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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING: THE PREPARATION OF NEW TEACHERS THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Thesis in Educational Leadership

by

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ABSTRACT

There are particular experiences throughout a teacher’s career that influence his/her professional adaptation, learning, development, and performance. The purpose of this study was to discover the types of experiences—biographical and professional and the organizational practices that influenced, in a transformational way, the professional development of intern teachers and other educators who participated in a year immersion into a Secondary Level English-Language Arts Professional Development School.

The inquiry answers the following five questions: 1) What is transformational learning in the context of new teacher preparation and development? 2) What is the relationship between transformational learning and experiential professional development? 3) To what extent is transformational learning and experiential professional development relevant to teacher preparation? 4) To what extent do teachers identify transformational learning and experiential professional development as being relevant in their professional training? 5) What best practices are related to transformational learning and experiential professional development in the context of professional development schools? The original conceptual framework of this study applied Mezirow’s Transformational Learning Theory, Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model and Starratt’s foundational qualities of an ethical person; autonomy, connectedness, authenticity and transcendence, as the preliminary theoretical components of a transformational professional learning experience. A qualitative case study approach was taken and utilized participant-observation, document analysis and the interviewing of 14 participants who were profiled as a phase of the data analysis.

Findings show that transformational learning in the context of teacher preparation and development is an active, organic, constructive process. It can emanate from occurrences in one’s biography—as early as when a child begins school—and is later able to identify, critically reflect, dialogue and act on these meaningful experiences and encounters within the context of learning to teach. Best practices that promote transformational learning were identified as authentic immersion, initial selections and mentor-intern match-ups, inquiry at the center of the PDS organization,
critical self reflection through journaling and textual connections, subbing for substitute and the organic planning of professional activities. My results support the idea that interns in a self-selected, authentic professional immersion teacher preparation program, like the one studied here, have a significant stake, active professional community commitment and a heightened awareness during their training and prior to employment, that, as a result have a significant transformational impact in their personal and professional grounding as future career educators. A re-conceptualized diagram of a transformational professional learning experience is presented.
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<tr>
<td>SCASD</td>
<td>Scarlet Area School District</td>
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<td>PDS</td>
<td>Professional Development School</td>
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<td>EPDS</td>
<td>English-LanguageArtsProfessional Development School</td>
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<td>TPLE</td>
<td>Transformational Professional Learning Experience</td>
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my daughter, Lily Julia, my godson, John Aragona, and to my mother and father, Monica and Paul
Introduction

Problem Statement

There are alternatives to the current models of teacher preparation and development that embody different assumptions about teaching and learning and the transformation of schooling that appear more compatible with the complex demands of the context of teaching (Little, 1994). The long-held practice of a future teacher spending three years at the university then the final half of the fourth year in a field experience has been questioned as whether it is an effective or authentic preparation model for future teachers (see Roth, 1994). Pre-service teachers often give their in-service experiences a failing grade-calling it limited, inconsistent and disconnected from their coursework (Neville, Sherman & Cohen, 2005).

However, there are some positive signs. Initiatives like Professional Development Schools (PDS’s) are positively affecting the traditional ways teachers are trained, recruited, inducted and developed (Levine, 1997,). PDS’s are playing a particular role in school reform efforts and are transforming the way school districts and colleges of education work together to bridge the gap between theory and practice, academic preparation, classroom learning and in-service experiences. Castle, Fox and Souder (2006) found that PDS teacher candidates performed at higher levels (compared to non-pds teachers) on aspects of instruction, management and assessment and that these higher levels of performance are intertwined with a sophisticated understanding of the connections between and across various aspects of teaching.

Rather than conceptualizing the process of teacher development as being lockstep through a series of universal stages regardless of setting or experiences, teacher educators
are now emphasizing the interrelationships between teachers’ learning and development and the context of their own learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2006, p. 389). There are both personal and organizational components to the process of the development of becoming an educator that do not necessarily follow a set of stages.

“The life stories of teachers explain that the practice of classroom teaching remains forever rooted in personality and experience and that learning to teach requires a journey into the deepest recesses of one’s self awareness, where failures, fears, and hopes are hidden” (Kagan 1992, p. 164).

In this thesis I seek to inquire into what are the personal and professional components within the context of one secondary level Professional Development School that contribute to the transformational aspects of becoming a teacher. In this light, as has been noted by scholars before me, one way to conceptualize pre-service experiences is through an individualistic, psychoanalytic approach to teacher education (Kagan, 1992, Richardson 1990, Combs 1965). The problem facing educators is not having had enough experience, but how to utilize their own life experiences in a useful way (Bourdieu, 2001).

I am using for this interpretive qualitative case study of one Secondary Level English Professional Development School- transformational learning theory- in order to create a theoretical perspective. Transformational learning theory was developed by Jack Mezirow and is a “process of exploring, assessing, and working to change limiting frames of reference and habits of mind. It has both individual and social dimensions and implications and it demands that we be aware of how we come to our knowledge and that we be as aware as we can be about the values that lead us to our perspectives” (Mezirow,
Fostering transformative learning is not just about making sense of experience through dialogue; it also involves creating experiences that can help facilitate understanding among the participants involved (Taylor, 1998).

**Purpose of Study**

There are particular experiences throughout a teacher’s career that influence his/her professional adaptation, learning, development, and performance. The purpose of this study is to 1) discover the types of experiences-critical, personal, professional and organizational, that influence, in a transformational way, the professional development of aspiring teachers. The bounded context for my inquiry is the Scarlet Area School District-Pioneer State University Secondary Level English/Language Arts Professional Development School as an organization contributing to personal transformation of teachers.

**Research Questions**

1. What is transformational learning in the context of teacher preparation and development?
2. What is the relationship between transformational learning and experiential professional development?
3. To what extent is transformational learning and experiential professional development relevant to teacher preparation?
4. To what extent do teachers identify transformational learning and experiential professional development as being relevant in their professional training?
5. What best practices are related to transformational learning and experiential professional development?
6. What best practices are incorporated in Professional Development Schools? Which are not?
Chapter 2

Review of Relevant Literature

By providing opportunities for [students] to exercise autonomy, connectedness and transcendence, educators enable [students] to experience the fulfillment and satisfaction of the way of being human. They learn the lesson that living ethically is the fulfillment of human nature.

Robert Starrat

This chapter of the research proposal presents a review of the relevant literature in order to provide a basis for this study. It is a review of representative literature and empirical studies in order to provide a foundation for the research inquiry. This reveals the meta-orientations or the major positional views, world views, or models of reality for the study. The concept of meta-orientation highlights the linkage between curriculum practices and the philosophical, psychological and social contexts that shape them (Miller & Seller 1990 p.5). This conceptual framework and the accompanying diagram are an outcome and a summary of the review of representative literature. It is not a fixed a priori framework and it will inevitably evolve as an outcome of the data collection.

This review will aid in drawing implications about teachers’ in-service experiences and the transformational effects on their professionalization. It is divided into four sections: 1) curricular orientations and how people learn; 2) the purposes and ethics of schooling; 3) motivation; 4) transformational and experiential learning.

How People Learn and Curricular Orientations

In the 17th century John Locke first espoused the theory that learning occurs through experience, observation and reflecting upon those experiences and observations. This idea was advanced in the 18th century by Immanuel Kant, furthering that knowledge and meaning are constructed by the individual and have personal, cultural and social
meanings. In the 20th century it was John Dewey (1938) who elaborated on the philosophy of learning from experience and Lev Vygotsky (1978) who posited that there is a social context of cognition and that experience enriches and fosters human development. Clearly, at the core of schooling is teaching and learning. Knowing how people learn and understanding how they are actually taught has been on the minds of academics, philosophers, and scientists for centuries. When we consider the process of learning, it raises many views on the nature of thought and cognition, and, in the context of this study, the art and science of developing and preparing new teachers.

In order to more clearly understand the transformational curricular orientation and its place in schooling, here I discuss the transmission and transactional curricular orientations then follow with the transformational orientation. Transformational learning is composed of and is closely associated with the constructivist theory of learning. Miller and Sellers (1990) identified the transmission, the transactional and the transformational as the three major distinguishing curricular positions that aid in the understanding of instructional objectives.

The *transmission curricular* orientation is characterized as the delivery of facts and figures from a teacher to the student. It is a relatively fixed relationship where the teacher is the deliverer of information and the student is a somewhat passive recipient of the teacher’s knowledge. Learning takes place passively, as opposed to actively through the study of texts, via rote memorization and through clearly delineated roles and responsibilities taken on by the teacher and the student. Curricular content is factual, quantitative, organized and classified and there is a definite distance between the learner, who becomes atomized, and the material to be learned. In the transmission position, the
function of education is to transmit facts, skills and values to students (Miller& Seller 1990). Often this technique is perceived as a one-way street. This position fits in with the behaviorist approach that defines learning as a relatively permanent change in behavior that results from experience (Thorndike 2001) and as Skinner noted (in Merriam and Caffarella 1999 p.128) that the ultimate goal of learning is to bring about behavior that will ensure the survival of the human species, societies and individuals.

The transactional curricular orientation is characterized by a dialogue-driven relationship between the student and the curriculum in which the student reconstructs knowledge through the dialogue process (Miller & Seller 1990). In doing so, knowledge is constructed and learning is an interactive, more open process than in the transmission instructional position. In the transactional position the student, rather than the text or the material, is in the center of learning. As Dewey notes “an experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what at the time, constitutes his environment (1938 p.41). The transaction curricular position is a process that draws out the relationship between the learner and the subject being learned in ways that are aligned with methods and models of cognition and intelligence. The transactional approach is often considered within the constructivist views of learning which recognizes the dynamic nature of thinking and how the learner builds an internal representation of knowledge based on a personal interpretation of experience (Bednar, et. al. 1991). In this approach, the teacher constructs experiences and the student will shape the meanings and knowledge themselves through interaction, mental processes and direct engagement with projects and problems of the areas being studied. “Knowing is process, not product” as Bruner noted (1966, p.72) and interaction and dialogue between the
teacher and the student is necessary and balanced in places where an apprentice-like 
relationship develops. A cooperative approach to learning is promoted and understood to 
be necessary. The transactional curricular orientation fits closely with the cognitive 
thinkers such as Piaget and the stages of learning and Vygotsky’s thesis that learning 
from experience is the process by which human development occurs.

The transformational curricular orientation seeks balance and change on a 
personal and a societal level. According to Miller and Seller it encompasses three specific 
orientations: teaching humanistic and social change orientations; a vision of social 
change as movement towards harmony with the environment rather than exerting control 
over it; and an attribution to the spiritual dimension of the environment (1990, p.8). This 
position develops curricular material using a holistic approach to education that aims to 
work with the whole student encompassing social, emotional, physical even spiritual 
components of our nature. Essential to the transformational position is acknowledging 
that teachers and students are viewed on a human, more existential and interconnected 
level. As Carl Rogers (1993) the humanist psychologist notes, students are treated with 
genuineness, empathy and respect. Beyond the technical aspect and the content 
knowledge of subject areas, it is socially constructed knowledge that plays an important 
part in the nature and work of teachers. Knowledge about teaching is communicative 
rather than instrumental-it is about understanding ourselves, others and the norms of the 
organization, community and society in which we live (Cranton & King, 2003). Learning 
takes place through the traditional ways as well as within the social context of the 
environment, be it the classroom, the school, small groups, or other informal or non-
traditional settings. The transformational position fosters a collaborative nature where
there is a leveling of the learning/teaching hierarchy. This takes place by teachers and students alike contributing and negotiating the spaces where learning is created. Some of the names associated with the transformational educational position include: Carl Rogers; the humanist psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (1978); the founder of Summerhill School, A.S. Neil (1960); the elementary educator, Maria Montessori (1912, 2002), the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1998); and the critical theorist Henry Giroux (2001), among others. Emancipation and empowerment are two of the aims of transformational curricular orientations.

The Purposes of Schooling and the Ethics of Teaching

This section of the literature review discusses the purposes of schooling and the ethics of teaching and how these concepts inform and influence this proposed study of the preparation and development of teachers. Many scholars have written their thoughts on the purposes of schooling. Summarized here are broadly acknowledged reasons for the purposes of schooling followed by the ethics of teaching.

Socialization (Gracey 1972; Feigelman 1993), inculcating literacy (Hirsch, 1985), producing citizens for a democracy (Dewey 1916; Cuban, 1998), and developing skills for the economy and workplace (A Nation at Risk, 1983) are all central, broad components of the reasons, and purposes for the institution of schooling. These essential elements serve students and populations to achieve ends that strive to develop functioning citizens who can contribute to society. Being able to get along with others, understanding the historical and cultural foundations of one’s nation and its people, voting and being trained and skilled enough to support and contribute to society have all long been central functional purposes of education. Although much of human experience is covered in
these categories, there is a deeper element that is central to education and schooling which is not considered.

A transformational position in the preparation and development of teachers requires the consideration of purposes beyond those that are merely functional as chief reasons for the institution of schooling. Many scholars (Hodgkinson 1991; Starratt 1994; Freire 1998; Giroux 2001; Gardner 1999; Stefkovich and Shapiro 2001; Begley 2004) discuss the ethical, moral and values based character of teaching and schooling. Hodgkinson (1991), from a historically analytical position argues that there are three primary purposes of schooling, the economic, the ideological and the aesthetic. Although economic and ideological reasons, as mentioned above, are two foundational purposes for schooling, what needs to be considered more deeply and readily are the aesthetic purposes of education, like the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness (Gardner 1999), self-fulfillment, joy and reason as being at the core of schooling and teaching. Hodgkinson (1991) surmises that since education has about it an idealistic and humanistic quality which renders it distinctive and relevant to all aspects of the human condition, it is invested with a moral character that renders education special within the callings and vocations of men and women (p.23). What follows from this argument is that since education is a humanistic, idealistic and a moral pursuit, then the practice and art of teaching has ethical obligations.

**Autonomy**

Autonomy derives from the Greek, *autos* (self) and *nomos* (rule), hence. “self-rule,” the condition of living according to laws one gives oneself, or negatively, not being under the control of another (Haworth 1986, p. 11). Haworth also furthers that
competence is the foundation of autonomy. "Life consists in learning to live on one’s own, spontaneous, freewheeling: to do this one must recognize what is one’s own—be familiar and at home with oneself. This means basically learning who one is, and learning what one has to offer to the contemporary world, and then learning how to make that offering valid (Merton)." Starratt (1994), grounding his work in philosophy, argues that one of the primary tasks of schooling is the formation of ethical persons. He notes that ethical people have developed qualities of autonomy, connectedness and transcendence.

Authenticity

Starratt (2004) argues that authenticity plays an equally foundational position within the realm of teaching and schooling and that authenticity is the primary characteristic of moral and ethical leaders. Begley (1994, 2005) from a cognitive perspective, looks at the valuation processes within ethical instances and the acquisition of certain values such as empathy and the social problems of the community that lead to further intuitive action. Begley advances that authenticity, defined as self knowledge, moral reasoning and a sensitivity to the orientation of others, can be achieved through different strategies like reflective practice, sustained dialogue on moral issues and ethical dilemmas of moral practice and participation in an authentic democratic process (2005). Brookfield (2006) identifies 4 indicators of authenticity being congruence, full disclosure, responsiveness and personhood. Kornelson (2006) notes that presence, vitality, and abandoning order provide for authentic teaching and Dirkx (2006) argues that self knowledge is at the heart of authenticity and is achieved through soul work in which we attend to powerful emotions and symbols in everyday life and practice. Fargo (2006) found by looking specifically at her own classroom practice. that authenticity comes from
a teacher answering the question ‘Who am I?’ in relation to her students and attending to student needs, holding clear expectations, valuing individuals, caring, reducing anxiety, empowerment and choice. Similarly, Cranton (2006) found that caring, open and meaningful relationships with learners are building blocks for authentic teaching. Lin (2006) argues that authenticity is bound to culture. And in a very relevant conversation, Hunt (2006) investigates the institutional constraints that limit authenticity in the teaching practice. From this researchers’ perspective, the foundational qualities of an authentic ethical curriculum seek individual and collective transformational ends.

When we consider the preparation of classroom teachers and their field experiences, certain purposes of education are readily discussed. But too often the focus is more on such issues as classroom management, constructing a lesson, administering a test, following state guidelines, dealing with school-wide policies or maintaining a relationship with the cooperating teacher. These are all important and relevant, but missing a deeper sustenance than mere technical requirements of the job. The moral and ethical purposes and responsibilities of an educator are not readily discussed as a central core element in most pre-service and professional development curriculum. It is essentially an integral learning process by which intellectual, moral, and ethical learning standards are created, not some evaluation based on current moral standards and world views (Kolb, 1984). Teacher preparation programs can lack coursework and curricula built around the ethical dimensions of the practice of being an educator where a transformational change may (need to) occur on a personal or pre-professional level but is unacknowledged in the larger context of the pre-teaching program.
By exploring pre-service teacher’s experiences and how and when and within what context teachers exercise autonomy, connectedness and transcendence, and hence become authentic educators, we may shed light on how to further improve transformational curricula for professional development and pre-service teaching, improve the human character and conditions of teaching and schooling.

Motivation

The preparation and professional development of teachers is a complex and multi-dimensional undertaking. We know that cognitive processes and motivating forces play a large part in sustaining a professional career as an educator. When considering transformational learning and the preparation and development of teachers, it is relevant to discuss cognitive and psychological processes that motivate. Early views found that motivation has many sources. James (1890, 1950), writing from a cultural standpoint found that motivation results from native tendencies. Freud found that behavior results from within the individuals reflecting psychic energy. Murray (1943) found that individuals have an achievement motive. Skinner (1957), a behaviorist, found that motivation is a function of consequences. Maslow, (1968, 1970), found that motivation reflects the striving of individuals to self-actualize. Rogers (1961) emphasized the internal dimensions of a person’s interests and enthusiasm as linked directly to their motivations.

People’s level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than what is objectively the case (Bandura, p. 2, 1997). Beliefs affect human perception, interpretation and behavior which mean they are the source of behavior. A central assumption of the cognitive approaches is that people respond not to external
events but rather to their interpretations of these events. People are active and curious, searching for information to solve personally relevant problems; hence the focus of motivation is internal and personal (Hoy & Hoy, 2003) as well as external and public.

Equally important in forwarding the idea of what induces people to act, Begley (2005) identifies four basic motivational bases; 1) personal preference or self interest; 2) an inclination towards consensus; 3) a concern for consequences; and 4) a proclivity towards trans-rational ethics (the acme of development of the human mind and goodness) or principles. From a humanistic perspective, to motivate means to encourage people’s inner resources - their sense of competence, self-esteem, autonomy, and self-actualization (Kolter & Hoy, 2003). In the case of this study, it is the elucidation of personal and organizational experiences and beliefs that will further aid in the understanding of motivations, as well as clarify values and offer a contribution to the leadership of teacher preparation and professionalization.

Experiential and Transformational Learning

Experiential education differs from traditional education in that a student learns material by actually practicing it instead of simply talking or reading about it (Bacon, 1983). “Wholly independent of desire or intent, every experience lives on in further experiences. Hence, the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kinds of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences (Dewey, 1938 p. 27).” Therein is the nature of experiential learning in the context of a professional development school. The amount of time allocated by many teacher preparation programs as enough field experience to acquaint candidates with the duties and orientations of becoming a teacher is usually one school semester. In light of
this we must consider the nature and value of experience and the long term effects of pre-
serve preparation and their traditional professional development programs. A multitude
of personal and institutional, organization, social, formal and informal experiences play a
part in the development of capable, enthusiastic, well rounded professional educators.

Within the context of preparing and supporting the transformation from student to
teacher, there must be a clarification of prior experiences that are be considered to be
“critical incidents” (Mezirow, 2000) which in turn can are interpreted as influential in the
educator’s cognitive, practical and professional development. A personal transformation
is a fundamental change in an individual’s personality involving and combining a
resolution to a personal dilemma and the expansion of consciousness resulting in a more
fully realized personality integration (Boyd, 1991, p. 203). Transformative learning
involves dialogue-inquiry or rational discourse, which enables individuals to make self-
discoveries. As individuals make self discoveries, their feelings, images and thoughts are
factors and experiences of pre-service and beginning teachers and created a Biographical
Transformation Model-(BTM)- (formative experiences, interpretations, schemas,
framework for action, student teaching practices) that is useful in conjunction with
Mezirow’s theory in understanding transformational learning in this context of teacher
preparation and development as well.

Experience is used in this study as an event or series of events that the interns
participate in or lives through, which has cognitive implications for their understanding
of themselves and the world in which they inhabit. According to the New Shorter Oxford
English Dictionary, experience is defined as “proof by actual trial”; the events that have
taken place within the knowledge of an individual, a community, or the human race. The
taxt, science and practice of teaching are distinctly human events. By discovering,
clarifying and reflecting upon a pre-service teacher’s conscious perception and
apprehension of experiences this will aid in the understanding of their motivations and
deeper abilities and competencies to teach. At the same time, if teachers are going to be
able to open their pupils to [peak learning] experiences, they must first learn to recognize
them and nurture them in their own lives (Maslow, 1973, p163 in Tickle, 2001).

Concerning the nature of experience, John Stuart Mill observed

Whatever we do for ourselves, and whatever is done for us by others, for
the express purpose of bringing us somewhat nearer to the perfection of our
nature;…Whatever helps to shape the human being-to make the individual what
he is, or hinder him from being what he is not-is part of his education (Mill, 1874
p. 333 in Houle 1980 )

There are direct and indirect influences upon the character of a teacher and their
cognitive and professional formation as an educator. Through direct participation in the
events of life, the seeds for learning are planted; reflection and further dialogues are the
nourishment that aids in the overall amount of growth and the heartiness and density of
the reflection on those experiences influences the future breadth and scope of their
transformational impact. Experiential learning involves an individual’s direct encounter
with the phenomena being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter, or
only considering the possibility of doing something about it (Borzak, 1981). Experience
is ‘proof by actual trial’ that follows with a passage in to one’s sense and future meaning
making of experiences not yet lived. Carl Rogers (1961), stated “Experience is, for me,
the highest authority. The touchstone of validity is my own experience. No other person's
ideas, and none of my own ideas, are as authoritative as my experience.” It is the
uniqueness of the individual teacher experiencing life, in the context of school and out of school—that makes for the determining and understanding of the elements that make up a transformational professional learning experience.

With this in mind, transformative learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference…frames of reference are the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences (Mezirow, 1997). According to Cranton (1996) transformational learning occurs when an individual has reflected on assumptions and expectations about what [has] or will occur, has found these assumptions to be faulty and revises them. Moursound notes that transformational learning is further understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to future action (2005). From a spiritual perspective, Habito (2005) argues that the process of transformation may be activated by symbols, social relationships, feelings and states of consciousness.

Kolb’s experiential learning theory (1984) defines learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. The theory posits that immediate or concrete experiences are the basis for observations and reflections. These reflections are assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts from which new implications for action can be drawn. These implications can be actively tested and serve as guides in creating new experiences (Kolb, 2000, p3.) Experiential learning theory further builds upon the ideas that are elaborated in the transactional curricular position that knowledge is constructed. Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created by the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984). James Zull, a biologist building on Kolb’s work describes the transformation of experience as a three
step process, a transformation from our experiences in the past to our ideas in the future; the second step being that the source of knowledge moves from outside our selves to inside our selves, we move from passive to active creators of knowledge and finally in the third step a transformation of power passes control of learning from others to ourselves—we will know what we need for learning and will take charge in getting it (see Zull, 2006 p. 33-34).

Transformative Learning Practices

Taylor (1998) in a review of the literature on the practice of transformative pedagogy, discusses the findings of many unpublished dissertations. In this review he identified five general themes about the nature of transformative pedagogy: transformative learning as group situated, as time consuming, as a predisposition, as affective learning, and educator and students as transformative learners(p.48). His review notes the essential practices and conditions for transformative learning to occur as; transformative environments promote a sense of safety, openness, and trust; effective transformative instructional methods promote student autonomy, participation and collaboration; the importance of activities that encourage the exploration of alternative personal perspectives, problem posing and critical reflection.

Transformational Teacher Professional Development

According to Judith Warren Little (1994) a model of teacher professional development that is focused primarily on expanding an individual repertoire of well-defined and skillful classroom practice--is not adequate to the ambitious visions of
teaching and schooling embedded in present reform initiatives. The practice and research of teacher development, Hargreaves (1995) argues, should address the technical competence of teaching, the place of moral purpose in teaching, political awareness, acuity, and adeptness among teachers, and teachers’ emotional attachments and engagements with their work (p. 26). In this light, Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning further elaborates on the experiential models of learning and is useful in conceptualizing transformational teacher professional development in the context of experiential learning in a professional development school.

Transformation theory’s focus is on how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings and meanings—rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others—to gain greater control over our lives as socially responsible, clear thinking decision makers (Mezirow, 2000, p.8).

In this light, in consideration of preparing people to become teachers, Mockler and Normanhurst (2004, p.4) argue that a transformative teaching profession sees its primary responsibility in terms of the development of critical, literate, socially aware citizens with a strong sense of their own civic responsibility, and through them the generation of social capital and the propagation of civil society. (see Figure 1.)
Conceptual Framework

**Figure 1.** A Transformational Professional Learning Experience – A Visualization of the composition of a transformational professional learning experience is presented below.

Figure 1. The Composition and Process of a Transformational Professional Learning Experience
For this study I am utilizing my definition and conception of transformational professional learning experience (TPLE) which is the structure and planning of distinct educational experiences with the aim of enhancing and reframing the professional abilities of both pre-service and in-service educators in such a way as to promote and enhance social cohesion. This TPLE is composed of purposes and curricular orientations at the institutional level, motivational forces at the personal level, and the elements that define a profession, ie.; the structures, contexts, education, activities, ideology, behaviors, etc) at a universal level. Learning through experience and cognitive realizations of autonomy, connectedness, and transcendence all work within the personal, professional, organizational and social spheres in grounding and authenticating a transformational process. There is a transformation that takes place that is natural and based on both direct and indirect experiences that transform a person into a teacher.
Chapter 3  
Context and Methodology of the Study

What this means is that you use your life experience in your intellectual work: continually examine and interpret it. In this sense, craftsmanship is the center of yourself and you are personally involved in every intellectual product upon which you work. (1959, p.196)  
C. Wright Mills

The Scarlet Area School District (SCASD) is a medium sized suburban-rural school district drawing its attendance from a 150 square mile area. There are 14 public schools: 10 elementary, 2 middle, 1 high school and 1 alternative high school. There are also four charter schools serving the elementary and middle levels in the school district. Scarlet High, as it is known, has approximately 2600 student in grades 9-12 and over 7000 students attend schools in the entire district. It is a well financed school district that performs at levels that exceed state and national norms. Per pupil expenditures of $13,925 are above the state average of $10,755. The school district is well above the statewide averages on reading, math and English proficiency exams (Standard and Poor’s). The school has a 95% graduation rate with 86% continuing for post graduate schooling/training and a large percentage of the graduating seniors from Scarlet High go on to becoming freshman at the Pioneer State University campus located in the school district.

The school district is unique because of its proximity to Pioneer State University (PSU), sharing in culture and in resources in many ways. Approximately 65% of the district teachers (Standard & Poor’s) have advanced degrees and many students are sons and daughters of professors and administrators at PSU. The relationship between the SCASD and PSU has developed numerous crossover projects between colleges and
departments including two Professional Development School’s (PDS’s), one at the elementary level and the other at the high school level that are a partnership between the College of Education and the district. The College of Education has one of the largest teacher preparation programs in the nation with over 600 potential future teachers graduating each year. Of these 600 students approximately 60 graduate with a degree and certification to teach secondary level English. Of these 60, 15 complete their final year field experience-student teaching through the Secondary English/Language Arts Professional Development School. During the 2005-2006 school year the Secondary Level English/Language Arts Professional Development School has 12 interns placed at the high school level and one at the middle school. Currently there are plans to start a middle level professional development school in the near future. The Elementary Professional Development School places sixty students in all ten of the elementary schools of school district. All totaled, less than 10% of the students who graduate each year from the College of Education complete their field experience by participating in a professional development school. The Elementary Level and the Secondary Level English PDS are separate entities, with different faculties as leaders, educational processes and ideology, although both have won national awards for their programs. This study solely focuses on the latter.

**Grounding for Methodology**

The researcher makes important decisions at the start of the project in order to clearly define the parameters and boundaries of the inquiry. My ideological inclinations, stemming from humanist, progressive, experientialist, and critical ideological positions, and practical considerations defined the method of inquiry for the study. Since it is the
work of the researcher to determine the distinctions inherent in the topic being studied, the inquiry methodology brings meaning to an entire research situation. John Dewey stated:

“Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole. (Theory of Logic, p104-105)

Methodology brings out the elements necessary to define and clarify the entirety of the research situation. Dewey (1998) further notes that what is designated by the word situation is not a single object or event or set of events; for we never experience or form judgments about objects and events in isolation but only in connection with a contextual whole (p. 383). Inquiry clarifies and defines the entirety of a situation.

In addition, I am aware of the influence of my own background, biases, disciplinary interests and experiences on the nature of this study. I am a former English teacher who worked in a number of settings as an educator; in the suburban environment for my training, at the state level on policy issues, in urban traditional and alternative schools as an English/Humanities teacher, and internationally as a Fulbright exchange teacher. Reflexivity-defined as “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the ‘human as instrument’ (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, In Merriam 2002 p. 26), is, by my nature, a part of this qualitative inquiry. These aspects of my background will be further delineated and clarified throughout the conducting and completion of the study. Along the way to becoming a teacher, there are particular experiences while growing up and during the training period that are instrumental in that development. These experiences are both personal and professional.
Conducting this research, in the short and the long run, aims for findings linked to some sort of emancipatory change which focuses the possibilities of teaching and learning, but not change simply for its own sake but change that has a democratic, autonomous and cognitive perspective. The emancipatory cognitive interest could be defined as follows: a fundamental interest in emancipation and empowerment to engage in autonomous action arriving out of authentic, critical insights into the social construction of human society (Grundy, 1986, p.19)

Researcher Bias/Declaration of Self

In my own life I can look back and identify the instrumental moments that have encouraged and lead me along the way of my own personal and professional transformation as a teacher. These moments were not planned, but conditions may be designed to promote them in the professional realm. In the personal realm, critical interpretation of identified incidents makes the process a vital one in their transformational effects. I can identify a number of disorienting dilemmas or critical incidents that have played a part in my entry into, my worldview and my development as a teacher.

While in second grade at St. Agnes Elementary school, the regular teacher, Mrs. Zelles was absent and another teacher from the upper grades filled in as a substitute. His name was Mr. Longaro and he was a social studies teacher from the seventh or eighth grade. While he was teaching our class lessons, I recall him saying to the class “Yes, I am a man and I am a teacher” as he rolled up his pant leg and showed the class the hair on his legs. I believe that the seed for my becoming a teacher was planted there in the second grade. I realized from a young age, that a man can be a teacher.
I grew up in an upper-middle class suburb of New York City that is segregated in many ways as many suburbs are. I can count on one hand the number of African-American and minority homeowners in the town while I was growing up. There were housing projects on the other side of town where the African-American families lived. In high school, following a track meet, I was searching for my jacket, not the team sweat jacket provided by the school, but a new jacket my mother had recently bought for me at a fancy department store, one that was colorful with a warm lining on the inside that I liked very much. I was cold and became nervous when I could not find the jacket anywhere on the field. I got on the bus and found Kelly, an African American student in my grade, hunched up against the window wearing my jacket. He was obviously cold. I asked him for my jacket back and he gave it to me. I could smell his body in my jacket. My reflection is an empathetic one. I was cold, and so was he. I was a have and he was a have not. I am white, he is black, but in the end, in many ways our needs are the same. This was a lesson, although not learning at the time in coming to learn the other and see oneself- that our human needs are the same.

Throughout all of my schooling I was traditionally trained. I attended a Catholic elementary school, and a public middle and high school in the same town I lived in growing up. I attended a Jesuit college in Upstate New York and graduate school for education at a large research university on Long Island. My first position out of graduate school was in the New York State Senate as a fellow on the education committee. After two years I came to New York City to teach, thinking this is where the most help was needed. My first position as a teacher was through the New York City Alternative School Superintendency where I had a 4 month position at Satellite Academy, a transfer school
with four locations throughout the five boroughs for students whose social, emotional and academic needs could not or were not being met at the traditional schools throughout the city. These were schools for students who were at risk of dropping out, who maybe recently had a baby, who were on the receiving end of a razor fight, for students from alcoholic families, and many other kids all with special learning needs. My role was as an itinerant teacher and a “wandering eye” observing, aiding, coming to understand how the four schools worked and reporting back to the principal. The schools used progressive and alternative methods throughout the program in meeting the needs of the students and practices which I had never before seen, which at the time were unconventional but which today have become more commonplace. Over the four months I spent there I experienced many difficult yet profound lessons about students, teaching, learning, and education that have stayed with me to this day. This entire experience for me was critical in my professional development as an educator in coming to understand a more open, tolerant, alternative and progressive view of education.

After having taught for seven years in New York City I applied for and was accepted to participate in a Fulbright Teacher Exchange to Hungary. The entire experience was, both personally and professionally a transformational one. Within the larger framework of these experiences, there were many critical incidents along the way that have formulated into ideas and ways that inform my current practice and world view.

After arriving in Hungary at the Leowey Klara Gimnazium located in Pecs, a small city located in the southwestern region of the country, I attended a ‘brown bag’ meeting arranged by the director of the program in Budapest. These were monthly meetings arranged on a topic of cultural and academic interest for all the scholars and
exchange teachers in Hungary during the 2000-2001 academic year. I was talking to the director of the Hungarian Fulbright program about my teaching schedule and course load and responsibilities and he said to me “Call me if you need more freedom.” Although I never called, this phrase stayed with me during my experience abroad and to this day. The availability of a higher degree of professional self-determination, above and beyond my duties at the Leowey Klara Gimnazium in Pécs, Hungary, was a liberating experience. There were many professional endeavors throughout the year ranging from production of a play, to teaching at the college level, to attending classical opera and piano concerts and functions at the ambassador’s home where I found many professional responsibilities and liberties never before granted to my position as an educator while teaching in the United States.

In many ways, my selecting of this topic also emanates from an area of professional interest. My experience and interest upon arriving at Pioneer State, coming from teaching in the small school’s reform movement in NYC was in researching small learning environments. I first believed I would study summer seminar professional development programs for teachers because I had experienced a rich breadth and depth of experience in a number of these types of study programs. As I began to look in to this area, my advisor at the time, early on in my program, had mentioned the Elementary Level Professional Development School at Pioneer State University and introduced me to the lead professor. I was not enthused about this prospect having had limited experience at the Elementary School level. It was not until two years later did I discover the Secondary level English Language Arts Professional Development Program after a side conversation with my qualitative research professor who informed me of this program.
Meeting the founding professor, Dr. Jameson, and looking in to the program it seemed to be a fit: an alternative teacher training program using an experientialist approach, using a small school within a school model. Meeting the interns and observing the PDS meetings, there was much I was able to personally and professionally identify with in my own preparation and experiences as an educator that ‘rang true’ to me, knowing this was the group and the context for me to conduct my dissertation.

**Methodology**

Methodology helps to define the relations between academics and the educational community at large. This is an interpretive qualitative research inquiry. It is a case study of one small learning organization; the unit of analysis being the Secondary Level English Professional Development School formed in partnership between the Pioneer State University College of Education and the Scarlet Area School District located in the northeastern part of the United States.

Yin (1994) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (p.13). The U.S. General Accounting Office (1990) defines a case study as a method for learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained by extensive descriptions and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context (in Mertens, 2005 p. 61). It is an intensive description and analysis of phenomenon or a social unit such as an individual, group, institution, or community. The case study is a bounded, integrated system (Merriam 2002, p. 8).
Yin (1994) notes that the case study approach has more variables of interest than data points, relies on multiple sources of evidence and benefits from prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. All factors that are instrumental factors in the design of this research which realizes there will be multiple variables in the perceptions and the types and ranges of responses that will be acquired throughout the course of the study.

Research Relationship

During the pilot study and over the course of the 2005-2006 school year, I became familiar with the people involved in the Secondary English Professional Development School. In addition, I spent time as an intern in the school district completing the requirements for my school district administrator license. Gaining entry and to the community was not necessarily very difficult, but over time my own integrity and judgment played their part in guiding the research along its way.

According to Glesne (1999) the relationships in traditional qualitative research are generally asymmetrical, with power disproportionately located on the side of the researcher. Throughout my own relations and research with the SCASD-PDS, my aim was to establish democratic and egalitarian relations with the community. It is a dialogical community of which, although I may be taking information from, I hope to make a leveled participation in the work and knowledge that has already been and is constantly being created in this organization. In mapping the course of the research dissertation, I am declaring my own egalitarian and democratic political positions as well. Utilizing the transformational learning theory inherently requires a critical reflection by subjects on their organizational and personal experiences. By furthering a more
substantively critical and egalitarian relation between myself and the PDS community members, this dialogic approach encourages an object-subject switch. The switch transforms the research participants from manipulated objects into active critical subjects (Gitlin, Siegel and Boru, 1989)

According to Merriam (2002) reality in qualitative inquiry assumes that there are multiple, changing realities and that individuals have their own unique constructions of reality. My aim in conducting this inquiry is to, as clearly and concisely as possible, “report the perspectives of those participants involved, uncover the complexity of the human behavior in context and present a holistic interpretation of what is happening” (Merriam, 2002 p. 25). I am interested in how the participants as a member of the PDS community “interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and the [transformational] meanings they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, 2002 p. 38). In doing so, create a dialogue and present the findings so they may be useful to a community of researchers and practitioners.

Sample Selection

A sample refers to any group from which information is attained; it is often selected from a larger group called a population (Wallen and Frankel, 2001 p.128). Conducting a pilot study during the 2004-2005 school years aided in my decision of selecting a sample to be interviewed and involved in the larger study conducted during the 2005-2006 school year. The Scarlet Area School District Secondary Level English Professional Development School is a small organization currently composed of 13 interns, 15 mentor teachers, 6 university consultants who work with the interns, 1
facilitator, 2 district associates and the founding director. There are also approximately 93 alumni interns who have graduated from the program. This is the pool from which I selected my subjects to study. Due to time, financial and scholarship constraints, it was not possible to interview all members/and alumni of the PDS. I did interview 8 current interns, one alumni intern, 5 mentor teachers of whom 3 are alumni of the program and worked in various capacities within the organization including seminar facilitators and administrators, one alumni associate, one full time district administrator involved with the program, and the founding director who is an Associate Professor in the Language & Literacy program at Pioneer State for a total of 16 interviews over a 10 week period between May and July of 2006. Included here are profiles of 14 of these people interviewed.

Conducting the Research and Collecting the Data

Over a period of one school semester I conducted approximately 8-10 site visits, attending mixer days, meetings. These meetings generated significant data for the study in my role as a participant observer. My process for conducting the interviews followed this outline: I began by presenting the interviewees a pre-interview survey of essential questions via email so they can consider the themes of the interview and begin to generate ideas for answers. This was administered to the interviewees prior to meeting for the official interview. I conducted reflective interviews with the interviewees in which we had an open ended conversation guided by my interview protocol. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and took place either at the Scarlet Area High School, the Scarlet Area Middle School, in an office at the Pioneer State University, a local coffee shop or in my home. Any follow-up conversations took place via email or
via the telephone. Interviews were conducted in the order that participants were available to be scheduled.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003, p.135), interviews may be used in two ways: either as the dominant strategy for data collection or employed in conjunction with participant observation and document analysis. Interviews were open-ended but also followed a protocol.

The interviews started, generally, with the open ended question, “Tell me about your experiences in the English Professional Development school,” I asked each mentor, intern or other PDS participant the question “What ideas, experiences and questions are at the heart of your teaching or your desire to teach?” Discussions revolved around incidents and experiences that took place during their childhood, their teens; personal biographic episodes, and their reflections on these events, may have occurred for the first time within the context of this study. In asking this question, I was then able to begin to probe into the responses in a way that revealed deeper meanings and connections to my research interest into the process of transformational learning and the professional development of teachers. In essence, this question aimed at ascertaining the participants teaching presence; responses to this question were broad enough that they encompassed experiences that were personal, familial, and school related; ideas which touched on a broad range of student-centered topics, to fundamental questions about teaching and schooling.

Follow up questions followed a protocol and were categorized as: critical incidents, discussions of autonomy, a sense of connectedness, authentic learning, and
transcendence. The aim of the questions was to ascertain and aid in articulating the transformational personal and organizational components of the PDS.

**Organizing, Analyzing and Synthesizing the Data**

Maxwell (1996, p. 78) outlines a number of analytic options that fall in to three main groups namely memos, categorizing strategies and contextualizing strategies. Here then occurs another phase of applying, analyzing, and reflecting upon the findings to generate a new frame for understanding the original research questions. This is all a meaning making process. Mapping and matrices, diagrams, and charts, were all part of the graphic representation of the data. Data was categorized according to objective and subjective themes from the conceptual framework and ones that emerged through the data-samples can be viewed in the appendix.

Maxwell further notes that some coding categories are developed through existing theories. I automatically, even before started to read my data, had a general overall schema. Bogdan & Biklen (in Creswell, 2003, p. 193) also support this when they note that there can be pre-assigned coding schemes. While reading the data, I placed findings in categories.

Coding of the interviews took place once the transcripts were completed and they were coordinated with my hand written notes taken during each interview which were followed by my writing of short interview summaries. Regan-Smith (1991) notes, these short interview summaries, what I call profile summaries, allowed me to see threads that run through interviews and thereby maintain the context for the quotes that are lifted out of the interviews and used as examples in writing up the research. I created a profile
template (see appendix) as an aid in analyzing each of the people interviewed. This process aided in the data analysis.

Validity

Validity…depends on the relationships of your conclusions to the real world, and there are no methods to assure you that you have adequately grasped those aspects of the world that you are studying (Maxwell, 1996).

Conducting a research study that has valid conclusions is not something a researcher waits to find out at the culmination of the project. It is a process that begins at the start of the project, in the design of the proposal and continues throughout as the proposal is carried out. The careful considerations of planning a thorough project are important in order for the process to lead to valid conclusions. What Maxwell means is that a researcher must know and understand the context within which the research takes place and other portions of the field where the research may be transferred or applicable. Having a thorough understanding of the literature and being able to reflect upon what was found in the data allows the researcher to make valid, real world conclusions that are applicable.

Lincoln and Guba outline four criteria for judging the validity of qualitative research as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability…four criteria that define a qualitative study enabling the entire project to be one that has integrity. From the researcher’s perspective, at the conclusion of the project, it is the researcher, and the people who have participated in the project who will be able to qualify the findings as credible. Rich and thick descriptions of the context and the findings of the original qualitative study aid in the validation component of transferability.
Transferability is not necessarily a primary aim of the researcher of a qualitative study. The person who wishes to "transfer" the results to a different context is then responsible for making the judgment of how sensible the transfer is (Trochim, 2002).

When we try to ascertain the dependability of a research project, we are looking for a consistency throughout the study and in the findings. There are a number of ways to check to see how dependable a study is, like the use of triangulation methods or having others review the findings. The idea of dependability emphasizes the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs (Trochim2002). The research proposal and the methods used to carry out the study provide the necessary stabilizing structure, providing the framework for dependable findings.

Another word for confirmability is corroboration. The purpose of corroboration is not to confirm whether people’s perceptions are accurate or true reflections of a situation but rather to ensure that the research findings accurately reflect people’s perceptions, whatever they may be. The purpose of corroboration is to help researchers increase their understanding of the probability that their findings will be seen as credible or worthy of consideration by others (Stainback & Stainback, 1988).

In qualitative research, the credibility test asks if there is correspondence between the way the respondents actually perceive social constructs and the way the researcher portrays their viewpoints (Mertens, 2005 p. 255). I will utilize a number of methods to increase the credibility and validity of this study. From an interpretive perspective triangulation is a principal strategy to insure for validity and reliability (Merriam, 2002). Triangulation involves checking information that has been collected from different
sources or methods for consistency of evidence across sources of data (Mertens, 2005). I conducted interviews, reviewed relevant literature and analyzed documents relevant to the professional development school. Information was sought from multiple sources using the same data collection methods. The use of multiple forms of data collection, interviews, internet archives, and PDS documents to ascertain results will aid to the validity of the findings as well as contribute to the legitimation and the authenticity of findings.

I also used Lincoln and Guba's (1985, p. 283) audit trail and member checks to strengthen the validity of my findings. The audit trail includes field notes of each interview; including context and notes, keeping audio-tapes and transcriptions of interviews, memos, and the development of charts to organize the analyzed data. Most importantly I added to the credibility and authenticity of the meanings of my findings by using a process of member checking. This, according to Mertens (2005), is the most important criterion for establishing credibility. Whenever possible, all interview profiles were reviewed by the person interviewed in order to insure they reflect the true nature and meaning intended by the interviewee.
Chapter 4

Profiles of Participants

There are in our existence spots of time,
Which with distinct pre-eminence retain
A renovating Virtue, whence,
... our minds
Are nourished and invisibly repaired
(Wordsworth- The Prelude- Book XI, ls 258-278)

*If one aspect of knowing oneself better is the ability to reflect upon one’s place and function in society, another aspect is the ability to reflect upon and come to a better understanding of the implementation of that function.*

(Bottery, M., 1996 p. 191)

This chapter introduces the 14 people interviewed for this study. The sample and this chapter is categorized and the profiles are presented in the following order: 4 intern teachers who were seeking a Bachelor’s degree followed by 1 alumni intern who graduated and has been teaching for 3 years; 4 intern teachers who were seeking a Master’s degree followed by 3 alumni who are all currently employed by Scarlet Area School district and act as a mentors or facilitators; 1 former Associate; and finally the founding university professor. The profiles are based on my observations and field notes over the course of the past year and formal interviews I conducted in May, June and July of 2006.

Critical Incident Technique

These composites utilize the critical incident technique. Critical incident technique is a qualitative interview technique that investigates significant occurrences (events, incidents, processes, or issues) identified by the respondent the way they are managed and the outcomes in the way of their perceived effects (Chell, 1998, p.56) A critical incident is synonymous to what Mezirow (2000) calls a disorienting dilemma.
which is often the trigger to a transformational learning experience. Critical incident analysis enables the exploration of personal and professional experiences in relation to metamorphosis and change in the members of the PDS community, their learning, and development (See Van aken, Berends, & van der Bij, 2006).

In this case, I attempted to identify critical incidents which occurred prior to participation in the Secondary Level English-Language Arts Professional Development School that may have stimulated a passion and motivation to become a teacher; critical incidents that occurred during participation in the Professional Development School (PDS) that encouraged a deeper reflective and autonomous posture in learning to teach and the professional responsibilities of becoming a teacher. During the interviews I asked the participant the question “What ideas, experiences and questions are at the heart of your teaching or your desire to teach?” In asking this question, I was then able to begin to probe in a way that revealed deeper meanings and connections to my research interest into the process of transformation and the professional development of teachers. In essence, this question aimed at ascertaining the participants’ teaching presence. Responses to this question were broad enough that they encompassed experiences that were personal, familial, and school related; ideas which touched on a broad range of student-centered topics, to fundamental questions about teaching and schooling.
PROFILES OF INTERNS

BETH
Bachelor’s Degree Intern

Beth is a 22 year old single white female who recently graduated with a Bachelor’s Degree in English Education. She grew up in Huntington, NY; a suburb on Long Island where she attended elementary school. Beth and her family then moved to Central Pennsylvania where she graduated from high school. She is articulate and thorough in her responses and is a student in the Honors College at Pioneer State. Her younger sister, currently a junior at Pioneer State, is also studying to become a teacher. Originally, Beth did not set out to become a high school teacher. She developed an interest and became involved in broadcast journalism while in high school and started her freshman year at another university as a communications major. This lasted only a short while, one semester to be exact.

Critical Incident leading to Teaching

While at Syracuse University, Beth had a critical experience that transformed her perception of broadcast journalism and instigated her pursue the study of teaching.

I had a bit of a crisis of faith one day when-- there was a lot of incidents going on that [first] semester with all of the Greek life on campus. There were a lot of parties that got busted up, and there was one horrific incident where a girl was raped at a party. And I remember being in the news studio that day, and finding out about that, and the first reaction in my head was, 'Oh, that's terrible.' And the person next to me said, 'Oh, this is great! Do you think we can get an interview with her? What a great story!' (27-32)

Beth’s values were different than those of her peers, and her perspective of her chosen field was quickly altered. Her crisis of faith was life altering, enough to change her perception of the field of broadcast journalism and leave the program and the
It became frighteningly clear what the values were of the people she would be working with in the future. Beth’s intentions sought a different human measure. She was motivated by a more humanistic perspective rather than an exploitative one.

And I just, all of a sudden realized what my life would become if I kept continuing down this path, and I really wanted to be great at what I did-- I didn't want to have to exploit the suffering of others for personal gain. And I felt that, that is what part of the news industry is at times. It was something that I really disagreed with, and I didn't like at all…(38-41).

She knew that her disposition did not match the aims of broadcast journalism and that ethically she was motivated in a different direction. She reframed what she had come to know about broadcast journalism and reflected on what she really enjoyed about it: the teaching aspect. She became excited to try something where, instead of hurting others, she felt like she would be having a positive effect.

It was a complete life-changing moment. One eighty. Right there… I thought back to what I enjoyed most about being in the Broadcast Journalism program and it actually was instructing all of the underclassmen [on] how to use the various equipment, and not necessarily running the show or working with the equipment. But, just getting the chance to teach and impart knowledge.

**The Ideas at the Heart Beth’s Practice**

After deciding to switch majors, she also decided to switch schools. Beth transferred in to the College of Education at Pioneer State in the second semester of her freshman year deciding to become a high school English teacher. When I asked about the ideas that are the heart of her teaching, she talked about a connection to her high school English teacher who was an empathetic and encouraging person who instilled the foundational building blocks for a strong professional identity.

When I was still in high school, I really didn't like English class until I met my English teacher my junior year, his name was Mr. Rand, and he was--
amazing…the fact that he allowed us to have these long discussions, and -- it felt like he really cared about our opinion, and having us make connections to the literature instead of just being told what to think about x, y and z….I thought, 'Wow! I didn't realize I could do this! This is great!'

The idea of someone else, particularly a practicing teacher nurturing and having faith in Beth, instilled the type of deep clarification she later found within herself to choose teaching.

**Critical Incident in High School**

Mr. R’s class had a deep impact on Beth, and it serves as a source of professional and personal inspiration and motivation. One particular assignment carried a lasting impression.

We had to write an autobiography for the one English teacher [Mr. R] that I really enjoyed, and, at the end of it, he wrote comments about the piece, he wrote, “Elizabeth, you should seriously consider being an English teacher. I look forward to calling you a colleague.”

Mr. R’s impact was formidable. He designated a career option and a future for Beth that was beyond her own self interest and conception. It is as if he inscribed a future onto Beth. Until then, though, she had not even considered a career in teaching and was actually, at first, repulsed by the idea.

And up until that point, I had completely written off the profession of teaching. I was like-- forget that! I'm getting out of high school, I'm going to college, and I'm going to do my own thing! I'm not going back to high school if you paid me a million dollars!

But what followed was an important, somewhat transcendent, instructive moment that opened the professional pathways for future development.

And all of a sudden, it clicked, and I said, 'This is a possibility!' I think from that moment on, it [teaching] was always in the back of my head-- 'Wow! According to a teacher, this is something that someone that I really admire thinks that I could do! Maybe-- maybe he's right. Maybe I should try it!'
The Questions at the Heart of Beth’s Practice

One of the major components of Beth’s teaching is personal reflection. When I asked Beth what questions are at the heart of her practice, she divided them into two categories: questions that are of a personal nature and ones that are more professional, functional questions that relate to classroom practice. The questions show a level of reflective integrity that is necessary in the long and short term of professional development.

I think one of the major components of teaching is personal reflection, every day. You know, did this lesson go the best way it possibly could? And, are the students learning anything? Are they meeting the goals of the unit? Are-- And you have all those silly personal questions-- Do my students like me? Do they enjoy the class? Or, is it useful for them? Am I teaching the things that they’re going to need in order to function when they get out in the real world?

At the same time, Beth also held deeper school related questions, based on her classroom experiences, that inspired her to conduct her own inquiry project into the learning process.

The question that I was exploring all year had to deal with peer groups and how peer relationships in the classroom can really alter the environment of the classroom. And it seemed only to lead to more questions. Do we treat classrooms of students as specific groups? You know, this is the one with the athletes, or this is the one with all the quiet students, or... How does that, you know, create notions, like paradigms in the classroom. Great teachers, that’s what they do is they ask questions. And it only leads to more.

She realized the importance of questions and their impact, but also the central role they play in her own and in the practice of teaching. In the beginning of Beth’s experience, what is established is not just that questioning helps to reframe and inform her daily classroom practice, but that knowledge is not a fixed entity and that inquiring and reflection upon those questions are essential practices of a great teacher.

Critical Incidents in the PDS
A critical incident occurred in Beth’s classroom around the grading of papers. Beth was given the responsibility of grading one Advanced Placement English class’s college application essays. Many of the students in the class were applying to the same program in the college where she attends, so Beth was familiar with the necessary standards and practices for application and acceptance to the college.

I didn't have any experience with grading and my mentor didn't use a rubric, didn't tell me what to look for. So I just, kind of, put them in piles. You know, these are the ones I think are the real stand-out, the ones that deserve an 'A'; these are the ones that are 'B's; these are the ones that are 'C's. And, I wrote comments all over them, you know, grammatical errors that needed to be corrected, things that were confusing, things that were too generic.

Not having much guidance from her mentor on how to grade the papers, Beth did the best she could in grading them. Here again she has personal and professional questions. This being one of the first assignments she was responsible for, her developing professional persona was at stake.

I handed them back, really nervous, like 'Oh my goodness, they're all going to be expecting 'A's, they're not going to get them, they're going to be upset with me, what am I going to do? This is the first real impression they're going to have of me.' And, I want them to take this seriously because this is one of the most important pieces of writing they're going to do all year! This can determine whether or not they get into college! Oh my God!

After returning the papers, one student showed up at her door the following morning crying because she had worked so hard on the essay, and she was asking why she had received an 81 on the paper.

My first reaction was an eye roll as well! Like, oh my God, are you kidding me? I gave you a 'B'! I said, 'It's not your best work. I feel like you could do better.' And she was so upset with me. And I realized that there are those specific student needs that maybe I wasn't meeting. You know, maybe students—especially advanced students—want more structure in their grading process, because she just, you know, 'Well, what determines what's an 82 and an 81? What determines-- what did you take off points here for?' And I was like... I don't know!
Beth’s reaction was self-reflective but also clearly shows her changed thinking from a more transactional and transmission perspective to an empathetic approach to her professional responsibility. She had to alter her outlook in order to approach and learn from the experience of grading the papers. The humanistic and socially responsible component of teaching is being able to help the student to help themselves, not simply to deliver a grade.

What am I going to do? I also realized that I need a rubric. These students specifically need structure. They need to be told exactly what they lost points for and why. And so, from then on, I was using grading rubrics, even if it was something that wasn't attached to the sheet, so I could refer back to it and say, This is why you have this score.'

In the end she is not necessarily sure if her classroom student will remember, but it leaves a lasting impression that will influence her own long-term practice and professional development.

They may completely forget about crying to you at 7:30 in the morning, but I'll never forget it. And I'll never forget how I felt and... it was something that I always refer back to, when I am grading papers and thinking about students, like, how important one or two points can be.

**Connections to Students**

Beth’s professional identity is beginning to form. Having to act and respond to professional issues on her own, as well as due to her age being in proximity to the students, she realizes they are on the one hand easy to relate to because of the closeness in age, yet distant because of the professional identity that Beth is exploring. A socialization process is taking place where *there is a tension between who she was, who she is and who she is trying to become.* The immersion of being in the school and the
classroom for the entire year enhances Beth’s formation of identifying herself as a teacher, and it also gives her the time to work out and think about her students in a more mature way.

It taught me a lot about how to react to students comments, you know, really take a second, pause, you don't want to -- I still remember things my teacher said to me in high school and middle school. Those little things can stay with students. And you don't want to be the teacher who said that one thing that you just regret instantly, that stays with them forever.

**Putting Self on the Line-Autonomy and Initiative**

Beth felt that throughout the course of the year, she had not put herself on the line for two reasons. Her first mentor teacher was wonderful where the relationship was more mutual, more transactional. Another mentor was “the decision-maker” where Beth was more in a transmission type of relationship and felt her place as an intern was to watch, observe and do as she was told, and any decisions she attempted to make could be overridden by her mentor whose experience in the classroom outweighs Beth’s.

... It [was] very hard for me to speak up when I know that she could make a decision that I don't necessarily agree with or that feels inappropriate. I felt that it is not my place to say -- she has been doing this for twenty-five years. I'm just an intern. I don't have the same level of experience that she does. And so there were times when I wanted to, but I did not.

But there were times when she felt the mentor was incorrect, but Beth, although voiceless in the classroom due to her status as an intern, comes to internally understand her place and her role with this mentor.

There was a student in our class who lost his mother in a-- she was terminally ill, and then he lost his brother in a car accident. And I've often said that it's maybe not the best idea to talk about death in our first period class, and often she's forgetful, and she brings it up. But I have held my tongue. I haven't said anything. But I feel like that student-- his needs are not being met. And I feel bad for him.
From the beginning of the PDS experience, interns are encouraged to “take initiative”. But in the classroom with her first mentor there is conflict between what she is told to do and what she is able to do. The process of figuring out when and where and how it is best to take initiative was learned through participation in different activities during the immersion experience. Quite often, Beth had responsibility for an entire class and she developed her own lessons and units in conjunction with her mentors. At the same time, Beth felt the pains of collaboration and immersion in this relationship. In the beginning of the year one of her mentors, expected her to sit back and observe and listen during the first few months in the classroom, then gradually take more responsibility. Being told she was going to be like a first year teacher and then having to sit back and observe caused a professional tension.

In this whole experience, I feel like-- as an intern, you really have to learn your place. In inquiry meetings, and seminars, like workshops where it's just the group of interns, and a few supervisors, you're more than welcome to learn, to grow, to ask questions, to state opinions of what has happened in your classroom. However, it's not the time and place for that at faculty meetings, department meetings, sometimes when you're meeting with teachers who are not a part of the PDS program. It is the time to observe, and to listen. It's going back to the same idea. They have many years of experience on you. It's not your place to speak up as an intern.

She felt most in harmony with the PDS experience when she was with the other interns in seminars and inquiry sessions. Here is where, from the beginning, she was able to take more initiative.

I took less initiative with my mentor, more initiative in seminars and inquiry meetings. I felt like, more in harmony, as you were saying before. I felt like I could speak up more, I could voice my opinions more. So I became more vocal there instead of with my mentor in the classroom.
As the year went on, Beth began to feel a lot more competence in the classroom because gradually her mentor had given her more responsibility, and responsibility and autonomy go hand in hand. This brought Beth to experience flow in the classroom.

towards the end of the year, she let me be so autonomous in the classroom that I felt like I was being very independent and that I was taking initiative because I was doing exactly what I wanted to do, regardless of even asking her. I was just doing.

Substitute Teaching

There were times throughout the year that Beth was able to act as the substitute teacher in the classroom. Although the sub was in the room, Beth taught the class because of her familiarity with the course and the students. During these instances Beth’s sense of competency and autonomy grew tremendously. The substitute teacher acts as a “salient other” and enables Beth to better interpret her experiences in her development as a teacher.

And I feel so capable, like, I was like-- if this is just my classroom next year, I could do this. This is-- I am meant to this, I'm ready to do this. I'm ready to have my own classroom. I really feel that way whenever a substitute comes in.

Connections

Beth felt connections to her experiences as a camp counselor throughout the year in the PDS experiences. But it was not nearly as easy nor as concentrated compared to the PDS experience.

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1 See Borich 1999- a salient other is an individual selected or accepted by the developing self and conditionally valued for a specific reflection of the self and for interpretation of specific event in Beth’s professional development as a teacher.
[Summer Camp] was a twenty-four hour job. You were either teaching, or you were instructing afternoon or evening activities, or you were on call. You never slept, you were always doing something. And that was a cakewalk compared to PDS. I feel like I am always really working intensely at something, and, it's been really challenging, really difficult, but an amazing growing experience. But I don't think I can compare it to anything. It's unlike anything I've ever experienced. (516-521)

A deeper connection to the school environment is set out in the beginning of the year, and over the course of the program; some roots grow deeper and some relationships grow stronger. From the beginning, a sense of equality is projected on to the students, although it is a tension-filled experience in finding one’s place within the school realm and the mentor-intern relationship. There are feelings of connectedness to the students and a closer feeling to the mentors develops throughout the PDS experience. The closeness in age that Beth feels to her students seems a natural extension of herself, as if she is playing a different role than the teacher in the classroom does.

At the same time, her sister got sick towards the end of the semester and was hospitalized. During this time her mentor supported her and showed empathy during this time; it was when she felt most deeply connected to her.

I feel like we've had moments where we've been very closely connected. Especially recently, I've been going through some things in my personal life, my sister had been sick, and so I felt a little flustered coming into the classroom, and she's really been there for me in a very supportive way, that I don't think other people can be. You know, she'll always ask, every day, 'How's she doing? Is everything okay? Do you need to make a phone call? Do you need to go home?'

She felt disconnected from her school peers and her family back home because of the pressure of graduating from college, writing her honors thesis and the intensity of the PDS experience. But new, more expansive connections formulated due to the full immersion in to the school community.
I've felt more closely connected to the community in general, working at the high school, than I ever have at Penn State because at Penn State you're in your own little microcosm. You know, you don't really leave campus you're so focused with events on campus. And now it's like, oh, there's a whole world of State College that exists outside the university. But at the same time, I felt huge disconnect from other seniors in college at the university. They're on a completely different schedule, doing completely different things than I'm doing.

As the year began to come to a close, she began to feel even deeper connections to a sense of history and humanity through her influence on her students and their possible futures.

I've had those moments where I'm thinking that the things I say and the lessons really have an impact on these students twenty years from now, or ten years from now, or next year... and those effects can kind of ripple, you know? What if one of these students decides to become a teacher and that impacts those groups of students.

**Transcendence**

Here Beth discusses the PDS program as compared to the traditional types of teacher preparation that are not year long immersions. She cannot see how someone could feel prepared to teach after such a limited experience.

from what I observed, [in the other programs] you sit in the back of a classroom, observe for, let's say, ten weeks, and then teach, you know, three or four weeks, reflect for two weeks, and then they're done! And, I just-- I can't imagine feeling prepared after that! And going to teach a classroom of students-- you'd be fumbling! For years!

Beth explains why the immersion experience is valuable in learning to become a teacher.

The context and the specificity of the program inherently enrich the pre-service learning.

Because you have to learn lessons over and over and over again. And, from other parts of the educational process that I've experienced at Penn State-- they've been nothing like PDS. It's all very generic and preparation. You know, you have to make fictitious lesson plans for lessons that you will never teach, which is ridiculous. You want to be able to teach that lesson and then reflect back on that lesson. So the next time you do it, you can realize how to do it better. You know?
Authenticity

The times when Beth feels as if she has been true to herself and that she is having an authentic experience emanate most from conversations with student who seek her out to discuss the lessons/units that she taught that were based on her experiences.

It'll be, like, little things, that I see, where, my students will start talking about how they're accepted into the Pioneer State Honor's College, for next year, and they'll start asking questions about my senior thesis, and what I had to do. Or, it'll be students in their senior speeches, when they refer back to that narrative poetry unit that I talked about, and they'll reference the poems that they did for that. And it'll make me feel so good, like, 'Wow, they remember that!' Not only do they remember that, they write about it! Again! Like, this is something that is going to stay with them!

The experience has had an effect on Beth’s worldview. She believes she has developed a healthy cynicism and sense of realism in her future work and recognizes how far she has come over the course of the past year. She also is able to define her own experience in the light of how she believes others may have been prepared to teach as well.

You're not going to change every student, and you're not going to make a huge impact on everyone. There might be one or two that really enjoy it and really remember it, and that's great, you know? (632-635)...I've become more realistic. And, I feel like a lot of teachers still enter the teaching profession with this huge sense of idealism, like, 'I'm going to make this terrific impact on the world!' And, 'I'm going to change everything!' And I know that I can't do that, but I can change one student at a time. (651-655)

And, reflecting upon why teaching and becoming a teacher is important to her, her intentions come back to the type of experience she had when she was in high school.

I want to have the same sort of positive impact on the students that that one great teacher had on me. I want to show them that people do value their opinions on literature and on life, and different issues in life. We want to understand their questions so we can help them to become better writers and give them the skills that they need in order to function in the real world (396-400)
In the end, she feels as if she is being most true to herself when she thinks about Mr. Rand.

I feel like, every day I get some sort of reassurance that I'm doing the right thing, and, this is what I was meant to do and I'm doing the best possible job at what I can. And I really feel like, I could go back, and I could visit that English teacher and say, 'I'm an English teacher now, and you led me here, and I feel like you were right, I could do this. And I'm doing the best I can.' And I am being true to that.
Drew
Bachelor’s Degree Intern

Drew is a 27 year old white male who graduated in the spring of 2006 with a Bachelor’s degree in English Education. He grew up in Central Pennsylvania. Originally he expressed no strong interest towards becoming a teacher. While in high school, Drew was interested in engineering and thought he would become an engineer, even though his verbal standardized test scores were higher. Upon graduation, he was not exactly sure what he wanted to study, and he enlisted in the Navy for 5 years where he was stationed on various ships and submarines in ports around the world. During his first two years in the Navy, Drew explored becoming an engineer, and during this time he realized it was not what he wanted to do. His jobs and experience in the Navy over the next three years gradually lead him to becoming a teacher.

I ended up working as a training petty officer…for my division. So I was developing training for other people on board basically making lessons plans and putting things together and doing presentations and it was from that, and I really enjoyed that, and doing that, and putting the two together, I decided well, I’m education, and I come from a family of educators, my father is a teacher, I have aunts that are teachers. It wasn’t a long stretch for me then when I started putting things together and then it was just a matter of choosing the discipline that I wanted to get in to.

Familial Connections

How Drew came to teach English has emotional and familial connections to his grandfather. Although his father and aunts are teachers, they did not influence his choice of subject. His interests and experience while in high school and the Navy might have led him to be a science or math teacher, but these subjects did not ring true for him. He linked his choice of becoming an English teacher, on the one hand, to his higher scores on verbal standardized tests, and, on the other, to memories of his grandfather who was ill.
during Drew’s final year in the Navy and died just a few days after Drew concluded his service and arrived home.

While Drew’s grandfather never graduated from high school, he was well read, wrote poetry, was very personable and spoke in church regularly. Drew’s experiences and life with his grandfather are imprinted on his memory and Drew believes his grandfather’s character traits are foundational to his own identity as a teacher.

When I was young he would read to me books he had in his personal collection and he signed his name on every book on the inside cover and it was in his, first or second grade handwriting inside these very old books. So, yeah, that’s a part of me that will never go away. And that has turned me on to literature for a while and I look back through high school, I moved away from that, I don’t know why. I was engineering, I was taking drafting courses, I don’t know where that side route actually happened, in the long run its actually been great, I may not have joined the navy...

Drew’s journey to becoming an English teacher may emanate from his tacit understanding of his relationship with his grandfather and also the fact that while in the military he learned from experience that his own skills, background and strengths were suitable to becoming a teacher. The type of hands-on, immersion experience while in the Navy led Drew to the PDS. He was planning on applying to the PDS since his sophomore year because of its experiential, immersion approach to teaching.

Critical Incident Growing Up

From the beginning of his experience in the PDS, Drew was interested in the topic of inclusion in the classroom. He identified a critical incident in his life that has influenced his view of education and his underlying motivation for teaching. When Drew was in elementary school transitioning from the 4th to the 5th grade he was slated to be in a class being taught by a teacher who was a friend of his family’s. This teacher informed his mother and father that Drew was in her class and that it was not the highest tracked
class; it was one track down and they should move Drew to the higher class.

Subsequently he was removed from being with the students he had been with for four years and was placed in the higher tracked group of students with whom he was not familiar. Drew does not remember if he had to test in to the higher class or not; he reflected on the matter being instrumental in his view of himself as an outsider in the school. There was also something about the way he was moved to the higher level tracked class that did not ring true for him and a sense of fairness and equity in the process he questioned.

I just remember it being a weird situation and it kind of gave me a bad taste in my mouth especially when it comes to tracking. I don’t know if it was difficult for me [as far as the work goes], but I would say it was a challenging experience and it did put me outside of my comfort level. …I think I rebelled against that in a lot of ways…Certainly I was capable of doing the work, I felt like an outsider moving in to the class.

It made Drew feel uncomfortable in a classroom situation. He saw an inherent unfairness to how students were placed in certain tracks.

Drew’s inquiry project for the year was entitled Do the Numbers Add up? A look at class size and its effects on curriculum and its effects on curriculum, discussion, and classroom climate. He connects his choice of topic to his experience of not feeling comfortable in the 5th grade class. While conducting interviews for his inquiry, he found out that in one of the advanced classes there was one student who was moved up during the year. In a discussion with her, he learnt that she had struggled with the move, not necessarily academically, but the fact that she was in a place that was outside of her comfort level. Drew was able to empathize, and it helped him further solidify his perspectives that certain needs of students need to be satisfied in order to make students ‘comfortable’ in the classroom and with transitions
Collaborative Teaching Institute

While in the PDS, Drew was drawn to the Collaborative Teaching Institute (CTI) which is an offshoot initiative of the PDS program that places two teachers in the CTI classroom, is capped at 18 students who are 1/3 emotional support, 1/3 learning support students and 1/3 non identified students in the same class.

I really like the idea of CTI, and I think part of that again stems back to my kind of the bad taste that was put in to my mouth to tracking at an early age. I really see the benefit of, you know, we use the metaphor, there are the horses pulling the wagon, and then there are the horses that are in the wagon. But really everyone still gets to the same spot.

The students in the class do not know it is a CTI class. The idea is that everyone in the CTI classes will benefit from extra support, either in the sense that activities are given more structure and explanation, or that there are two teachers in the room and the class sizes are smaller, so that students get more personal attention (Becker 2006).

Ideas at the Heart of Teaching

Drew is interested in the idea of how students are tracked in the school system from a very young age and how difficult it is to remove oneself from that track. From Drew’s own experience he sees his role as an educator: someone who helps students along in their transitions. Drew is particularly well suited for this role, not being in his own comfort zone while working in very close quarters while in the Navy on submarines. This enabled Drew to be able to learn how to adapt and remain cool under pressure which aided him on his relationship with his mentor and his interactions with the students. Drew noted that when he was in the Military he “learned how to make peace” while working and living closely with others.

Critical Incident while in the PDS
As is the case with many interns, during the first few months of apprenticing something happens that is a memorable incident with many lessons to be learned. During the first weeks of being involved in the PDS program, Drew had to teach a lesson. He did not plan properly; he only sketched out the ideas. When he tried to deliver, he ‘bombed’ and realized that without concrete plans, things fell apart quickly.

…for me to have a successful lesson… I need to personally do a formal lesson plan, in detail, almost like a script and I guess from my perception of teaching before I guess that was more what I thought teachers who weren’t quite sure how to teach, that’s what they did but that is totally not true. For me at this point in my career I definitely need that formal structure or else I’m not, I don’t have enough of a handle on, and I am sure that will change throughout the years as I teach more and more lessons and I am able to pull more. …it was a good learning experience looking back on it now, realizing what happened, but it was this whole immersion process. (176)

The incident put the PDS experience into context for Drew. Although he had a mentor and could rely on her for advice, he realized he was on his own. Having the room to reflect on the experience had the greatest impact on Drew. He realized this is why he is engaged in the PDS program. At the heart of his PDS experience, as he sees it, is having been given the freedom to fail at his task, but then because of the supports and the experiential design and nature of the program, he is able to reflect on what happened and try again.

**Autonomy & Initiative**

Drew and his mentor met almost every Sunday throughout the year in order to discuss, reflect and prepare lessons for the coming weeks. He and his mentor developed a good working relationship, and Drew felt most closely connected to her when they shared reflective practice on a lesson that was delivered in the class. Taking initiative for Drew was part of a larger collaborative process.
By working so closely with a mentor, he learned that before taking any initiative, he had to discuss things with his mentor. Depending on her response, Drew would move ahead or not. The mentor was in control of the situation, although Drew thought there were times when he could have taken more initiative and been more upfront or forceful, he did not want to because he understood the importance of relationships. Staying with one mentor the entire year, he had a positive experience, and he attributes this to his being able to find a balance and learning how to live together.

I had such a great experience with my mentor, I found that balance and recognized that next year I will have my classroom, and the decisions, I will make the decisions. And I will be able to pull things from my mentor and I will remember back that is how she did it, and I remember another idea, so let’s try this now. And I think now, that is where a lot of the strife comes from. The mentor intern relationship in this program is paramount; you have to find some way to cohabitate. It really is like a marriage in a lot of ways from what I understood. Some of the mentors that are married speak to that. It really is, it makes you laugh. There is a lot of truth in that..

Having lived on ships and submarines for 5 years with the same people day in and day out, Drew only had an argument once, having reflected on this experience in the Navy he said it really is a reflection of his temperament and demeanor.

Drew felt the most autonomous when he was given the opportunity to entirely prepare and teach a unit on his favorite novel, The Grapes of Wrath. This was when he felt most closely connected to his students and he explains how he felt and what was and connections.

I love when the students bring up an idea about a novel that we are reading or during a lesson they bring up something I haven’t thought of. So, at that point, it becomes the roles have been reversed, and they’re explaining an idea that they have had that is totally new at least to me, it is new whenever that happens. I think the bond, and they realize it too, as long as I am coming across as generally interested in what they are saying. And they know they are giving me an idea that I haven’t had yet, so, that’s really that community then of everyone’s a learner, not just the students, the teacher’s learning as well.
Connectivity and Confidence

Entering the job market towards the end of the year and going on interviews, Drew felt very confident, not necessarily going in but after and throughout the interview. He was able to make connections to his PDS experiences he had not previously acknowledged. Although nervous at first, he felt extremely confident when his insights were validated by a professional from outside of the PDS.

I am normally able to control my nerves, as soon as we started talking about education and my practice, I was just, on, I was making connections to things I was doing in my classroom, calling things I haven’t even thought about. Lessons I had gone through in September with my mentor able to make those connections. It makes me proud that maybe I did learn something this year. I think a lot of times we lose sight of that, because we are in the day to day. In reality, at the end it really has, and at the job fair I went through several interviews and it was the same situation, I felt really prepared for anything they were willing to ask and I am sure that is only going to translate once I have my own classroom. I can already feel it. (Interview, June 2006)

He also felt further convinced of his abilities when his mentor is out and he has takes charge of the classroom. He feels and acknowledges a deeper connection to the students as well.

…my mentor was out for half the day, so I was the person in charge. I have a sub, but, they sit in the back and really don’t do anything. I am the teacher and the kids respond to it. Like today, today is a confident day. I can point to those two things. I think once the students saw me as, yeah, I’m still the student teacher, but, I really do think that they hold at least look at me as a teacher because he wanted to know if I would possibly be around that he could have me as a teacher next year and that makes you feel really good. That makes you feel really good. Those were some confidence boosters.(Interview, June 2006)

Drew felt that in the end he had grown both professionally and personally. Having worked so closely in the PDS community, but also, as the only male in the high school intern group where he taught, he also learned socially. In the end, the connections he
made to his mentor, the other interns were instrumental in his development and he concluded by reflecting on classroom climate and the role of a teacher

I didn’t realize that as much coming in, and you say which classes you had growing up even in college that were the best classes you were learning the most and you felt the most comfortable, when you start to look at them you understand it wasn’t some miraculous think that happened, and that that community was built. There was somebody there that was fostering it and that was the teacher. (Interview, June 2006)
Barb
Bachelor’s Degree Intern

Barb is a 22 year old single white female who grew up on Long Island in an upper-middle class community. She is the oldest of three children, having two younger brothers who are in the 8th and 11th grades. She attended a small Catholic primary school and a relatively large Catholic high school with over 650 students in her graduating class. Barb’s earliest influences in her journey to becoming a teacher stem from her Aunt, who is a teacher. Also, she had a 3rd grade teacher who made a lasting impression with her ability to show care in the classroom. Well spoken, confident and with a distinct presence, she started at Pioneer State as a Broadcast Journalism major, thinking that becoming a teacher was ‘not enough’. After taking the freshman seminar in Broadcast Journalism, she realized the ethics of the field did not fit with her own and she switched to becoming an Education major, her original goal. She heard about the English Professional Development School as a sophomore and submitted her application the first day they were accepted. At the beginning of the PDS program she expressed that the traditional approach to learning how to teach did not make sense to her. She is a member of a sorority and will be graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in English and Education in the Fall of 2006. Barb is interested in Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences and her inquiry project was titled Expression of Students’ Multiple Intelligences through Different Projects. In Gardner’s terms, she considers herself to be an inter-personal and intra-personal type learner.

Why Becoming a Teacher is Important
Barb’s deciding to become an English teacher was a recognition of her own strengths and passion for the English language. Her school experiences inform a deeper sense of her values as a future teacher. There were positive and negative experiences in the elementary and middle grades that motivate, inform, and frame Barb’s current practice and desire to become a teacher.

[In] sixth grade, I remember we had to do practice for the State test, and anyone who got below a certain score had to move to the front for the rest of that week. And I had to sit in the front and I wasn't dumb at all, but I just, like, didn't do well on this social studies test. I just didn't do well on it and I had to keep sitting in the front, keep sitting in the front. And it was really just traumatizing to me.

Barb identified throughout the interview that a teacher’s role is not to just simply deliver information on the subjects being taught, but to act as an advocate for children and teach students lessons that are going to stay with them for a lifetime. The impact of not just actions but also words has a lifelong effect on a student. This was impressed upon Barb in the seventh grade in a religion class.

…one teacher, I remember, she just said-- she was a nun-- and she said, "If you are ever getting married and you think to yourself, 'I could always get a divorce,' you shouldn't marry that person." And I don't know why, but that has still always been with me ever-- and I was in seventh grade, that she said that. I remember her telling us that students come back and say, 'You know what, you were right about that thing.' I don't know. It was just something that always stuck with me, and it had nothing to do with what we were learning. I don't even know what we were learning about, but just at that moment, when she said that, I was like, 'Oh. Okay.' And I still think about that….

In turn these words made a lasting impression on Barb’s approach and beliefs about the role and work of a teacher and how lessons being taught in the classroom are directly relevant to a student and their life.

…what I say in my classroom my students are going to remember me saying, and could influence the rest of their life… I think that the heart of all this is to teach real life lessons; even if I'm teaching just the text. Like, how does it relate to
them, because why would you want to learn about something that doesn't, somehow, relate to you? And maybe it won't relate to them now, but eventually they'll see, like, oh, okay, that's why we read that, and that's why we talked about that. Because, this does happen in real life and it's happening to me right now.

Ideas at the Heart of the Matter

Barb’s deeper identification with the lessons in the classroom stemming from her religion class in the seventh grade can and will influence the rest of her life….

I think to be a teacher isn't necessarily just to teach the subject that you're teaching. I think it's to influence and direct your students in the right direction by having them realize who they are, and who they are in our society, and what their strengths are, and what their weaknesses are. Because all those things they're going to use the rest of their life….And I think that's one of my strengths, is being able to do that.

From these experiences Barb identified three main questions that are at the heart of her teaching: How do I reach each student on a personally relevant level? How do I reach each student in the classroom who learns differently from the others? How do I do that fairly and equitably so all students feel comfortable in the learning environment?

Autonomy

Barb’s identified the times when she was most autonomous as critical in her development as a teacher. While teaching her own unit on *The Crucible* and *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* she utilized Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences. During the teaching of the unit, the students complained they were learning in a new way. This became critical in Barb’s understanding because she realized that students did not really know their own strengths and weaknesses. Barb felt that this informed her own teaching and that her role is to teach students who they are and how they learn. Coupled with her inquiry project on the Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, these were vital teaching tools in her showing reflective integrity within her role as a classroom instructor.
I think [I learned that] number one is, stretch my horizons. Not to just do a lesson the way I feel comfortable doing it, but if I'm expecting them to expand their horizons, I have to also. Or, move away from my comfort zone. I need to do that, too, as a teacher, and that's balance for my students and for me.

Connections

A component of the mentor-intern relationship is planning time that takes place outside of the school building and regular school hours. Barb identified this time as when a deeper learning experience was nurtured between Barb and her where they discussed both professional and personal issues alike. Having a balanced professional and social relationship outside of school with her mentor was a positive part of her PDS experience and facilitated the development of skills and attitudes in Barb’s journey to becoming a teacher.

Already feeling a connection to the teaching profession through her relationship with her aunt who is a third grade teacher, a closeness in understanding with her male students she attributes to her bond with her own brothers who are high school age.

Barb identified her experience as a sorority sister as being relevant to her success in the PDS program. She compared the two as being positive forces in her life. The collaborative environments and the institutional hierarchy of the PDS and sorority have similarities that Katie discussed.

In the sorority there's a president, and a vice president, and I feel like they're the leaders of that group, and so, kind of take that form with [the teachers] all of the heads and -- not that they're in charge of us, but they are our collaborators too, just like the board of my sorority is. They're collaborators. They're our friends, but they're also our leaders, and they're supposed to be influencing you in the right direction. So at times it's like that, and I also think that there's ups and downs of being in any kind of organization. And I think this is an organization, just because you're always working with the same people. There's always times when you're going to get along with people, and there's people you're not going to get along with, and in view of that you can all work together to make it the best.
Autonomy

When a substitute was teaching the class, Barb’s autonomy rose. During a particular incident it was the one time during the year when she felt as if she had to put herself on the line. An uncomfortable situation arose when a the sub who declared “Oh, I stopped using drugs twenty years ago,’ 'Well, not that long ago,’ and continued to discuss her drug use exploits to a class of students who were visibly uncomfortable with the situation. Barb felt that what the sub did was unprofessional and that if she did not report the incident, the students would have. Initially though, Barb considered for a moment that if she had wanted a job in the school district she may not have put herself on the line but, in the end, she reported the incident to her mentor the next day and had to discuss the incident with the school administrators. In the end Barb’s ethic of care for what was in the best interest of the students won out.

Transformational Effect of PDS

Coming in to the PDS Barb felt as if she was always planning what was going to happen next. One of the biggest impacts the PDS program had on Barb’s outlook was changing her sense of time.

Here is today, and I'm planning ten years this way. And so I think this program's influenced me a lot that way-- realizing that you can't do that. Just, in the classroom, you can't do that. (laughs)…You can't plan. You think you're going to be done in four weeks and, you know what, the kids really like Romeo and Juliet and the unit went on for ten weeks. And so, did I expect that? Did I even come close to planning that? No! I had four weeks, and we did ten weeks. (laughs And I think that's a lot to do with your own life. Like, why can't I-- I should have enjoyed my life right now…

Not knowing what the outcome of the year was going to be was difficult for Barb. She was accustomed to receiving a syllabus at the beginning of the semester in all of her courses and following the lessons until the end of the term. Being immersed in a
program that by design creates lessons around the students’ needs and problems as they arise was challenging. Any type of long term planning on her individual part became difficult, and, was not helped along by the built in components of ambiguity and tension that play a central part in the design of the program. The day to day of being a teacher really hit home after realizing that the calendar she was to deal with was the real school year calendar and the plans for the interns were not necessarily drawn up or made public. Focusing on the present moment became more important than the future.

Harmony and Authenticity

Through the challenging and tension filled year, Barb never doubted her decision to become a teacher. She jumped in from the beginning by doing attendance and grammar lessons for her mentor and built up to larger units on poetry and Shakespeare. Barb had the essential experience of feeling like a teacher from the start by being immersed in the school year calendar. When considering what the ideal image of a teacher that the collaborators of the PDS program promote Barb commented “Someone who was real. Like, not someone else. Like, they don't come into school and be someone else. Like, who they are here is who they really are.”
Pamela
Bachelor’s Degree Intern

Pamela is a 22 year old single white female who grew up attending public school in a small Northeastern city of Pennsylvania. Her parents divorced when she was young and she spent much of her time growing up in the restaurant her mother owned. She spent the many weekends in the home of her grandmother. Inspired by this same grandmother while in elementary school, Pam’s dream was to write speeches for the President. In high school, Pam became interested in business and her ideas about what path to follow were further influenced in a Physic’s class where she had an influential community minded teacher. Upon entering Pioneer State, her original intent was to follow in her mother’s footsteps and become a business person. After studying economics, accounting and calculus for two semesters, one day feeling little connection to her fellow students whose focus was on money and profits, she finally realized her values were not in line with the other students in her classes and switched majors to her real interests which are English and teaching. Pam’s year long inquiry project was titled Meaningful Revision in Student Writing which focused on improving students understanding of the writing and revision process and its value as a viable assessment tool. She graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in English Education in the spring of 2006.

Why Becoming a Teacher is Important

Pam’s described her grandmother as unconventional and eclectic. An avid reader with an interest in politics, public radio and pornography, Pam was exposed to a myriad of worldviews and ways of living from a young age.

Growing up I was really close with my grandmother and my mom. My parents were divorced and my dad lived in Florida, so I spent a lot of time with my
grandmother on the weekends and she was/is a huge reader, and I remember her library being full of books and now that she moved in to someplace smaller, the books start in the bathroom with the A’s and travel through her whole house.

From a young age, Pam watched pornographic and lesbian films with her grandmother. The experience was one that made her understand different ways of living and loving, although her mother did not agree with what her grandmother was showing to Pam.

I remember watching a movie about a lesbian couple when I was really young and thinking, huh!...that’s interesting. And I remember…I mean we watched great movies, we watched a lot of porn films, and so it was different from like my other experiences of watching movies which was always loud and there was a lot of stuff going on, but with those kind of movies where you have to really engage and be reading and like, I felt like more of a connection with the movies because your more engaged in them, you can’t look away…[More of an intimate experience with the film rather than entertainment]…and I remember my mom and my grandma getting in arguments and my mom saying, “I can’t believe your letting her watch R rated movies and I don’t want her to see those things yet.” And we remember watching violent movies and so, they were rated for an older audience because of the sexual content generally, and my grandmother I can remember her saying, in her argument, “Well, wouldn’t you rather watch people create life than destroy it?” Laughs So, it’s kind of what I remember.

In high school and in college she and her grandmother began to read the same books and discuss the meanings of the books together.

When we started, I think that extension of movies to books I think that’s when I felt a really great connection to her and I think the first book we read together was I think, A Fine Balance which is a book about an Indian experience.

Pam was able to share a perspective with her grandmother by talking about the books and in turn discussing life. In college, her grandmother regularly sent comics and news articles about what was going on in the world. Pam was inspired through the simple sharing of information. During this time their relationship was maintained via regular long distance Sunday evening telephone calls.
It was just a whole different world she and I could experience together… Now that I am a student of literature, and I am reading all these books in my classes that I would probably never normally pick up but that have been really influential in my life and that now I can give her books to read…And I can remember, so I was a junior and I came home after my guess it was Christmas of my junior year so I bring home all my books, all my novels and whatnot, and she kind of made her way through them and remember her calling me and saying, “Well, I realize that my self education ended as a sophomore in college and I don’t quite get the books your giving me anymore without talking to you about them.”

Pam began to take on a different role and formed a distinct dialogue with the world through her grandmother. In many ways, a new understanding formed within herself; one of a budding educator. In many ways, Pam’s grandmother became her first student by her being able to share insights and points of view on the books she brought home to share with her from college.

**Ideas and Experiences at the Heart of Teaching**

While in her junior year in high school, Pam’s school had block scheduling where she took 4 classes per day. During this time, she had a physics teacher who she described as being significant in her decision to become a teacher. He was a community oriented and caring teacher who made her want to do the work.

I spent a lot of time in his class, he was very influential, like I said, he was a very caring person, and he loved what he did and it was exciting. We did a lot of different things, like physics Olympics, which fit in with activities or the things we were learning about at the time, and of course, the Cardboard Boat Regatta at Christmas where we build literally cardboard boats out of tape and cardboard and had a little course in the high school pool and that was really neat because it was like this huge community event where not only did the students do it, but alumni and students and teachers from the high school came and it was like this great thing. He made me want to be a physics teacher…

Although Pam did not pursue Physics at Pioneer state, she attributes part of her love of learning and inspiration for teaching to this high school teacher. The way he was people oriented and his ease of including the entire community in his endeavors left a lasting
impression on Pam and created for her an important motivation to teach and a functional
impression for an identity for a career as a teacher.

Critical Experience in the PDS

I will share the entire portion of Pam’s discussion about how she learned to write
a lesson plan naturalistically because it expresses, in many dimensions, how the structure
of the PDS teaches and how the interns wind up learning important and relevant skills.

So, I’m thinking we were all very frustrated at the beginning of the year and
because we felt like we didn’t know what was going on and we just wanted to
know how to write a lesson plan and we didn’t know how to write a lesson plan
and it wasn’t so much for me that a lesson had failed, it’s just that I knew this was
something I was going to be expected to do and that a lot of school districts, as a
new teacher you submit lesson plans all the time and I am thinking when are we
going to learn this. My mentor doesn’t need to write lesson plans anymore, and
maybe their not really that useful and maybe I should just know how to do it and
it wasn’t until much later, maybe November, that we learned how to do it. And
then even then I was frustrated, why didn’t they teach us this earlier? This was
something they could have done in August or September. Then, two weeks ago(in
May) when we had our inquiry conference and the past interns came back, we
were having this conversation and we were talking about everything and what our
experience was like and what their experience was like, and we were talking
about this frustration about the lesson plans and it clicked at that moment. That is
what this whole model is about that if we had learned how to write a lesson plan
when it did not matter, when we weren’t writing lesson plans for our students and
knew how that lesson plan was going to work in the classroom it wouldn’t have
made half as much sense as it does now. And to know what my lessons looked
like before I came up with a solid clear rationale for why I was doing what I was
doing and to see the difference between what happened when I didn’t do that and
what happened when I do that now. I realize that like you …part of this whole
immersion model, this inquiry model is that you feel your needs when you need
them. And so, we sought that out and had that need fulfilled when it was critical.
When we needed it and it was frustrating but now I really understand that aspect
of teaching and why I need it and when I don’t need it and I can go through those
processes in my mind now and I don’t think I would have learned the lesson if I
had sat in the class and someone would have told me how to write a lesson plan
and why it’s important.

Pam learned to write a lesson plan when the need to learn how to know how to write a
plan was at its highest. It is like the adage, “When do you teach a person to fish? When
they are the hungriest! The way a lesson plan was taught was as an emergent model that was driven by her own classroom experiences. The interns wrote lessons based not on an outside theory of how best to create a lesson, but on the particular needs of the students in the context of the classroom and the school in which they were teaching.

**Autonomy and Collaboration**

Pam had a good working relationship with her first mentor. She learned how and when she was able to make contributions in the classroom. Pam worked with another mentor for a short while but she did not agree with her style of teaching in the classroom. She felt it limited the student’s voice and interaction on important topics. Pam felt she could not teach in this way and wanted to speak to this mentor about it. In this instance it was a struggle for Pam to do what she thought was going to be best for the students or was she going to do what would create the least waves in the classroom. She chose the latter. In an effort to maintain her integrity with the students, as she saw it, Pam adapted and pulled back from interacting as much with the students in the classroom. Learning to collaborate with her mentors was at times for her a red light on a one way street.

Collaboration with the other interns though was equally important… An assignment to write a unit plan working with two other interns was given in one of the seminars.

We were reading the short story “11” by Sandra Cisneros and we talked about, you know, the pre-reading strategies we would do and how we would incorporate it. But we each brought something…But, in collaboration sometimes you need to give that up and figure out how you can best contribute. So when we were looking around and looking at all the different lessons and that some people didn’t want to give up their idea, you know, because it was their idea because it was their idea, it had to be great. And to see that we were one of the more successful groups that said something to me about collaboration. The whole idea that two heads are better than one was true at that moment because our goal was just to make a good lesson and it wasn’t about me looking good…
In some way, Pam [and her group] put their egos on the side in order to come together in the best interest of the assignment, which was in the best interest of the students for whom they were creating the unit. Although Pam [and the other interns] had to write lessons and units on their own, a sense of autonomy was outweighed by the collaborative environment.

I think this model does not provide for that [autonomy] you are really doing the collaboration. The teaching is never about you, it’s about the students. And so I don’t know if I’ve ever felt completely autonomous, but, there have been times when, or you know, units when, I have definitely taken the lead and done most of the work on my own. But, even then, I didn’t feel like yes I was doing it on my own, and I felt really good about my lesson or knew that I needed to change something or whatever. I really like the direction its going in and I like that the students were appreciating this different style of you know responding to the text than we have been doing the rest, or first part of the year or whatever.

Although, Pam’s place within the larger social and professional structure was clearly understood. In the end it offered a three pronged approach to the oversight of her work.

I don’t know if I ever felt autonomous because even as I was doing it, I was thinking how will my mentors see this, how will my advisors see this, [and] will it work with the students.

Putting Self on the Line

One day when her mentor was absent and a substitute was present, Pam took responsibility of the class and was responsible for teaching a lesson. The class was reading Hemingway’s A Farewell to Arms and the assigned reading the night before was when Henry and Catherine’s relationship exploded. It was a point in the book when they were having a very physical affair. She felt it was important to talk about how it was playing into the relationship and how much of the relationship it was. To make Pam feel more uncomfortable and uncertain about approaching the discussion, one student’s
mother was sitting in that day. Although the text is riddled with violence and ribaldry,

Pam also felt a need to talk about the sex.

Had my mentor been there it would have been very normal, I would have seen the way she handled it but she wasn’t there and we hadn’t dealt with it? and I’m going ok this is what I would do if it were my classroom and it would be fine and you know I would try and approach it from an adult manner so the students felt like they could do the same not only do I have this sub in here kind of judging, but I have this mother and what is this young person teaching my son. And but I decided that you can’t ignore it. Because it’s a big part of that reading and we talked about it and I was nervous the whole time thinking what am I going to do and the next day when my mentor came.

Pam was concerned what her mentor was going to say about it not just as a mentor but as a mother too, much like listening to the argument between her grandmother and mother back when she was younger. Although Pam noted she was nervous talking to her mentor, because she put herself on the line for something that was important to her, a component of her nervousness dissipated, and a more mature understanding of the nature of discussing difficult topics ensued.

I told her this is what happened and you know we had to talk about it and she goes I know you had to talk about it and it was fine and at the end of the period or the day, I think we had a really great conversation and I like the point that that student brought up and that student brought up and it made me feel good but there was still that nervousness and OK, what is she going to say as a Mother, never mind a teacher

PDS Activity that Had a Lasting Effect

Overall the impact of the PDS was one that made Pam a much more reflective person. As many other interns noted, writing regularly in a journal had a huge impact on Pam’s teaching.

We’re supposed to be keeping a constant journal and I don’t do that all the time, but, talking to other interns and to other teachers and also journaling and going home and talking to other teachers made me much more reflective about what’s going on and asking questions and wondering what I could do differently or
wondering why what did or what possibly reasons were there for the outcome in the class. That’s one way it’s changed me.

As a future English teacher, the experience also had a roundabout effect and a leveling off of understanding in the way in which she sees the subject she teaches as compared to how she approached the student as a high school and a former college student.

It’s also changed my actual view of literature when I was in high school it always frustrated me, that teachers always wanted us to analyze what the author meant and my answer was how can we know what they meant maybe they just wrote it and your interpreting this thing that they never intended to happen. And it frustrated me, and then in college, and your constantly doing that in your lit classes, and I said, ok this is what I think they mean. And here’s my support, and so in college, ok well it’s a theory and you give your support and people can either buy your theory or they don’t buy your theory. But now, I have evolved, to understand that the meaning comes from the reader, and so, this is what it means to me and this is what that symbolizes to me, and maybe the author did or didn’t mean to do it, but, here are the things that support my meaning and so it changed in that and then that has influenced then how I teach because instead of me saying what does this mean, I am saying what does this mean to you? And it’s two words but it is a very different question,

Pam encapsulated that the PDS experience changed her basic idea of the study of literature…she is no longer solely a student of literature, but now she is also a teacher, sharing her own ideas and aiding others in making meaning of the world in which they live.
Ben
Bachelor’s Degree Alumni Intern

Ben is a single white male in his mid 20s who grew up and went to school in the region surrounding the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania. Ben attended Catholic elementary and high school and during his junior and senior years his English teachers were particularly influential. Although Ben, considering himself a “Catholic school boy” originally wanting to attend Notre Dame, he enrolled at Pioneer State University after his father filled out the application materials for him. Being told he was good at Math, he arrived early for a Summer Pre-College experience in the Engineering Department. After seeing an upperclassman struggle with his studies, Ben asked him why he stayed with it and was told “it makes good money”. Soon after, Ben dropped Engineering and enrolled in the Department of Undergraduate Studies as an undeclared major. He knew which classes he did not want to take and reflected on how much he loved reading. He declared his major as English Education but as a junior was in danger of not graduating in the customary 4 years. With Dr. Jameson as his advisor, and his father pressuring him to graduate, he was introduced to the PDS program which he applied to, was accepted, and which enabled him to graduate in the time his father allotted. While in the PDS, Ben’s inquiry project was on the concept of democratic classrooms. He graduated in the spring of 2001 with a Bachelor’s degree in English Education and he is currently a teacher in a suburban school district in Maryland since the fall of 2001. Ben is a lively and engaging speaker. Our conversation was wide ranging and he spoke in a stream of consciousness. He communicated his experiences using references to classroom examples, pop culture, literary texts and their influences on his personal and professional life. He maintains a
close relationship with the PDS program and has returned each year since graduating to
meet with the interns to talk about his experiences.

**Critical Incident While Growing Up**

There are two constants in Ben’s life when it comes to his journey to becoming a
teacher: his relationship with his father and his love of reading. At critical times in Ben’s
life, his father has played a part and now that Ben is a teacher, their relationship has
grown closer. Ben’s decision to teach came at a time of disagreement with his father
about the direction he was (or was not) taking. Deciding to teach was a crucial decision in
Ben’s process of individuation, of coming to own his own decisions and realizing his
authentic self, which, as it turns out, has much in common with his father. Secondly,
throughout the interview, Ben discusses the books he was reading at certain times and
how the text and his life and thinking interrelated and played a part in his personal and
professional development.

Ben’s father, an elementary level special education teacher and a reading
specialist is also a history buff. While Ben and his brother were growing up, they had
the summer months off and the family often traveled. Ben recalled one particular tour
around New England visiting Boston and other colonial era historical places. He
identified this trip, along with the text he was reading in school at the time, as the best
trip he had ever taken and the important role his father played in developing a teaching
sensibility and values for his current practice.

…It was around the time in class, in school where I was going over that stuff like
Johnny Tremaine and all that. And that you know I associate that with childhood
and that spirit of revolution and freedom. And like one Christmas a couple years
ago I got him[my father] a book *Founding Fathers* and like wrote a whole note
like you gave me the spirit by taking me to these places and seeing it and standing
where the Boston Massacre occurred and just . . . I could go back there now in my mind and remember and you know see and picture and imagine what it would have been like.

Ideas of freedom are maintained at the heart of Ben’s teaching.

**Critical Incident in High School**

Ben’s 11th grade English classroom was abundant in books and ideas that he still draws upon today to inform his own teaching. As a junior in high school he studied The Romantics Era and it heightened awareness of his own thinking and his deeper appreciation of humanity. In a spirit of revolution and freedom during this same time, a sense of autonomy began to grow in Ben as well, and he was more willing and ready to accept his teachers’ challenges and ask questions.

My junior year teacher offered us, he said here’s *Animal Farm*. You can read it if you want. And I picked it up—I don’t even know why—and I never had a book that made me pissed off so much as when they chased Snowball out and it just really I mean I remember walking in the next day and pounding my fist on the desk and demanding that we talk about this because how dare they disguise . . . they’re, they’re just pigs. They’re trying to help people. What the heck? You know I didn’t understand . . . I was, that was where my whole ideal vision of things started happening and it was yeah that book really touched a, a deep nerve

Ben has strong ideals and his father acknowledged that this path becoming a teacher was going to be a tough, frustrating struggle for him at times. In the long run, the decision to teach brought the Ben and his father closer together.

In my adult life it’s brought us together more closely than I could possibly imagine us being close because when I go home or on the phone it’s like yeah this is what I’m doing. He’s like oh this is what . . . you know and we get into it. And so we were like little kids. We run off to the side and there’s my mom and my brother who they don’t really . . . they’re not educators and they you know they don’t know the lessons and the ins and outs of this. So they’re sitting there like um, hm. But my dad and I [are like] yeah, yeah, yeah.
Much like Ben’s travel with his father, his high school experiences also added to his professional interest in democratic classrooms and also informed the ideas he holds at the closely in his practice.

Idea at the Heart of Ben’s Teaching

It was Ben’s decision to drop engineering and explore his true interests and passion for reading that started his path to becoming a teacher. As Ben explains it, his journey was more an adventure in to his own self. Ben saw that in choosing English education, on the one hand, he would not have to take classes he did not want to take, like chemistry, math, physics and a foreign language, and on the other hand, as a field of study that actually motivated him to want to try and provide, as a teacher, the opportunity for other people to learn to be better people through reading. In coming to the decision, through arguments with his father about his decision to teach and his errors along the way that may have possibly prolonged his graduation; applying to and being accepted to the PDS was an important part in Ben’s finding himself and being true to who he believed himself to be.

So I filled out the paperwork and at that point in time my interest in teaching was . . . grew into also trying to, for one thing, to create a new identity of a teacher. One that’s more human and more person. And one who can stand in front of a group of students and say I made a mistake and you will too.

Ben holds a lot “close to his center”. As he discussed throughout the interview books and reading play an influential part in his personal and professional life. Stories play a central role in his life as an educator. There are also deeper links to his religious upbringing as a Catholic.

There’s a lot at the heart that I hold close to the center. My mind just first goes to stories. And I have a good friend of mine who’s a priest and we kind of see each
other as doing the same exact thing because he’s teaching a book and I’m teaching a book. And we both recognize the fact that we learn through narratives and being Catholic you know looking at Christ as the teacher he told parables, he told stories. That’s all it is. And so that is an idea in a classroom. There’s certainly a component of spirituality. I don’t know if it’s exactly Christian because I don’t specifically place spirituality [in a religion].

Ben is functioning beyond his ego, from a spiritual place within himself. Ben’s enthusiasm as a teacher shows when he talks about his practice; he is clearly excited about and engaged in his work. His interest in democratic classrooms here can be linked to his high school experience where he was free to bring up ideas then for discussion and emanates from this sacred place. In his classroom he likes to ask his students to bring their abstract ideas in with them then have them formulate them in to a story. He urges his students to try and go out and experience those stories they created themselves in some experiential way. The spiritual connections and parables are component parts of Ben’s seedling ideas of a democratic classroom. The parallels of Ben’s philosophy to his friend the priest is the idea of approaching education as a teacher who is reflects on the life being brought to his classroom each day and also learning from the class, acting as a guide, and acting as a community leader rather than simply transmitting ideas to the students.

Connections

My mom came down to my class once and spent a day with me in the classroom. Fantastic. And there was one moment I think it was like the day before she came down where I thought this is going to be very interesting because I’m going to be . . . two identities are going to be happening at the same time. And I, and it was just a quick thing. There was a touch of nervous. And then it just disappeared and . . . because I thought well what I’ve done in the classroom is I’m, I’m not a teacher—I’m me. Like I . . . and it dawned on me that I am my mother’s son in the classroom.

The psychological process called individuation is at work here whereby Ben has a deep awareness moment. What teacher (young and old alike) would not feel a bit nervous with
their mother coming to visit? Ben’s mother’s visit was actually an important part of his coming to see himself for who he is, his authentic self, not divided, essentially indivisible. In the end, who else could Ben be in the classroom? He has the ultimate realization that he is [biologically] and essentially who he is, which is his mother’s son. There is no one else he can be. No separation from self, no division; a whole sentient being in the classroom.

During that first year of teaching in Maryland, his experiences of community was like his year in the PDS and Ben struggled with having to adapt his style of teaching to the standards and procedures of his new place of employment. The first year teaching in Maryland he received unsatisfactory evaluations from his supervisors. He came back to the PDS reunion each year and spoke about this experience to the new interns. His own experience in the PDS was transformational and he came to learn how to be more autonomous, critically reflective and inquiry oriented in his practice. The school district where he was working did not necessarily value these attributes the same way he did. Realizing this was difficult for Ben, especially after having such a positive, personally relevant experience in the PDS. Other teachers may have left the situation to find a more suitable fit, but Ben saw it differently. And it is important to highlight that all his previous experiences kept him in the classroom.

The criticism I got every time I sat down with the principal or superintendent, supervisor or whatever, they always said all right, if you could do one thing different what was it? And I nailed it. Every single time it was like accountability or classroom . . . whatever. It was yeah that’s exactly what I have here. I’m like looking like yeah I know. You know you don’t have to put the giant U down there. I know. I’m working on it.
Ben realizes his ways of thinking are deemed alternative in the general scope of things. He knew that there was something he was doing was not…yet he had the understanding of intelligence knowing itself. In response to the unsatisfactory evaluations, Ben had to write out his lesson plans word for word and submit them for review.

I had to type out word for word my lesson plans it was in my head a prank. All right they want me to do this because… Kesey was all about the movie and your script and to know your script is to change your script you know in order to change it you need to know it. And well who are you in your movie? And what is your movie about? And so that whole idea just fascinated me and I brought that in class because here I am typing my script and that’s where I was coming from to it. Whereas they’re coming to it as standards and you know and I’m thinking who am I in this movie here? So that’s where like the stream of consciousness where I literally would get to the end of a lesson in the middle of a sentence and just start the next day’s lesson in the middle of that sentence. And then finish that sentence and say good morning. How are we doing? All right from what I just said this is what we’re going to . . . rrrrr! And they, they weren’t having it. They didn’t like that at all. But it was the only thing that kept me sane.

Ben found contextual clues of how to respond from a book, in this case, Ken Kesey’s The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test. Also, the spirit of his response harkens back to his trips with his father to the sight of the Boston Massacre, when Ben realized that our country has, at its roots a prankster mentality, and these ideas Ben revels in. More deeply, he is also looking quite critically and authentically at himself in the face of his supervisors and the standards which they are imposing upon his teaching. Ben’s teaching is grounded in his organic relationship with the material.
Experiential Learning in the PDS

When Dr. Jameson introduced the inquiry project at the start of the year his words had a resounding effect on Ben. Dr. Jameson asked the interns “So, What do you want to learn?”

Asking me that question empowers me because my answer was I want to learn about democratic classrooms. I want to learn about why the teacher has a need for control, and why people haven’t given, don’t give students the chance to answer that question for themselves. And so I went to my mentor and I said this is my, this is going to be my inquiry democratic classrooms in education. And we just chuckled. Yeah that’s what I’ve been working on. I’m like all right. And at that point we stopped it, being mentor and apprentice. It was…learner and learner.

The asking of this question was transformational for Ben as was his relationship with his mentor. His perspective on what happens in a school was altered. Instead of being taught, he was to decide what he was going to learn, he was able to decide. Ben was in control of his own learning and he thrived with the opportunity. Asking this question also brought Ben and his mentor closer together, a synergistic duo. Again referencing Ken Kesey’s Electric Kool Aid Acid Test; Ben described this experience;

We’re on the same bus going further. And so we had first period planning and I would read stuff at night—Freire and Myers. What other stuff? Rod Petersen just loaded, loaded readings on me. And I read them and would come in first period and I’m like yeah this is what I was reading and you know I was wondering how this would work with Lord of the Flies and situated learning—legitimate purple participation. And like he gave me Lord of the Flies to teach as my project, like solo. Cause typically I’d come in and like all right let’s try this. First, second period we’d try it. We’d have that five minutes and do, do, do, do—bounce real fast and then all right. And by sixth period we were like nailing this like lesson that was made in that day, in that moment, from readings that I read the night before you know. And that’s how I learned to do it you know to constantly reflect and act—reflection and action like (snaps fingers). You know I’m going to make mistakes, all right, but I know I’m aware of this and I’m here and okay.

Praxis is at work in Ben’s relationship with his mentor and his experience learning to teach in the PDS. Ben and his mentor sharing an interest meant for a deeply enriching
experience. He saw this closeness with his mentor and the PDS experience on many levels as a community experience;

We worked on many levels because it was me and the internship and there was this community going on and there was me in the classroom with this community going on. And it was the kids and the book with this community going on and it was just like this huge thing with community. And that is definitely at the heart of it[my experience in the pds]—a community.

Authenticity

Ben’s experience in the PDS was a deeply effective one. The immersion was unlike any other learning experience he ever had. Being asked “So what do you want to learn?” and having the close relationship with his mentor were effective in his own professional development. Being able to learn what he wanted to learn in this social and professional context-Ben’s own thinking became liberated, and he had the time to think about his own thinking. His mind was freed up; it had the room to meta-cognize. Ben described this aspect of his thinking as “ghosts”. The ghosts are the part of his thinking that he did not yet have the language to express, yet, the ideas were present, and always have been present in his mind. These ideas have formulated over time through his schooling about race, about class, about his prejudices. Through participating in the inquiry process that is a central part of the PDS, he came to understand his own views and express them in profoundly personal sense.

I had the, the ghosts in my mind of this. But they were ghosts. And the PDS showed me that there, it, they’re solid. These are, there are words out there that explains stuff. So which led me to believe or helped me see myself as legitimate, which gave me confidence with these ideas and gave me confidence to try out stuff and fail and praxis and all that.

The ghosts are his own ideas that exist in his unconditioned mind which through participation in the PDS he is able to further express and develop. These were the ideas
that were never brought out in the traditional classrooms and curricula he encountered at
Penn State or previously. Being able to seek this center out, Ben’s own essential and
authentic being became liberated. Previously Ben did not have any experiences in a
transformational curricular orientation that validated, or represented his own ghosts or
ideas. His ideas and thoughts were able to come out and be constructed and represented
in the PDS environment. The PDS gave Ben the language, tools, and ability to represent
the mental symbols that was necessary to express these ideas of his authentic self.

The notion of inquiry is deeply embedded in Ben’s practice of teaching. It is what
he does as a teacher, and the longer he practices it, the more he comes to understand its
depth and the reality that there are always more questions to ask.

And we all are our own theory. Like we’re all creating our own theory. And
that’s something that I had to get my head around I guess. And it probably
happened at the end of the second year, beginning of the third year, which was
just great because I thought all right. I, I know this stuff. Or know that it’s
happening. But yet I’m still learning it you know and it’s like all right I’m okay
with that.

This is a Ben coming to understand himself…watching his own patterns of development,
not taking what the administration says as the model of a teacher, but, writing his own
script and doing the best he can.

Metaphor

Ben’s metaphorical view of his experience in the PDS is a creative one that refers again
to pop culture.

The movie The Matrix because it’s like taking a blue pill and suddenly you find
yourself in this test tube all slimy and yucky and you’re like wait a minute. This
is really what the world is? You know. It’s like it’s, it’s eye opening and it’s like
that you know when Neo touches the mirror and it’s like whoa! That’s . . . really
it shows you . . . Dr. Jameson really does a nice job pulling the curtain and letting
you see that there’s, there is no wizard behind the curtain and it’s that you know
MASTER’S DEGREE INTERNS

Jordan
Master’s Degree Intern

Jordan is a single white female in her mid 30’s who grew up and has lived in the area surrounding Pioneer State University her entire life. She attended elementary and middle school in the same school district and graduated from Scarlet High School where she was an intern in the PDS. She has a son who is now a young teenager. While a student she was always very grade driven and a consistently outstanding student. In high school she was placed in an accelerated academic program for the arts. Starting her junior year she was taking college courses at Pioneer State and by the time most students were incoming freshman, Jordan had already completed almost two semesters of college courses. Upon entering college, Jordan did not declare her major but was interested in studying art. Her transition from high school to college was not a smooth one. She married in the Spring of 2006 and will received both her Bachelor’s and her Master’s degree at the end of the term.

Critical Incidents

There were two critical incidents in Jordan’s life that had a lasting effect and influence on her progression and development in becoming a teacher. For Jordan, it was a relatively difficult transition to college life. One week after turning 18 she was arrested for shoplifting and the offense became part of her permanent record. Soon after, she moved out of her parents’ house and started her first official year as a college student at Pioneer State.

I discovered a whole new level of autonomy for myself and I certainly explored and enjoyed the social aspects of Pioneer State much more fully than I did the
academic opportunities and I was also working full time because my parents and I sort of had a split of minds, and I was in a position of having to support myself financially [as a freshman at Pioneer State] so I worked full time and I had friends and academics definitely took a back place.

She began to explore a number of different fields. After a brief internship in a local advertising agency, she realized she was not very adept at commercial art.

Floundering in the department of undergraduate studies as an undeclared major for two years she was on the fence about what she wanted to do with her studies.

I tried all these ideas and every semester there was some new hope, some new possibility of where I was going to go with my life. And it just didn’t click with me, and I wasn’t clicking with school at all.

Outside of her academic studies, where things did click for Jordan was in her interest in environmental causes. During her second year at Pioneer State she became president of the campus environmental action group, Eco-Action, and a deeper motivation and desire to become a teacher began to form. Although her social life was thriving, her grades were poor. She became pregnant and failed out of school during her sophomore year.

I had one semester in fact, which looking back is very amusing, at the time it was fairly heartbreaking; I failed every class but one, the class I didn’t fail and in fact got an A in was effective decision-making. [Laughs]. So, on my transcript I can always point to that, here is a little comic relief. That was my last semester at Pioneer State.

Not knowing exactly what to do with herself Jordan contacted the local Environmental Education Center in the community:

I called [the Environmental Center] and told them I was leaving Pioneer State due to poor scholarship, but I had the interest in doing, possibly, an internship with them, for a year to ostensibly find myself and to work more fully with their program and [at that time] I was more interested in the idea of educational environmental education. And they accepted me, which was very unusual. They typically do not take people who were not going to be going back to school, that
was generally, people’s last year of college. And they did accept me and I was there and I loved the educational aspect of being at [the Environmental Center].

The experience of having been accepted at the Environmental Center left a lasting positive impression on Jordan’s journey to becoming a high school teacher. At the same time, she was struggling socially and financially. It was difficult for her to mix with the other young people who worked there who were mostly over 21 and recent college graduates.

I felt like a failure when I was there because I was surrounded by people who were having successes in their life and I was there out of a failing and I couldn’t quite get passed it… So, I was very depressed.

After the internship ended, Jordan worked in the food service industry for a short time and this she said ‘was a badge of shame’. With her son turning 2½ she began to look in to pre-school options for him. There were two Montessori schools in the community and she began doing research on the method; liking what she found, Jordan enrolled her son in one of the schools and she subsequently volunteered there one day per week. During this time, she had considered becoming certified as a Montessori teacher and it turned out that the other Montessori school in town had an opening where she was soon hired. A year later, her son graduated from the original Montessori and the owner of that school hired Jordan agreeing to pay for her training and certification. She worked in the Montessori schools for a total of 3 years. Becoming a Montessori instructor was an important step in the direction she would ultimately head. In the end, the experience played an influential motivational role in her development of a professional identity and laid the foundation for her to continue to pursue becoming a teacher. Jordan still sought more and having failed out of Pioneer State remained a blemish on her record.
When I was working at the Montessori school, I had trouble finding full pride in what I was doing. Even though I was happy in what I was doing, I still felt very unfulfilled for not having finished Pioneer State. And, I would find ways to avoid the issue or paint a different picture even while telling the truth of what my educational history was when people would ask me and I had every hope that I would still go back to school.

Money was an issue because the job did not pay very well and she now had a son.

I would never make very much money and at this point I was a single mom and salary was important. I loved working with children, had a very, very good rapport, had a very easy time, it was a very joyful sort of experience, however, because of salary issues, I was having some struggles, emotionally and financially, and my boss saw that I was unhappy and she had to make some cuts, because of the downturn in the economy and she was going to drop everyone’s salary and she felt very bad dropping my salary, and she said I think that I should choose to let you go out of all the people because you don’t have your bachelors and you are not going to be able to survive on this salary and you are not going to be able to stay here in the long term. And she was right, it was very hard but she was right. So, I had to spend a very bad day.

Jordan knew in her heart that she wanted to go back and explore what college had to offer. But, this was a turning point for Jordan because she realized just how she felt about her work and her future.

when I had the opportunity to get my Montessori certification, I said, well I am training to be a Montessori teacher I wanted very much to be called teacher. I still told people, but not, I am a student. I didn’t, really admit that part. And I recognized and reflected strongly upon the fact that teacher was the label that I wanted for myself and I put a lot of pride in being able to call myself a teacher.

Returning to College

In response to leaving the Montessori School, Jordan decided to go back to college and finish her degree. Going back to school was a large motivator. After talking with a number of people and considering her options regarding what courses to take, she was referred to Dr. Jameson who was the founding director of the PDS program. He proposed entering the PDS program where Jordan could earn both a Bachelors and Master’s in English Education in a relatively short time. One month later, with her son
being in school on a regular schedule, Jordan was accepted back at Pioneer State after having been out for almost 10 years.

**Ideas at the Heart of Teaching**

After working in the Montessori schools, Jordan considered completing her degree so she could teach at the elementary level. She decided she wanted to have a deeper intellectual connection with her students. Her experiences at Pioneer State in the environmental movement and as an intern at the Environmental center are at the heart of her desire to teach.

I think it is tied in to my work in the environmental movement. I think it is an idea of saving the world [small chuckle]. Initially when I was young and impressionable, it really was an idea that I could make a big change, and I became more conscious myself, I realized that small changes are the most important and accessible. It is very difficult to make a global change. But I have the idea that I can affect a person or some people, and that drives what I am doing.

It is in the small changes that are cumulatively able to have a global effect, both in the classroom and as is the case in Jordan’s journey in becoming a teacher.

**Critical Incident in PDS and Transformational Learning**

During the first few weeks of school all PDS interns had to select a student with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that they connect with in order to conduct a prolonged case study over the course of the year. At first, Jordan had a difficult time identifying a student who she thought would be the best to study. It turned out that a student found her.

Probably three weeks into school, a student, quite literally, came to me. He was transferred in to class in week two, and in order to catch him up to speed, I had to work with him very, very closely and he came to me and opened up to me in ways that I was shocked….he had actually dropped out of school in ninth grade and he had to repeat everything except 9th grade English because he was quite competent in that area so they allowed him to move in to 10th grade English.

Jordan and the student got along very well and she identified with him on different levels;
[It was] A very new relationship with the student and really, who am I, and he just started telling me things that amazed me and he was so open and we started talking about literature and I was recommending books and we were talking about goals and I felt like, [although] on a very different path, was still going through a lot of the same struggles that I was. But he was just struggling on so many levels, and a lot of his home situation, while so much different, and so much worse than mine in so many ways, and I could really connect with him on those level and I worked very, very closely [with him].

Jordan felt a personal responsibility to the student because she identified so closely with his issues. She went the extra mile to reach out and help, but she also felt as if she was getting too close and that he was becoming dependent. Something did not seem right so she detached herself and focused on her other PDS responsibilities. Four months into the school year the student dropped out and Jordan felt responsible. She believed she could have made a bigger impact on his life and decisions. Although, by the end of the year Jordan had not fully processed the event and its effect on her, she realized how her own experiences of [dropping out and also getting arrested] are valuable and useful assets to particular role as an educator and her work with adolescents.

I think that what it does is make me more human and it makes me accessible. …it makes me available to them in a different way because I understand what it is like to be a kid in this town, I understand what it is like to be lost, and I would like to work with kids who are just as capable, all level, but I think the ones that I will have special kinship with are those that are just as troubled, but just as capable. So, how to help somebody find themselves in the middle of all that; that is what definitely what drives my teaching.

Losing the Ego-Critical journal writing

In conjunction with conducting the case study, all interns were also required to keep and maintain a critical reflective journal of their experiences throughout the year. This coupled process had a transformational effect and deep impact on Jordan’s outlook and personality and in forming her professional identity as a teacher.
I think in terms of the PDS program overall the one practice that we were asked to do was to reflect in journal form. I went through all of the stages of mourning with it. I am not a journaler. I tried and failed in my life and I was angry and resentful and denied doing it and I would do it and be angry about it, and I finally got in to it and I now have maybe a 70 paged single spaced typed journal so far that is not done yet and I think I have begun to really embrace the process and thought that, “Damn, I really need to go and journal about this”. And that has, that process, it is not the journal part it is the reflecting. And it has been completely transformational in the way I am thinking.

The journaling enabled Jordan to reflect on her own failings as well as her inhibitions.

Following through, the effects became long term and enabled Jordan to begin to move away from fear and get outside of herself.

I felt like I was going to be really wrapped up in my ego, I would not be able to take constructive criticism; I was worried about all those things at the beginning. And, this reflection has allowed me to release my ego. And when people speak to me critically, not cruelly, but critically, I have no problem. In fact it helps and I think about it and I process this in a different way. That has not changed me just as a teacher that has changed me as a person. And I think I had to be open to that. So journaling started this whole stage.

Within the process of journaling and reflecting, Jordan was able to begin to move away from fear; her fear of work through her inhibitions and her failings.

Taking initiative…fear…job… life… comes full circle

Jordan did not put herself on the line, in the context of the PDS environment, because she was concerned about her possible future position.

There have been other moments where I certainly could have gone down paths that I chose not to. And a lot of it is just alike students who are grade motivated. I didn’t go down the path because I see the end so clearly. I need to get a job and I am obligated to stay in this area, so that my life will come full circle if I work here. And I am afraid right now. I still have fear. But I think it will abate. [what are you afraid of] I am afraid of not being able to get a job. You know, kids are grade motivated. You know, getting a job for me, that’s my ‘A’.

Jordan always linked getting a job with getting good grades. She felt her performance in the PDS would influence her ability to get a teaching position. She had the idea from her
beginning involvement in the PDS to aim to be hired by the Scarlet Area School District upon completion.

A Journey of Redemption

Part of Jordan’s journey and purpose in becoming a teacher has to do with redeeming herself of her past actions. It is her journey through the trials and tribulations of returning to school and finishing her degree, of clearing her record of the shoplifting charge, of essentially replacing personal failures with personal success. The way to reach a full integration of her past and present was by re-identifying/reconnecting back in the high school environment where she originally attended and reformulate-recompose herself…

I had this idea that I could sell myself, and again it was sort of on the basis of a failing…I have spoken to a number of teachers here and one of the school resource officers who have the exact same charge and they have talked about their struggles with it, we founded sort of a kinship on the basis of our own past indiscretions.

Building this kinship aided in Jordan’s reintegration. Towards the end of the school year, she was interviewed for a full time position at the school. Here, Jordan had to put herself on the line and show what she has accomplished throughout the previous year, but really, she was putting the past 18 years of her life on the line in order to land that position.

Worldview Change

Internal rather than external observation

Jordan’s view of the world changed. Taking in to consideration the responsibility that she has for her son, and now and in the future her students, she recognized that there is much suffering in the world and that an external view of the world is not going enable her to perform and help her students.
My worldview changed on a lot of levels, I actually did something for the first time this year that I have never done before. I stopped watching the news and reading the paper. And I was sort of tiptoeing around that when I first had Alex, my son, because I was scared of what I was reading and once you become conscious of all the suffering (whispered) it becomes a little too much and I was afraid that I was bringing this child in to this world that has so many problems. And never had I wanted to be more aware and be more up to date so I could have these informed conversations with my students.

It is Jordan’s internal compass that has become more of the guidepost than any outside source.

**Authenticity**

Connected to students

Jordan felt confident when she is in the classroom and has interactions with the students. It is when she is clearly in the role as a teacher that her sense of validation in the work she is doing important.

The students are what make me feel like a teacher. [How?] Because in the classroom I feel more validated than anywhere else than in this whole process. First of all they call me a teacher. They respond to me like a teacher, they say you are my favorite teacher, and that kind of validation is pretty huge. But even more so they respond to the lessons that I implement, and they answer the questions that I ask, they, they follow the script of studenting, they perform and I perform and sometimes we reach really amazing conclusions together. So I think it is there in those moments, that I feel, I walk out and there is a little bit of air between my feet and the ground. [can you give an example] There are times when, I can’t give a specific example, but it has happened dozens of time, oh wait it has happened a bunch. And it is all when we were doing things, like what Dr. Jameson prescribed. It is making connections between a text and your life, and talking about, some bigger issue.

**Reflective Integrity**

Jordan sees herself in her students. By being able to see herself back then when she was in high school Jordan consciously reframes her former thoughts about herself and reflects on her own [surprising] personal transformation on many different levels.
I think what it is is I am them, and I am really not as far from them as I [now, as a teacher] thought I was when I was a teenagers and I thought it was a world between me and teachers and now I see that it is just a step between teachers and students…Everything is different. I have what I wanted in who I am that I never expected to be; which is great, I didn’t have a lot of faith in myself. But I have a lot of faith in myself now and I see that I am capable and competent.

As the reality of completing the PDS internship [and also the court proceedings clearing her record] Jordan’s realization of being able to redeem herself became clearer, and the occupation of teacher became more accessible and authentic.

One of the things that has changed, I remember then looking at teachers in a very idealized way, I thought that teachers were this one way that they knew everything and they were so together and they were so enviable, and I did think that even though I would have liked to have been a teacher, I don’t know how I will ever get from here to there. And now, I see now, that teachers aren’t really that enviable, [laughs] they are really just people.

It was a long road to personal transformation for Jordan, but in the end, the importance of paying close attention to the details and the larger whole comes in to focus was never more relevant.

I think sometimes it is easy to forget, because every moment…it is difficult to think about the long term changes when you are dealing minute by minute. And sometimes I have to step back and think about it, and remind myself that I have a good purpose.
George
Master's Degree Intern

George is a 33 year old married white male who grew up 30 minutes outside of Pittsburgh in a small city where U.S. Steel was the main employer. George is succinct and professional in his manner and in his speech. Both his mother and father are teachers; his mother is a special education teacher in the public schools and his father is a golf professional. While growing up, George worked with his father on the golf courses and saw how well doctors lived and originally pursued this occupation. He spent two years at one of the smaller Pioneer State campuses studying to this end. After failing a major exam in the pre-medicine program and realizing he may not have been adequately prepared for the rigor of the program, he transferred to the main campus of Pioneer State and was accepted to the Broadcast Journalism program. After completing his Bachelor’s in Film and Television in five years, he was employed by the Pioneer State University public television station for the next ten years. Over that time he became highly adept in all aspects of the technical side of producing television shows before deciding to return to school to become an English teacher. He graduated in the spring of 2006 with a Master’s degree in English Education. His wife, a physical therapist, recently changed careers and is a public school teacher also.

Ideas and Experiences at the Heart of Becoming a Teacher

George is already a professional, albeit in another field. He knows his own strengths and weaknesses and the types of environments he works well in. He identified strongly with his career in television and why he felt he went in to it in the first place. He is a master film editor who utilized his skill and craft with his students over the course of the year. He created a film as a component of his inquiry project which was entitled:
Breaking Boundaries into the Classroom Frontier: A Returning Adult Student’s Journey

Back in to the Classroom, which was a self study of his experience in the PDS intern program.

George did not see his switch from television to teaching as a difficult one. If anything, it was a natural progression and derivative of his work in television where he was becoming limited in his ability to have an impact due to the nature of the field. Television and film as George described are a young person’s market; competitive, cut throat and not always stable.

It wasn’t a difficult switch, and I’ll tell you why. Ever since 85 when I worked, as a kid at a golf course, one of the things, in terms of talking and interacting with people, the blanket term of communication skills, just the interaction, that’s what I always enjoyed. Television was a way, one of the reasons I got in to the field is I wanted to have an impact. To make a change with the programs we were producing/creating were, in essence having a direct effect on somebody, being that promoting change in a positive way making them think, making them reflect on the choices they made, and I think what happened to me, throughout that course, the interactions, that I had with people were not what I thought they were limited in the sense that you had a certain group of people that you worked with, a crew friends you were with.

After about 6 years in the television field, and having opportunities to go out to California to study and work at USC, he began exploring other options. He could not see himself doing what he was doing 20 years from now. George and his wife decided together to go in to teaching. His wife is a licensed physical therapist who also began to feel the challenges and cutbacks in her field and returned to school and became a teacher.

I mean because, it interesting, my wife did the same thing, I’m working for PSX I’m making a nice living, benefits, everything, I don’t have the one important thing, and that’s me. I’m not satisfied. And I think that’s where my wife was the same way. She was a physical therapist for UPMCM Pittsburgh she has a masters degree in PT. She realized, It’s kind of interesting how we both reached the same point. You know, 20-30 years ago, we can’t be doing this, I mean Physical therapists get the crapped kicked out of them and now they cut medical costs, they cut it but, its crazy the bureaucracy of it, forget it and she just said, this is not for
me. There are other avenues that we can use to do what we want to do in life. To have the stability that we want and also be able to make, to help to show the compassion we have, and try to transfer that to other people and specifically students because I think that’s beneath [being] positive role models…

While growing up, George spent time going to work with his mother and his father. His mother worked with severely handicapped student and she had always known he would come around to teaching.

My mother and I laugh about it now and it’s like, why wasn’t that like the chosen path and she always tells me. “Well, I always knew you had to do the route that you did in this particular way because had you not taken this course, gone it to film, gone it to television…you would have looked back and always regretted it and it would have, if you had gone right in to teaching, you always would have said, what if I had gone that route…”

Deciding to become a teacher emanated from wanting to have the stability that a career in teaching can offer. Also, his reasons were to be able to have a direct impact on people’s lives in a way that he was not able to working in TV. For George teaching was always a possibility, the answer was always right in front of him but he looked right past it.

Critical Incident While in College

Making the decision to switch careers became easier when George thought about a particular bedrock experience he had during spring break one year when he spent a week with volunteering with his mother who at the time was working with handicapped children.

When I was with my mom, she had a student I think his name was Tyler Grimm a wonderful kid, wasn’t deemed learning support, but everyone knew he needed to be, just one of the most gracious individuals, he came from a terrible home, his mother was, just now I found out, convicted for prostitution, And this kid…for me he was an Angel in the human form and working with him…and he could never get his homework in on time and he never did it in a way that was malicious…so he and I spent a week together, And I wasn’t getting paid for this, he was in the 6th grade, getting up every morning and having the feeling that you could actually make a difference in somebody, you can’t put a price tag on that, you can’t, no
matter what you do, to have that type of influence to have that positive impact, it was just amazing, when he left he said, you know Mr. [George] it’s been a real pleasure working with you, and he wanted me to get a job there, and I think moments like that, the Tyler Grimm’s of the world, him in particular, I think that solidified it for me. I think anytime you go and want to change careers, there are moments of doubt.

Looking back, in the classroom was where he realized he could make a difference in a person’s life unlike anything he could do in television. George learned, through reflecting on this experience, the values he had and how his own authentic inclinations were not being met in television.

**PDS Experiences**

Returning to school came with personal and professional challenges that were different than those the other PDS interns faced. Being the oldest student, the only married intern, and the only intern who had a viable profession before coming to the classroom he was in a different position as a learner than the others. He could be considered truly an adult learner where the others could be classified as emerging adult learners. George was somewhat isolated during his participation; he was the only intern during the year placed in the middle school, while all of the other interns, offices and seminars for the PDS were located 4 miles away at the high school. George had concerns that he was not meeting the expectations of the program, and not having his peers to collaborate with on lessons had an effect.

It really forced me to, which I think is good, to sink or swim, you have to do it. In terms of developing and coming up with a lesson or unit on my own, I would have loved to have a little more collaboration, it would have helped. Those particular moments in developing my own material, was beneficial…

Even though he was able to email the leaders of the program or meet with them one on one when he had questions, it was not the same. The distance was significant and not
being able to establish those daily social bonds with the other interns, mentors and leaders made it difficult for George to know if he was meeting the expectations of the program.

**Critical Incident in the PDS**

George felt the transition from television to the classroom in the beginning of the year. George had expectations of certain behavior in the classroom based on his experiences prior to coming to teach.

Well, it was really interesting, one student, she was one of the popular girls, and her and her friend were always talking in class and I am trying to teach and I told her one day I said, “You know, I’ve had enough, I’ve had enough of the Carolyn and Marilyn Show, I’m done. Guess what, the show has been cancelled, it’s over!”…And the whole class… “I just pulled the plug, it’s over and now get your head in that book and start reading!”

After this incident, although his delivery was never intentional, he realized that he was in a different place, with different rules, norms, expectation and even language. He now knew that he was not in TV anymore, was no longer working with adults, and that his actions could have deeper consequences. His mentor presented him with the idea if this was a discipline problem or a distraction and how his reaction has to be different in the classroom than in a studio.

“I think that’s, you know on television your either going 0 or 120 miles an hour, there is no in between. And, I think that, in school, you are sometimes going 10 or 150… has forced me to be more patient. Forced me to always thinking about really calculate and think before you act. [Has it changed you frame of reference?] The reference is no longer the set, the studio the director. You have to have that goal too. You can’t be this vocal tyrant. [In TV] there are so many instances that we would have a minute and people would be scrambling. I’m like a minute is an eternity in television, that’s ok, I would climb up on the set and change the light for the show, I’m like, I have 30 seconds, 15 seconds, I can get back there in time. I think there are times when you are in teaching, those moments now are everyday, at any point in time, those moments are happening. I think it has forced me to be more patient. I think that this is the most, you have to get to know your kids, you have to make the attempt,
Getting to know his students, whether it was by finding interesting ways to get them to complete their homework, or if was by making small positive comments throughout the day, George realize he had to build relationships with the students, beyond the actual tasks.

All of them [the students]…and get to know them. Anytime there is a moment that you could interject something, a positive comment… Like those shoes, you know like that shirt, my favorite band…you might not get that ingratiating big response from them…just the signal that they know that you know that you/they are watching. And for the majority of them, they know that is a big deal. …if there is anything that I take away from this experience is that getting to know the kids and their learning styles and what works best for them. I think that as you keep teaching you develop more and more strategies to get to tap in to those resources, and tap in to those skills.

The television studio was different because the sets of standards are different in the studio than in the classroom and George began to distinguish between the different needs in the classroom as opposed to the television station.

There was a certain set of standards that you had to meet and there was really no, it was a format…you do this, this and this, shots go like this. And you have an assignment sheet and you are going to football games and you are going to do certain camera settings, you know, I am going to see all the white outs, I am going to run, it is a set format. Here there are formats. There are so many different things that come in to play that you have to adapt to it.

George’s sense of time and place were altered and reframed. He realized that the relationship with the students is paramount to his success as a teacher. In the end, he came to the conclusion that there are not always simple explanations or quick fixes to a problem in the school setting.

**Authenticity**

In George’s experience in becoming a teacher, his new professional identity was validated through the voices and commendations he received from his students.
Once with a particular student that I mentor, for the inquiry project, I didn’t give them forms, for the video project I asked what impact I had on them they gave me some really great feedback. And the student I mentor said I said, give it to [Mr. George]. I am not grading you on this, tell me if you don’t like. Fine. He says it really is good you being my mentor and everything, I say is there anything else you want to say and he says, not really but you are the only one who cared about me all year. And you know. You were there, when I did the inquiry at the very end, I was like moved. Because it just hit me. That is when you realize…They are not seeing you as a [person]

**Metaphor**

George’s metaphor of his PDS experience is one of a process of individuation…

This experience has been like a rebirth. A reinvention of me. In that it has forced me to think about who I understand, challenges that have come about. And I think that is one thing great about being in the classroom setting, you have all of these experiences that most student teachers do not. PDS is like a, it is like a reinvention of who you think you are and your identity from your individual standpoint, you are a more compassionate individual, more understanding individual and that could be strictly from my own individual self, but I think the experience forces you to think about how you will reinvent yourself, because you will, whether you realize it or not. The experience is going to force you to do that. I don’t see how you could come in to the experience and not be changed in some way shape or form. You will be. So I would say it is like a reinvention, a rebirth of yourself.
Jennifer
Master’s Degree Intern

Jennifer is a 30 year old single white female who grew up in the community surrounding Pioneer State University. All of her schooling took place in the Scarlet Area School District and she graduated from the Scarlet Area High School. She describes herself as something of a wanderer; having originally started Pioneer State as a Biology major, she changed her field of study numerous times before graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in English. Upon graduation she heard about teaching English abroad and she became a certified ESL teacher through an intensive study program before heading to Japan to teach in an intensive learning organization. Returning from Japan, she was still not exactly sure what career path she wanted to follow and began teaching ESL domestically. She soon found herself considering teaching more seriously as a career. Having never taken any undergraduate courses in education, she began taking courses in the College of Education at Pioneer State as pre-requisites to a Master’s degree in Teaching. While taking the class she met an influential professor of education who informed and inspired her to apply to the PDS program. Her inquiry project was titled Generating Self-Motivation which looked at the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators present in her high school English class and what teachers and students can do to promote self-motivation. She graduated with a Master’s Degree in English Education in the spring of 2006.

Ideas and Experiences at the Heart of becoming a teacher

Upon reflection, Jen was not able to identify any critical incidents while growing up that lead her to consider becoming an educator. She did acknowledge though that it
was more in her social world than in a school or academic setting that she found that her talents and skills may be suitable to teaching.

There were a few times, and completely not school related, where I was teaching a friend, or a group of friends, to-- it was either some sort of dance move, some sort of athletic this-or-that and I was always, ‘You explain, you break this down really well. You make it easy to understand. You'd be a good teacher.’

Having grown up in the Scarlet Area School District, she was exposed to a traditional learning environment throughout her schooling. Jennifer considered herself to be very structure oriented, rational and determined.

I'm not one of those people that, like we've already discussed, had a moment of saying, 'Oh my God, this is what I'm going to do. This is my passion.' I've been a bit of a wanderer, who's just, kind of, 'Yeah, okay, this is something I could do, something I like enough. It's important to me, whenever I'm inside of a job especially to do the best I can.

She is someone who is motivated to take on challenges and also set up challenges for herself. Going to Japan and teaching ESL is one example of this. At the same time, she admits that as she has sets out to meet the challenges, the learning from experience that is was not always readily accessible,

I think but I would relish the opportunity to go anywhere. Because I like to see what I can do, and how I can thrive within that. But then, any travel experience can only-- I mean, I can't say that I've found that connection and how to play it out in the classroom at this point. I do think it will come, again, building on experiences, when I can sit back and take a moment to like, 'Oh, God, this really speaks of this.' I don't think I've had that-- I feel like I have a bit of blinders on, to get point A to point B to point C. But, you know, I've definitely considered and thought of-- I hope to be able to bring these experiences to play.

When Jennifer arrived in Japan she expected a more rigid, traditional learning environment. This was not the case. While teaching there, Jennifer rarely had adequate time to create a lesson plan and did not know what type or level of student she would be teaching from class to class or day to day. Partially due to the organization of the school,
the subject and the way in which she taught, this influenced and informed Jen’s thinking about teaching in a very different way.

I would say, because we were teaching conversational English, largely-- I mean, sometimes business English, but, largely conversational English… It connects or parallels with a lot of what I'm deeming kind of newer philosophies within teaching English. The idea of not necessarily focusing so much on grammar, not teaching traditionally, but really getting the students to see an overview, just basic communication, can we get our ideas across, can we think critically about this or that, as opposed to, 'Okay, well, here's the noun here's the verb, and focusing more on discussion versus testing. And, I mean, it was just because of the way the school was set up, largely because it was a company, that they weren't focused so much on testing except for leveling the students up. It was a new way of thinking about teaching, for me, at that point. It wasn't as rigid or in the box as what I thought and I think it's probably helped me a little bit.

This was her first exposure to a more progressive, informal model of teaching. Coupled with a comparative cultural experience in Japan working mostly with adult learners,

**Critical Incident**

Jennifer returned and began teaching English as a Second Language part-time with the Mid-State Literacy Council, an adult learning organization in Central Pennsylvania. It was in this position that her inclination and inspiration to teach became more pronounced, mostly by her experiences with her students.

At Mid-State Literacy Council, there were quite a few times where students would write a letter to me or asking me for letters of recommendation, when I even wasn't viewing-- it's not that I'm saying I wasn't taking that job seriously, by any means, but I hadn't been formally trained, I suppose, and it was a part time job, and I felt much more like a tutor than what my idea of a teacher was. So, when they would come and ask for letters of recommendation for them to get into school or do this or do that, you know, that spoke largely to me. And they would often express the idea of, you know, 'You're a great teacher. I don't think I'd learn from somebody if it weren't you.'

Jennifer’s students raised the professional importance of the position to her and in turn, she began to explore the option of teaching English more seriously. She asked herself questions like 'Do I want to do this for good? Do I want to explore education more
generally? Do I want to go more in depth with the subject and have these conversations a little more deeply than what I could do with ESL students?’ It was while Jen was taking pre-requisite courses for teaching certification at Pioneer State when she met Dr. Pardi, a noted progressive educator in the field whose work focuses on Organic Education and John Dewey’s philosophy, that she was further inspired and convinced to continue and follow teaching as a career path. It was Dr. Pardi who recommended that she consider applying to the Secondary Level English Professional Development School.

**Experience in the PDS**

Having more experience working with adults, Jen was a little concerned with making the switch to the high school level. She noted that teaching adults, although challenging, they are self motivated and do not have the same concerns as teenagers. Upon entering the PDS she was already an experienced adult educator and she said that

> I think I had probably painted a bleaker picture of it coming in than what I'm leaving with, I guess. I wanted to be very certain that I wasn't being naive in entering this, that I -- I was like, okay, I know I'm coming from the adult education world into high school realm, so I think I really set myself up with like, 'Okay, this is as bad as it can be."

Jennifer did not know what teaching teenagers was going to be like. She was concerned that the student would not take her seriously and take advantage of her, but she was able to create a respectful learning environment in her classroom and doing so made a big difference. Jen felt the closest to students during the informal moments before, during and after classes, as well as after she created a lesson, taught it and was able to have good conversations with her students. There were many times throughout the year when she felt ‘in the flow’ and this brought her confidence. Jennifer’s professional identity began to take hold when the students began to come to her for help. She learned
and knew the students respected her, her opinions and her interpretations of what they were working on. Being a graduate of the high school where she was interning also helped in understanding the cultural context of where the students were coming from.

She related an incident that happened in her classroom where she felt as if she put herself on the line.

In the very beginning of the school year, I had a student, an African-American student who-- he was a joker, cute kid, good kid. But, he would joke around with everybody, and he had apparently taken, in a joking manner, a dollar or two off of another student and was holding it, basically, saying, "I didn't take it, I didn't take it, I didn't take it." And, James was, "He took it, he took it, he took it." And, this confrontation was starting to get a little more heated. And I mean, like I said, this was the first month, maybe two months of school, so I was really not sure of myself, as to, how far do I step in? Are they joking? Are they not joking? Am I reading this correctly? And I was like, I can't blame; I can't accuse. I said, "If you have this money, you'd be smart to give it back right now, because, although you may be just joking, this joke can go too far and you don't know what repercussions and consequences can happen if it's not seen as a joke by the other party." And I was nervous. I didn't know if it was going to come into some racial issue or that they were going to see me as being too strict, they were just joking, and then I'd become a bit of a joke.

In this instance, Jennifer was able to show her understanding of the situation, draw on her experience abroad and relate it to the classroom situation. In doing she began to establish a classroom climate and relationships that were mutually respectful in order to benefit the students she was teaching now.

Any time you're dealing with any kind of racial or cultural issue in the classroom, you're going over-- I mean, just the blanket idea of going over and experiencing a new culture and what you see the positives of that, and being able to express that to the students may open some closed minds.

Her past experience teaching became useful in the PDS program now, and her confidence grew out of her being able to translated, in some way, her previous experiences and act on them with the new environment; even is she was not aware that she was doing so all of the time.
Autonomy and Motivation

Jen’s experience in the PDS collaborating with any of her three mentors was not what she expected. She had thought that collaboration had meant more teaching together or team teaching side by side in the classroom. This is not what she found. It was more like she had to stand on her own two feet from the beginning.

I cannot say that it's been what I expected, collaboratively. I've had an interesting go about it. I've basically been with three different people. I started out happier with ESL and there, to be honest, I did not feel supported. Kind of like, get in that frying pan; fire's on high; do what you're gonna do. I had to really kind of beg and claw and chew to get any support there…I think it's really difficult. I see the challenges. And I know that, as a student, I always preferred individual work versus group work, and it's kind of like taking that group work and putting it on a professional level. I think the mentors I've worked with are like-minded.

Getting the kind of support she expected was not what she got. It was a more professional approach to working with others in a school context and at times Jennifer thought how much easier it may be learning to teach in the more traditional approach. The PDS, by design has a unique way of evaluating the interns, and it is not as explicit or grade oriented as traditional approaches. In many ways, even though she was bound to her mentors for guidelines, and she received some critical feedback, it was her own judgment and autonomous motivation to perform well while inside of this position that enabled her to carry on and succeed. There was no ‘A’ to work for and there was little commentary or constructive criticism on her day to day performance even though she was supported by her mentors and the program. As a student, Jen always preferred individual work versus group work. Her experience learning in the PDS program was more like taking that group work and putting it on a professional level and realizing the mentors she worked with were like-minded in their approach. As an intern, Jen had to put her own value and
imprint on the teaching experience and Dr. Pardi was the person who was able to provide a theory from which Jennifer could relate better to the PDS program.

**Transformational Relationship**

Dr. Pardi writes about organic education, ecological consciousness and is a scholar on John Dewey. She looks deeply at progressive and grassroots movements to improve education and the creation of democratic classrooms, schools and communities.

Her teaching and philosophy had an effect on Jennifer’s understanding of the practice of teaching and everyday immersion in the PDS program.

[Dr. Pardi]-- she has a plan. And she knows that it works. And, I mean, the plan is the structure that I need. She was able to weave-- I wasn't even aware, I think of what educational theory and policy meant while going through that class until maybe the last week and then, all of a sudden, it was like, everything came together. You know, she was teaching eco-wise, just, eco-friendly articles, eco-friendly philosophies. And then, intertwining educational philosophy within that, and I don't think I was questioning it so much? Maybe at the very beginning, but then I just fell into a routine-- this is what we do, this is what we do. And, by the end, it just all kind of-- blossomed. And I was like, 'Oh my God. That was an amazing, amazing, experience I just went through.

Through the framework and teachings introduced by Dr. Pardi, Jennifer was able to look to her experiences and draw on them to inform her teaching and make deeper connections in her classroom.

That's happened, when I'm able to relate, okay, in my travels I've been here, I've been there, and this is kind of something that we're talking about. Or, this person is, you know, we were discussing Thoreau and Whitman and Dickens and their connections to nature without being so, like, 'I love nature,' kind of thing. I was able to relate what I thought a poem, kinda’ maybe the passion that this poet had for nature, looking at the stars, and describe to them different experiences in my life when I've like-- I think that this is the essence of what they were getting at. I felt this here, and here, and here.

The PDS program was the essence of how she actually learned throughout the year.
The way that I was successful, again, was not within the group work, was in the very traditional mode, was in the teacher-to-student, here's the textbook, here's the worksheet, here's the text. That's how I was successful... I'm a structure based person. I crave it, and so this has been really kind of-- I mean, I feel successful in it, but it's been really kind of unsettling for me, because it's just like, okay, I don't know, I have to figure out, and I don't know how to figure this out. I just have to do it, and it'll come. So, I mean, there have been a lot of times where I was just like, 'Man, I wish that I were sitting in a lecture hall and being told, and then just having those eight weeks.' Although, those eight weeks would not have made me feel comfortable at all going into my first year. So, I mean, in that aspect, this is completely invaluable.

And this model of learning, learning by doing, Dewey’s model of learning as experience she was first exposed to in Dr. Pardi’s class.

...She introduced me to Dewey. I always come back to this one little... excerpt of his, where he talks about-- You can teach a kid to swim outside of a pool. You can teach the strokes, you can teach the breath work, you can teach all these different things—but until you throw them in, if you throw them in a pool, teaching them outside a pool, they're probably still going to sink.

For Jennifer the PDS program let her draw from her experience and in the end it transformed and strengthened her practice.

-- I am huge in the belief that this is such an experiential profession and you will just keep on gaining so much ground each year, each time you have a new class, get more experience under the belt…. I would say, two or three years ago, I was fearful of being in a classroom and completely shaky about it. And now, I know that I can do it. The more prepared, for me, the better, but absolutely, I can get knocked down, I can come back.
Connie
Master's Degree Intern

Connie is a 30 year old married white female who grew up and attended elementary, high school and college in Connecticut. She went to public elementary school and an elite private girls college preparatory school which claims to present “a world of learning, exploration and growth, where girls are challenged and supported to be the very best they can be.” Here she was considered a “faculty brat” with her mother being on staff as a teacher. She graduated second in her class and received the Williams College Book Award; a prestigious honor for her performance in writing. Although her teachers expected her to attend an Ivy League school, it was around the time of graduation that her parents divorced. Rather than going straight to college, she moved out of her parents house, lived on her own and worked odd jobs for two years including positions as a manager at McDonald’s and of a kitchen at a ski area. Books and reading have always been primary in Connie’s life, and during this time between high school and college she also worked and lived above a library. Acknowledging where she was and what she was doing, Connie realized the need for a college education and although her academic background and credentials were stellar, she enrolled in a local state college as an English Major paying her own way and graduating in three years. Upon graduation she knew she wanted to teach, but felt she did not have enough content area knowledge so she applied to graduate schools attending the University of Vermont. Here she held a graduate fellowship for two years in the English Department. As Connie saw her position, it was ideal because she had complete control over the curriculum she taught and it was ironic that she was teaching students who were just a few years older than she was. After two years, she took a position as a lecturer while finishing up her degree.
Connie noted that at the state university she attended she found her calling and was inspired to teach by her teachers there; at the University of Vermont she had a much easier time teaching than many of her colleagues who were much older than her. Here she realized how comfortable she was in front of people, and just how much she really enjoyed the practice of teaching over research. The choice to follow the path of teaching was a natural one.

**The Journey to Teaching**

Upon completing her Master’s degree, Connie found a position at a small Quaker school in Maryland where she taught high school English for three years. It was an ideal situation; the position was a “teacher’s dream come true”

...because it is kids who go to private school, kids who are motivated, you don’t have to deal with a lot of discipline. The curriculum was mine to design. I had no real requirements, one course was World Lit, I got to choose the World Lit that I wanted. One course was American Lit and I got to choose the American lit that I wanted. I made my course, I had a course on war, on the American Renaissance, whatever basically I felt like teaching, I could teach to my strengths which was really amazing experience.

In both of the teaching experiences Connie found success because she had a large degree of control over what she was teaching. As a young teacher, Connie was granted autonomy in her new practice. Being able to teach to her own strengths in both the high school and University positions developed her confidence and competence in teaching.

After three years, Connie and her husband realized the hustle and bustle of living in the Washington D.C. area was not for them. Her husband, [an educator also?] found a position at Pioneer State University that looked promising so they moved. Rather than pursuing teaching Connie took a position full time position as an administrative assistant at the University. It was right after Labor Day when she began to feel depressed because
it was the first time in six years that she was not preparing for school. She had not realized how much of her identity was wrapped up in being a teacher. It was then that she explored getting back to what she enjoys doing and she decided that she would take the necessary steps to get certified as a public school teacher. Connie discovered and inquired about the Professional Development School and was invited by Dr. Jameson to participate. At first she was reluctant because it did not pay, but, she would be certified to teach public school in one year. She applied and enrolled for this reason. Connie graduated in the Spring of 2006 with a Master’s degree in English Education. She was hired at the end of her internship by the Scarlet Area School district and is currently enrolled in the Pioneer State pursuing a PhD in education while working.

**Ideas and Experiences at the Heart of Teaching**

Connie knows that one of her abilities in life is to be able to see the good in every person. At the same time, one of her constant aims as an English teacher is to teach students to think critically. This she couples with knowing that in her heart she is an eternal optimist, not just in theory but in practice also. This viewpoint naturally springs from her own experiences in life. While in high school, she worked with troubled students in a writing/riding therapy program where the students learned to take responsibility for themselves while coming to understand how to ride and groom and write about horses. Connie discovered that many of the students in the program were simply stereotyped and needed to feel respected for who they were. Connie has a genuine empathy and understanding for people who are labeled, or considered outsiders and different than others. She carries with her a respect and appreciation for every person.
This stems from her closeness with an uncle who is mentally retarded but also to experiences in her life, in school and out that have brought out her sensibility to others.

So I feel like, any everyone is capable of being loved, and so many kids have not been given a chance and they have been stereotyped and if they realize that your respect them, they will start to do amazing things, and it is for you they realize that suddenly that they can do these great things. And I think that, I know that they are capable of critical thinking regardless of what their reading level is.

Connie identified numerous experiences while in elementary and high school that she realized as being relevant to her becoming a teacher. She was often paired by the teacher to help a struggling student in their schoolwork; she tutored close friends and even a boyfriend in areas where they needed help. She also remembered further back to when she gained an empathetic position to others. There was a student in kindergarten that she recalled as being different than other students; an outsider and Connie were paired with him for activities.

I remember distinctly that he had these black glasses and like they were, and his shirt was always buttoned wrong, and he kind of smelled funny and he was always my partner for the fire drills…Because no one would want to dance with him, or dance with him during music class, or whatever and I you know I did it, I remember being a little distasteful about it, but as I grew up, I remember realizing, like we were on the same bus route, and he would get off the bus, in the bad, cross the tracks, we didn’t really have tracks, but, he lived in the bad part of town, and I remember thinking it must be really hard, to be who he is…

This experience brought out a consciousness of how the world is, some reality, a true part of herself, coupled with a desire for the world to be different, to be kinder to be a more understanding place.

I don’t know why I had at such a young age, I had that realization but, you remember those thoughts. In a small town where I grew up, you were labeled, you were one of the LS kids, and I remember… But it was different, he was labeled from the town. It was like oh, and there was like, and I just remember feeling a lot of sympathy, I was like gosh I am really am lucky that I am not that person. And I guess part of that realization is that, I could have been that person, it is a matter of luck where you are born and where you are born to, I think that
realization that situations dictate how other people treat you sometimes. And I just
never wanted to it to be like that. And I am not saying I was the nicest person in
the world, but I had those thoughts.

In the 9th grade there was another student who was perceived as an outsider,
different because she was artistic and Connie recalls defending her, and thinking about
why people do such horrible things to others. She remembered teachers doing the same;
labeling students as workers and non workers when Connie knew her peers differently.
She came to a certain awareness.

… it really has started as early as kindergarten, realizing that, there, by the grace
of God go I, there is no difference in who, in what we are capable of, there is a
difference in how we are labeled by the world around us.

Experiences in the PDS

Connie was already an experienced teacher when she began the PDS internship.
Having taught at the college level, as well in the Quaker school, she had already had
particular professional background that would inform her experience in the PDS. She
acknowledged the difficulty of being an intern with the amount of experience she already
had as a teacher. She is a deeply collaborative person, and, from her familiarity working
in the Quaker school she developed methods and approaches for democratic classrooms
and consensus building techniques that are very much at the heart of her philosophy of
teaching. Connie expected a very collaborative relationship with her mentors and within
the program and worked with three “co-teachers” throughout the year, and found that
each one had a different way of mentoring. The first one Connie worked with gave her so
much classroom responsibility that there was little mentorship. Although Connie had full
control of the classroom, she barely had time for the PDS. When Connie confronted her
co-teacher about the amount of work she was doing she was given an ultimatum “It is all
or nothing.” Connie chose to walk away and find another mentor. Her second mentor simply modeled lessons and Connie had to repeat exactly what he did in the following classes, like a robot, and although she learned to teach differently, it was not a particularly enlightened or a collaborative approach.

**Losing the Ego and Transformation**

Connie learned the most from her third mentor/co-teacher. The relationship was conflict ridden and a struggle. For Connie, she had to check her ego because she often got the message that her approach was just not right. This was a challenge, but Connie was conscious of her ego getting in the way. The PDS experience was a time for Connie to experiment, and not become a teacher but improve her already developed practice.

I tried it her way and it worked. And, so, hey wow look at that. And I felt had I done it my way, had she let me do it my way it still would have worked, but, now I have two different ways to do a discussion. For me, now the fact that I got past that egocentric stubbornness, and realized that I am not going to learn unless I try new things. To me that was very critical; that I have to let go of the self in the situation. Because it is not about me, it is about what can be best for the kids and if I know more things about how to teach, that is better for the students, not, oh, Connie has such a great way of doing discussion. No, she has more than one way of doing discussion.

The willingness to let go of her narrow egocentric concerns that were interfering with her own learning became the key to her being able to learn and progress. Connie did not think that letting go of the self was a built in part of the PDS program, but doing so was instrumental in her own transformation.

…because the ego is so personal, you can tell someone to check their ego, and they are going to get pissed about it, they are going to be stubborn, I think if you can let go of self, this program can be transformational, but I think if you don’t think you are going to change. Because really it is that letting go and taking a risk, it is doing something different, it is doing something that you are not comfortable with and that to me is what is transformational. I don’t think without losing the self, can you become transformed.
Authenticity and Duality

Connie put herself on the sidelines when it came to participating in department meetings at the level she was used to as a teacher. It was frustrating, and there were times when she wanted to speak out about what she saw happening around her, but she did not. Connie likened her experience in the PDS as an exercise in trying on different masks to see which one would fit the best depending on the situation. Connie felt like she had to “jump through the hoops” in order for her to get what she wanted, which was the credits to become certified. At the same time, she did learn new approaches to work with students in the classroom.

I let a lot of things go that I would disagree with or argue with because I learned early on that it really won’t get me anywhere and that the other person isn’t really listening, so I would be talking to myself. So for me, this year has been very uncomfortable in a lot of ways because I don’t feel like I have been true to who I am as a teacher and that, it’s been odd. It is probably different for people who have never taught and don’t know who they are as a teacher, but that modeling or experimenting is very exciting. But for me it is still exciting for me to do that, but it’s also uncomfortable because I already know who I am.

Connie’s not arguing, and being selfless in her outward persona made her feel as if she was not being true. Connie acted from a different place than from her self. She put her own identity and self on the side, experimented, tried new techniques and found that at the center was not her ego, but the she operated from a place that is truly in the best interest of the students.

The times when she did feel most authentic and true to herself though was either when she was working with students one-on-one, or when her mentor was not present, and Connie was the substitute teacher (which she was able to do because of her previous experience.)
So, usually my most authentic time in the classroom would be when I was alone in the class with the kids or the days when my mentor was in and out, in my lesson. Because so many times I taught a lesson that was not my lesson and to me that is inauthentic. I can still be authentic within it but if I am not the one that has created, bit I can do that, and there can be authentic moments within it, bit I believe when you take someone else’s, work, because it is not who you are, you are not coming from that place inside,

The duality of being an intern yet having been a teacher before resonated with Connie throughout the internship, but she also noticed that her own identity as a teacher was still reinforced through the students trust, interest and communication with her throughout the year.

Connections

Connie had some reservations at the beginning of the year and worries that she was going to be the oldest person involved, but it was not the case. There were a number of other people in the program who were older than Connie, one who was previously a teacher and two interns who had significant amounts of experience in other fields.

Connie was able to draw connections throughout her immersion in the PDS to the time she spent at the University of Vermont as a graduate student, similar in a personal and professional closeness she felt to the other interns.

There have been a couple of times this year that I really felt that camaraderie I had in graduate school that I didn’t realize I had missed so much, where there are people going through the same thing that you are, you can talk to them, but you can not talk to your significant other, because they don’t really get what you are going through; you are not quite where the professors are, you are not quite where the teachers are, and yet, you realize some of what you are doing is just as good as what they are doing. Actually there are a lot of parallels to my graduate school experience and it has been really enjoyable.

Connie’s also felt a close connection to the students, and for her, the closeness was an organic process; it is not there at the start of the school year, but it is exists at the
conclusion. She and her husband have decided they will not have children (for now) and that her life is to be a teacher and she considers all the students as her own. She was very involved throughout the year in the school community, and forged a deeper connection between her students and her authentic self.

I’ll go to their games, I’ll watch their plays, and say you did a great job or I see them in the paper I mention it, they don’t, they haven’t been getting sleep I’ll ask them if they are doing ok. It is all these little things combined, I think it is an awareness. It is noticing that a kid is falling asleep everyday in class and asking how they are feeling. You know, keeping an eye out for when their stuff is displayed. It is such a huge thing for a teacher to say, “Wow, I really like the pottery you had displayed out there. Such a little thing for us, but I think it creates that…

Even though throughout the year there were times when Connie felt isolated and she was not being true to herself, she was able to collaborate with others. This is one area where the PDS experience has broadened her lifer. Connie felt that because of her experience this year, the idea she wants to further commit herself to as an educator is how to make groups work well together. She discovered how people can connect with others and really listen to them and have a dialogue instead of a debate.

In the end, Connie was able to step back and critically reflect on her already developed practice. Already a confident teacher coming in, she considered her ego to be her Achilles heel this year, and she was able to put it on the side and learn. At the end of the year, she was hired on to teach 10th grade English at the Pioneer School District. Putting herself on the side paid off.
MENTOR-ALUMNI PROFILES

Lisa
Mentor-Associate

Lisa is a 32-year-old married white female who is mother of 2 children: a 4-year-old boy and an infant girl. Lisa’s father was in the military, and she grew up outside a military base in San Antonio, Texas. She attended primary and secondary schools that were strict, non-descript, cookie-cutter like institutions. Having been introduced by her father to reading when she was three, she entered kindergarten knowing how to read and she was thereafter placed in the district gifted program where she stayed throughout her k-12 school years. The large high school she attended was located across the street from the elementary school. There were metal detectors, gangs and teen pregnancies. Many students did not speak English as their first language, and out of a class of about 1000, only 400 graduated with diplomas. For Lisa though, having been placed in the gifted, extended learning program she received the best the school had to offer taking advanced placement (AP) courses in many subjects including physics and calculus. She entered Texas A&M University to study education but dropped it soon after having to take classes in how to decorate a bulletin board and use an overhead projector. Having always been a reader and an excellent writer, she wound up graduating with a degree in English and a minor in linguistics, where she was exposed to the writings of Donaldo Macedo the linguist and cultural studies scholar. Lisa married and in 1999 moved to Boston where her husband found employment. Finding out that Donaldo Macedo was a professor at the University of Massachusetts at Boston she applied and was accepted as a graduate student under his mentorship earning a Master’s degree in Linguistics. This relationship has had a transformational impact on Lisa’s own
vocation/effort/work and inspired her to pursue a PhD. In 2001 she began work at Pioneer State University in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction under Dr. Jameson, the founder of the Professional Development School where she was a graduate assistant and associate in the PDS for 2 years. She is currently employed as an English teacher in the Scarlet Area School District.

**Experiences and Ideas at the Heart of Teaching.**

While attending graduate school, Lisa worked as an English as a Second Language instructor in the Chinatown area of Boston and her experiences and observations during this time were instrumental in her ongoing motivation and desire to teach. It was when Lisa began to first reflect back upon her own education and the cultural, social and economic chasms that exist between the different races and ethnicities.

I enjoyed my educational experience but by the time I started studying for a master’s degree I had been cheated of a lot of experiences. We had never talked about questioning where knowledge comes from or questioning the power structures that create certain conditions for education to happen. And so, I would really say that the experiences that are at the heart of my teaching didn’t necessarily happen when I was in school, but it was when I was studying for my masters degree at UMASS Boston. I studied with Donaldo Macedo and he really opened my eyes to say that education is a place of cultural struggle and that idea of being able to help people in becoming more critical and change society through teaching in schools is probably what lies at the heart of my teaching.

Lisa discussed images and impressions from her own schooling which she began to look at through a more critical, socially conscious lens once she began studying at the graduate level. She talked about a girl with whom she played basketball with in the 7th grade that had her first baby when she was 16. She discussed the social ramifications and implications of a 3 year old boy she who had a locker near her who was sent to prison for life at the age of 13 for severely beating another student outside a movie theater, and the
different perceptions of a Latino boy and a white girl holding hands, which was not an issue as Lisa saw it when she was in San Antonio, but during graduate school it became defined as an interracial relationship and an area of cultural conflict.

And I never, ever thought of something like that as being an interracial relationship. I mean we live in San Antonio, there is not, I don’t know if I ever saw a racial difference, and then I can also remember going to the grocery store and noticing very early everyone who worked at the grocery store was Latino/a and everyone who shopped at the grocery store was white. Noticing that there was this big, that although we think or we thought of San Antonio as this big, this great interracial city, that doesn’t make up for that huge, huge class differences---just because we are intermingling doesn’t mean that we are all the same, and that didn’t hit me until, to really see the obvious class struggles, I knew that we weren’t as rich as other people, but to see that there is this entire other side of the city didn’t really hit me until I was in college [and reflected back on it].

It was through graduate training that Lisa began to tie her own life experiences and viewpoints to theoretical concepts related to the social context of schooling. The work of Paulo Freire, and constructivist teaching philosophies deeply inform Lisa’s practice. Lisa is good at, enjoys and knows how ‘to do’ school and she became a teacher because she wanted to fight for social justice believing the way in which she was best inclined and prepared to do this was through the schools as an educator.

The core questions at the heart of Lisa’s teaching are fundamental ones informed by basic literacy principles: Why read? Why write? What is the teacher’s purpose in conducting an activity? What is the student’s purpose in doing any classroom literacy activity? What are the students’ social worlds and how can she bring these worlds into what she is doing as a teacher? Lisa’s guiding ethic is to create classroom experiences based upon what her students already know, not areas where they are deficient. In doing so, she is better able to lead them to knowledge of themselves and the world which they can construct around these understanding and meanings of being literate.
Experiential Learning in the PDS

Lisa came to Pioneer State to pursue a PhD in Language and Literacy and met Dr. Jameson, the founder of the Professional Development School. In this position, she was assigned to work with the PDS where she was given a multifaceted role. Certified to teach English as a Second Language, the roles encompassed her being a PDS intern in the ESL department at the high school and as an associate in the PDS working with the interns. In the latter position, she was not just aiding their classroom practice, but was conducting formal interviews of the interns in order to better understand the function, impact and effect of the PDS on their learning to become a teacher. Lisa lived the experience as an intern and also conducted mini ethnographic-like studies of the interns based on discussions with Dr. Jameson and her own inquiry into language and literacy. In doing so, Lisa had a deeply informed understanding of how the interns learn to become teachers via their participation in the PDS. Lisa described the process she came to understand as to how learning occurs in the PDS

On the most basic level you[the intern] are thrown in to something and you have to think on your feet. And the questions that arise while thinking on your feet, if you research them well, and think deeply about them, try things based on what you read, what you may understand, reflect with help, on what happened why, what went wrong what went right, and then try again, it is different than trial and error, because it really involved this idea of thinking deeply and doing a lot of research in to what happened and not just going with your gut instinct and just saying well, probably I shouldn’t have done that on a Friday because the kids were not with me, you know that is not the only reason why your lesson flopped. Let’s look really at the educational theory behind it.

The intern is immersed in the school/teaching experience and because of this engagement, many different questions emerge and evolve about the nature of learning, the students, schooling, the profession of teaching, planning lessons, etc., By reflecting on these questions, on their own, with their mentors, with the other interns, and the
associates, and linking the reflections to the reading of relevant texts and contextualizing what they have read and learned, the interns, as a group and individually are better able to act on the issues they originally encountered and inquired about in an informed way. At the same time, knowledge production and learning is not solely situated with the intern. It is wider-and developed through collaborative, reflective theoretical measures.

“Because a reflection can be a useful tool if it is critical, theoretical reflection. If it is a litany of their complaints about the day, or if it is about “Oh my mentor just hates me.” it is completely useless.” What happened and why then what can you do to somehow influence the environments these activities are occurring in order to perhaps lead to more of what the students want to happen. How can you construct a learning environment that leads to a greater possibility of the kids learning what you want them to learn or learning things you never expected them to learn? But I think, so I think that reflection is a critical tool to help connect the intern to the students, to get them to switch from what it is that I am doing to what is it that is going on that I can maybe influence.

Critical reflection is a useful tool to connect the interns to the students and connect theory to classroom practice and professional development. It is a transformative personal and organizational process which then leads to other questions.

Lisa was able to distinguish the importance of how the PDS is organizationally and philosophically arranged to meet the primary interests of the student-interns, and also on how to improve classroom learning at the student level from multiple perspectives.

I really think one of the best things to a student intern that makes it much better than a student teacher is to have someone from the University there, someone who has had experience as well and can say, you know well, your lesson went really well, lets not, lets go beyond this level, lets think about what theories of education were you tapping, lets look at it from several different points of view. What would a behaviorist say? What would a psychologist say? What would a sociologist say? What would a cultural anthropologist say about what happened? You know and giving them those different perspectives I really think helps them learn.
The notion of professional development of the interns takes on a multi-faceted perspective in this light with connections being made between the intern to their own self, to other interns, to their mentors in the department, to texts, to the school and to the students.

**Connections**

These connections that Lisa felt herself and also promoted and developed as an associate helped the students to better understand the language and discourses of schooling. Lisa noted that the interns form their identity and are seen as part of a group of teachers in the school, not as interns, and this alters the nature of the professional experience they are encountering and engaged in. Where Lisa saw this having an impact was in the deeper purpose of preparing teachers; the interns center on what is in the best interest of the students, not worrying about their own selves as much.

They start to focus more on what is going on in their classroom and less on what they need to get done as a student. So that they can make that identity shift from “OK here is my portfolio, and at the end of the year, I have to have something that fits in every section of my portfolio and I need to do this and I need to do this” we can shift from what I need to do as a student they shift to thinking themselves as teachers and what their students need, what is best for them, I think the quality of the educational experience for the students is much more profound.

Lisa discussed teaching students to be able to see their classroom as a place that is not fixed, and they have the power and ability to change it using the guidance of literate principles. It is a continuous and ongoing process of understanding, and changing in order to meet the needs of the moment.

On a larger level, [the interns] are learning that their classrooms are texts, they are written, they are rewritten, they are changeable, they are malleable, they are coauthored by everyone there. But the classroom can be read at a basic level. You can read your classroom. And when we shift
the definition of a text from something that is static and done, to something that is constantly created and can constantly be rewritten and added to by any number of people, I think we can change our understanding of reality. Because then if everything is a text and everything can be changed, and a life can be a text, it can be rewritten if you have the authority as the author, (author-ity) to do it.

The authority to create anew granted to teacher and students, to question that which is considered real and to create representations of an idea in a personally meaningful way is an empowering concept and the nature of constructivist learning. It brings the notion of agency to the student.

I think that can empower young teachers, and I think that idea is important to get across to students, that the world, especially high school students who have never really questioned, maybe, you know they never really questions what is reality- they just take it for granted, if you can get them to question, wait a minute, if everything is constructed, then anything can be reconstructed. That might help them then lead to change things they don’t like. It kind of offsets the cynicism of “Ahh, what are you going to do? That is just the way life is.”

**Ideal Image of a teacher the PDS promotes**

In a conversation Lisa had with another English teacher not a part of the PDS program, the teacher explained that she discusses three “concentric circles of knowledge” with her Advanced Placement 12th grade English class in the beginning of the year: “What you must know, what you need to know and what is probably nice to know-but not necessary,” and she tells her students that the class is about things that are nice to know. As much as Lisa enjoys the professional relationship she has with this teacher, Lisa’s view of education is significantly different.

I would hope that the interns would absolutely never put their curriculum out in this circle of things that are nice to know… An ideal intern would turn it around and say what do the students feel they must know and how can I work with that as the base in order to put in things that I think they must know. Not just leave it at a
functional level of literacy if that is all they want to know but how can I also incorporate that, how can the kids feel the things I am doing are rigorous, relevant and reflective.

Impact of PDS

Lisa discussed the impact of the process of learning in the professional development school and the impact it could have on classroom teaching.

When you experience education fundamentally differently there is a better chance that what you create in your own classroom will be fundamentally different. So the theory goes. So I would say that being, that learning through doing and going through the inquiry cycle yourself and learning how to be a teacher, one of the things I think it does is it sets up teaching as more than just a job. It is your intellectual passion. Hopefully, having more young teachers where teaching is their intellectual passion, and not just their job, could then transform what they do in the classroom-

The interns become immersed in the environment of schooling, the PDS experience has been described as like the first year of teaching with scaffolding. It is a linking of passion to professionalism.

Metaphor

a happy vagabond, who just wanders in and out of experiences, learning from all the different things that happen to her, none of them are planned, none of them are set out to meet a greater goal, a lot of life is…do this, do this, do this, it really has helped to deal with just, you are always learning, no matter what happens you are learning. And you may not be learning what people may want you to be learning, but you are always learning. [very momentous] and spontaneous and that is how I felt all my learning was in the pds.
Cindy
Alumni Intern-Master’s Degree

Cindy is a 30 year old recently married white female. She grew up in an upper middle class, predominantly white suburb of Chicago. She is the youngest of eight children and received her undergraduate degree in English Literature from Columbia University; the same institution where her father, an engineer, and two older brothers also attended. Growing up, Cindy was an excellent student having graduated in the top 15% of her high school class of about 250, although she was never placed in any advanced classes throughout her schooling. Cindy had a rich educational upbringing. She attributes this in part to her large family which she feels a closeness to in her teaching because many of her ideas come from reflecting on the experiences she had while she was the youngest. Her mother, as a stay at home mom, was actively involved in all of her children’s education; volunteering at school as a classroom aide, attending field trips, reading stories to them at night and the like. Her father, accomplished in his field and president of a number of companies, provided Cindy with an understanding of how to communicate and work with people on all different levels. Being the youngest in a large family, she saw her older siblings get in trouble and have different experiences ahead of her. Cindy grew up with a keen eye for observing and learning from the actions and behaviors of others. At the time of Cindy’s graduation from Columbia, her father had heard about the developing PDS program from a friend who was then Dean of the College of Education at Pioneer State University. Upon graduation, Cindy left New York City and pursued her Master’s degree at Pioneer State. Cindy went through the PDS during its second year when there were only 4 other interns in the program. Upon completing the PDS program and receiving her Master’s degree in English Education,
she began work on a PhD at Pioneer State University in Curriculum and Instruction which she is in the process of finishing. She is currently employed as a reading specialist in the Scarlet Area School District.

**Critical Incidents at School**

There are critical incidents during elementary, middle and high school that provided Cindy with her motivation to teach. The experiences Cindy discussed occurred in the 1st grade, 5th grade, 7th grade and in high school, and each one recalls a close learning relationship with a teacher.

When Cindy entered the first grade, she had corrective eye surgery and remembered being the only child in elementary school with glasses. Upon returning to school following the operation, she was removed from her regular classroom for 3 weeks so she could have one-on-one reading instruction from a specialist. She clearly remembered working with the teacher and how together they created flash cards placed on a ring binder, and wrote books together where Cindy would illustrate them where she was the main character. One particular book Cindy recollected was shaped like a light bulb.

And granted I was only in that class for about two and a half weeks but for, you know, it made quite an impact for me to still remember just two and a half weeks of my elementary school years … the books that I wrote were always like adventures, you know, the main character was out somewhere away from a city looking for something, uncovers like a treasure and brings it back. And it was always you know it’s kind of funny there was a theme. They were always along the same line. I do remember that.

These biographical memories she links to her motivation to become a reading specialist.

During this same year a student-teacher came to her classroom and impressed her with box reading sets shaped like a barn. Being able to manipulate these materials and feeling very attracted to the different colors and shaped in the sets maintained a certain resilience
in Cindy’s memories that ground her teaching practice today. The theme of an individual seeking adventure away from the city, like the stories she wrote in the 1st grade, still holds for Cindy, having grown up near Chicago and schooled in New York City, she is living in the center of one of the most rural states in the country working as a reading specialist.

**Middle and High School**

During middle and high school there were three teachers who had a profound effect and influence on Cindy’s becoming a teacher. There was a personal connection beyond the classroom with her 5th grade teacher that developed because she babysat for Cindy and her siblings when they were young. That year Cindy became a prolific reader and it was also the first time she received straight A’s on her report card. This relationship led to an early integration between school and personal life and helped Cindy figure out what it was she was good at and enjoyed doing; which was reading and writing. In the 7th grade she was taken under the wing by her English teacher and given special responsibilities where she as a student was connected to teachers in a more ‘professional’ way.

I remember a teacher, her name was Mrs. Raier and she was somewhat eccentric and she kind of took me under her wing. She was my 6th grade, no 7th grade teacher, and she asked me to be the editor of the school newspaper. And they hadn’t had an editor in years. And so I got to be editor of the newspaper and I met with her and a group of students and other English teachers every day during lunch and we worked on the paper, the school paper. And I remember how important that made me feel outside of you know the ins and outs of all the classroom activities, club involvement, and something extra. And I still think about some of the things that she told me and how she encouraged me and that sort of thing.
All of these teachers made their profession personal to Cindy. She was active and engaged in the process of school and learning by working more closely with the teachers than the typical classroom interactions.

During her sophomore and senior year in high school, Cindy had an English teacher named Mr. Hout whose passion for detail and unconventional methods had a lasting effect on her interest in reading and her understanding of the passion and art that lies beneath the surface in the science of teaching.

I mean I loved reading probably from 5th grade on is when I really started to like to read. And I remember starting to read To Kill a Mockingbird and I remember you know this, this tall white haired teacher who always wore the suit. He went to the closet and he pulled out this little treasure chest and as we were reading, he’s doing this as we’re reading, and it was at one point when the little boy in the story got caught in a fence and ripped his pants and all of a sudden he stopped us and opens up this chest. And he takes out this little pair of jeans. And, and they’re ripped and it looks like someone you know sewed them up…And he had little soap figurines that he carved out and he did all these little extras to add to the text. Mr. Hout provided insight in to the amount of care and thought that goes in to creating a classroom environment where students are engaged. Having a teacher who also babysat for her when she was younger was able to relate things, in a particular way to Cindy’s personal life. She was also asked to be the newspaper editor in the 7th grade, which made Cindy feel more responsible and connected to the profession.

Ideas at the Heart of Teaching

At the heart of Cindy’s idea of teaching are universal themes that emanate from her own experiences. When approaching a topic or preparing lessons to deliver to a class of students or a group of teachers, she considers equity to be of primary importance. Because of her own upbringing and education, when it comes to her students, she aims to portray or model what society sees as acceptable and appropriate as compared to how the
students act. The fact that she has teaches in a predominantly white and rural community also influences her practice and ideas.

Diversity is, is huge for me and I think that comes from me going from Wheaton, Illinois, which was primarily white to New York City, which was such a . . . it was a culture shock you know. I was, I was afraid. And I think about when I, I’m in this, this, the Scarlet Area, about how different the world is outside. And I guess I always have that in the back of my mind—how to create some sort of exposure and understanding without prejudice, without stereotypes, or being able to acknowledge your stereotypes and biases.

The ideas at the heart of Cindy’s teaching spring from her having experienced racial and ethnic diversity in New York City. Experiencing different races and ethnicities in such close proximity and the culture shock that came along with it, while a student at Columbia, had an insightful effect on her practice. Although frightened at first, no longer fearful but knowledgeable and educated herself, she understands how different the world is from where she was raised, which racially and ethnically resembles where she teaches now. Her movement from Wheaton, Il., to New York to Scarlet, PA is a process of bringing knowledge of other places to her students, and exemplifies a progression of experiential learning which she applies to her work.

Questions at the Heart

Cindy, although close in age to her students, realizes there is a gap between what she teaches and what her students are actually learning. She knows there is dissonance and questions their overwhelming acceptance and use of technology, yet, she has learned, and is dedicated to the idea, that all students can learn. She is committed to constantly seeking the answer to “What is the right key to open the student’s mind?”
Experiences While an Intern in the PDS

The first few years of the founding and forming of the PDS were difficult and challenging for all of the school district and university participants involved. Because of the aims and the underlying philosophy of the PDS, along with the style of the founding university leader, in the beginning, roles, policies and curricular were ambiguous and there were many bruised egos and hurt feelings along the way. The aim of the PDS, at its core, is to meet the literacy needs of the students; the method for reaching this goal involved deep change in the school community; moving from a traditional department structure to a collaborative, multi-dimensional, school-university partnership was untidy and disruptive. During the formative years, members were dedicated to the mission, yet they struggled. Cindy was one of the first interns to go through the PDS during this time, and she too was challenged in trying to help maintain this collaborative environment.

Cindy’s began her internship with one mentor whom she got along with very well. She made excellent progress and enjoyed and felt part of the classroom learning community. Later Cindy was switched by the head of the English department to another mentor for unknown/irrational reasons that were beyond her understanding and control. Cindy tried to confront the department head and was rebuked. Relations between the university and the school district department were strained these first years and Cindy was advised by the university founder to accept the decision. Cindy’s relationship with her new assigned mentor was strained. In this new PDS organization, the roles and rules and policies were ambiguous. She felt as if she was punished for taking the initiative to find out why she was switched and to improve her placement; many of Cindy’s professional discourse stems from this undefined environment.
Critical Incident as an Intern and Transcendence

The transformative effects of play were at work when Cindy and another intern attempted to help out with and smooth over the hurt feelings and bruised egos that needed healing toward the end of the year.

So Dana and I created a Monopoly board. We thought you know what is, what is something that families do together that helps them you know get away from everyday life and let them enjoy and maybe have some personality? And, and you get some in play. And play is so important. And so we brought in, we created this Monopoly board. It’s in the closet; I still have it. And it was based upon the curriculum of the school. So we have you know 9, 10, 11, 12 on the sides of the board and all the books. We didn’t have avenues; they were books. And we created all this stuff and we brought it in and we started off our session with . . . it was right when Ally McBeal was very popular and she had a theme song. So we had a theme song. And we made everyone close their eyes and we really tried to engage the participants in some play. And we wanted them to laugh. We wanted them to start to enjoy each other. And it was really then . . . there were . . . even though we played I mean even in the middle of our board game tears were shed. I mean it was really intense. But really that, those moments were when you really felt like you were part of like a very close inner circle of people that reveal themselves, that didn’t hide their emotions. And even though it was intense and you felt uncomfortable, by the end of the year I remember we had this celebration. And my mentor didn’t come because there were so many hurt feelings.

As Huizinga\(^2\) noted (1944) “in play” there is something at play that transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action (p.1). In creating the Monopoly game, Cindy and the other intern found a way to utilize and actively engage their own elemental concerns of a family as well as the difficult organizational environment in an active metaphorical way. In doing so, she was able to create a vehicle to rise above the upsetting facts and difficult situations and provide a much needed authentic experience for all who were present.

Creating and experiencing this transcendent activity still informs and motivates her practice today. As reading specialist, Cindy now works closely conducting

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professional development seminars across the school as well as with specifically with the PDS teachers and interns.

...every time I do a workshop for our teachers and witness their interactions you know something that is not typical within their day. I, I feel that little peak after every workshop that I’ve ever done - that I’ve given others a moment to actually think and reflect and inquire—take something away with them. And it’s very, very momentary you know it’s probably . . . it’s, it’s just a few minutes worth. But that becomes your motivation. I mean you can even take it down to the classroom level. And you have peaks, I mean, just looking out and seeing one kid who you’ve been working on for weeks just understanding one concept and finally like the light bulb comes on. You know and they get it and you’re like ahh! And then you start over.

**Autonomy**

Reflecting back to the rich experiences she had while in elementary and secondary school that brought Cindy to teaching, it was interesting to discuss the notion of her feeling autonomy throughout her participation in the PDS. From the very first week that Cindy was an intern, she felt extremely capable and competent in front of the classroom which she attributed to her academic preparation as well as her own work ethic which she is able to apply very easily and naturally in different situations. There was a maturation process at work between her transition from being an intern to an English teacher to a reading specialist.

I don’t know if it was the change from being a, a half-time English and a half-time reading specialist to being a full time reading specialist that really made me autonomous. It was really . . . and for a year or so I disconnected from the PDS and really worked on who I am as a reading specialist. And granted I did bring a lot of my pedagogical views and philosophies and, and a lot of that with me. But it kind of opened up a new window of opportunity for me to stretch you know my intellect and my belief that I learned in that discourse to a, a broader range of what education is. And so that, it was almost like a growing up. It was a coming of age in a sense for, for me as a teacher. The maturation process harkens back to the experiences in the elementary school grades.
Being promoted can be linked in a circular fashion to her experience when she returned to school following her eye operation and she worked with the reading specialist. There was a personal and a professional encoding that took place then that Cindy worked out through her own course of action in becoming a reading specialist. Moving from a half time to full time removed a dual nature of her professionalism, bringing a wholeness to her practice raising her level of autonomy in her professional practice.

Authenticity

Cindy uses an applied experiential approach of bringing knowledge to her students. Her inquiry process to a new topic includes conducting research, both academic and personal that enables her to more clearly bring her authentic self to share with her students. Cindy’s inquiry starts by her immersion with a question. From there it is as if there is a maze which she wanders, critiques, contextualizes and sleuths herself through seeking information and deeper insights in order to form a unit. Often times, part of her research includes interviewing or discussing the topic with either an expert or, in one particular case, a family member.

Cindy developed a unit to teaching the novel The Color of Water, a story about a family made up of a Jewish woman and an African American man who had 10 children, which addresses issues of race, immigration, diversity and acceptance. In conducting research prior to teaching, Cindy recalled the story her grandfather told about immigrating to the United States and asked her father to write the story down for her so she could share it with her class.

And then I read his e-mail to the class. And it was funny just by opening up that little part of who I was and where I came from it felt different. It felt you know it felt like I gave them the invitation to share about who they were.
And this process had an authentic and transformative effect within the context of the classroom in the study of the text.

In life, many argue that our nature is to see ourselves as different from others, but there is a constant desire that within this difference, we come to realize that this other is in many ways our own self as well, and just how alike to others we are. Cindy’s journey to understanding her self in the context of others is her journey to becoming a reading specialist. In many ways it is a journey of acceptance. Her experiences as a youngster entering first grade, working independently for those two weeks following her operation had to do with feeling comfortable in school and fitting in. Moving through school, her later experiences nurtured her love of reading and she found ways that she became closer to the profession of teaching in a natural and personal manner. Cindy’s interpretations of her experiences were a following of her personal nature, her own light bulb, to her place as a professional that was encoded within her from when she was small.

Metaphor

It’s almost like I was given a map, okay. And it had a zoom function and I started off on the zoom function, okay. So it was just very close-up and personal with one really small area. And then as I mean I’ve been here, this is my, this is my 8th year, and then slowly over the years as my relationships have changed, my mentor moved, I switched positions gradually, I’ve been able to like zoom out further and further. And I’m seeing more of a, a general picture of education within our district, within our school. And how people interact, what motivates, how standards affect curriculum. I’ve been able to see a whole bunch of different things that I never saw when I was doing this [before].
Nica
Mentor-Alumni Intern-Master’s Degree

Nica is a 25 year old married white female who grew up and attended school in an upper middle class New Jersey suburb 25 miles from New York City. She is the oldest of three children and the formation of her teacher/mentor identity can be traced back to her parents working nights and Nica being responsible for caring for her two younger sisters. Nica always performed very well in school; she was an ideal student and started her college experience at Seton Hall University in the honors program as a Secondary Education major. Wanting a more residential college experience, she transferred to the Honors College at Pioneer State University graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in English after writing her senior thesis on Kate Chopin’s The Awakening. Her summertime job during college was a significant pre-professional experience in her development as a teacher. Nica spent eight weeks every summer as a camp counselor working with 4th and 5th grade girls. Along with the traditional camp topics she also discussed with the girls issues like body image, group interactions, peer relations and how to be sensitive to one another. Topics she maintains as being important to her current practice. She found it remarkable, year after year, to see how her returning students grew and progressed. One summer while at Pioneer State, surrounded by roommates who were business majors, she gave in, as she says, and took an internship at Harper Collins Publishing in New York City. Although she loves reading and books, it is the communication and relationships that teaching allows one to form that Nica values highest. She found the corporate environment cold and impersonal and after 3 weeks went back to work as a counselor at the summer camp. Right before graduating from college, she received an email inviting her to participate in the PDS. Although not an
education major at Pioneer State, Nica knew she wanted to teach. Seeing the similarities to her camp experiences with the immersion aspect of the PDS, she applied and was accepted. Her inquiry project explored the personal and professional aspects of self and their interrelationship in the classroom setting. She graduated with a Master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction and was hired by the Scarlet Area School District at the end of the PDS program.

Ideas at the Heart of Teaching

Nica by nature is a very social person. She speaks swiftly and is very detail oriented in her descriptions. She laughs a lot and listens closely; she is attuned to the dynamic of conversation. It makes sense, and it is very clear that at the heart of Nica’s teaching are relationships. Nica sees her job as a teacher as one who builds a community around relationships with students which starts by being able to talk to each other as human beings; not seeing the student-teacher relationship as a superior-inferior one. Having had to take care of her younger sisters while growing up, she is able to empathize with her students and she works hard to set up her classroom as a space where students can take risks and feel comfortable because they trust the relationship that has formed between teacher and student. For Nica, reading and writing is a social and varied act which encompasses more literacy than grammar. She found that her PDS experience made her aware of the numerous social worlds that exist and that there are multiple experiences that she was able to become involved where she realized that her students are diverse learners and part of different communities than she is. One of the most powerful learning experiences Nica had encompassed just this idea.

Experiences in the PDS
Nica saw her participation in the PDS as a critical juncture in her life. Whereas throughout high school and college she always knew how to get a good grade, but the PDS experience was different. The traditional way of grading was not how an intern was assessed or evaluated, nor was it the way her mentor used predominantly to grade students in the classroom. But the traditional way of teaching and learning is the only type of learning Nica was familiar with. The inquiry model of learning made her literally ‘fall off her chair’ early in the PDS experience.

I knew in college what I needed to do to get a good grade. I knew. A teacher could come in, a professor could come in and like I could size you up, I knew exactly what to do to get my ‘A’ and be out. Right. And that was what I did all through college and I was very successful at it. And when I came to PDS, shortly after a few weeks, Mary said she didn’t use points and the whole idea of learning and trusting the process and like doing something to find, like to explore, not to just get an ‘A’ or just to get the end result. That was when inquiry smacked in to me. And, I wasn’t resistant at all, I found it liberating. I was like wow, I can like, this was something to try and be better, and explore and that was kind of liberating.

The PDS inquiry model of learning, a constructivist and experiential immersion approach was liberating, but it was not easy. One of the strongest aspects of the PDS is that it makes you acutely aware of the different social worlds that exist within and outside of the school community. Needing to understand the different communities which students come from and are part of is one of the key teachings of the PDS. Because of this and her teaching assignments, Nica was forced to ask herself difficult questions and confront her own identity and personal history throughout the course of the year.

With her mentor, Nica taught an advanced 11th grade English class where she was easily able to identify with the grade driven, college bound students and found it easier to value, trust and help teach her mentor’s holistic lesson plans and grading structure. The other part of her intern placement was in an 11th grade class of applied academic students
which consisted of at-risk and special education population of whom 98% had an individual education plan, many had reading skills at the 3rd-4th grade levels, and the class was known as the last stop before dropping out of school. It was an associate in the PDS program who pointed out to Nica that she showed little affinity with this group of students.

[She said] “Well, you don’t seem like really engaged with them, you don’t seem like you are active with them.” I’m like “I am showing up every day for work, I am with them, I am here” but, she made me think, like, “Oh, maybe I don’t, I am not excited to see them in the morning and like, you know, maybe they smell like cigarettes, and who are you to judge what they are doing.”

Reflecting on these words and thoughts, Nica had to confront her own high school experiences; where she came from and what her own experience was with this population of students in order to come to terms and integrate a more integrated professional identity.

Critical Incident in the PDS

It was immediately following the first anniversary of September 11 when Nica created a bulletin board about America, and prepared lessons about the 9/11, and the American Dream for the Advance 11th grade students. She knew it was a meaningful date in history to mark and discuss, but doing so caused her to seriously reflect on her identity and core reasons and motivations for teaching. She devised the activity for her the advanced but she did not consider the lower level students. She asked her mentor about preparing the lesson for the applied academics class and her mentor said “You can if you want.” This was the critical moment when Nica, looking back, realized she was on her own path and that no one in the PDS was going to tell her what to do when it comes to certain types of decisions. She decided not to prepare a lesson for the lower level
students because she remembered how they were laughing during the school wide 9/11 bell ceremony and believed they would not value her lessons. Nica was confronted and challenged in seminar early in the semester by one of the associates about her decision to not teach her lesson to the applied academics class, and also about the content of the billboard she created in commemoration of September 11, 2001.

She was like, “Well did you ever think that maybe from where you come from they value something different?” and she further asked “You know, do you feel that you are privileging certain cultural understandings of Americans, are you getting other perspectives of what America means to other people in other worlds. Perhaps someone in the Middle east what it means to be an American is quite different than what you are teaching your kids, are you showing them these different paradigms?”

These questions caused Victoria to turn inward and look at her own history and value system. She was shaken, challenged and angry and her prototypical patterned thinking was turned upside down. It was a humbling experience.

And, it kind of made me think. It made me feel like I was being persecuted, like I was being told that I was a socioeconomic bigot, like all these terrible awful things. But, to an extent she was right. I was not happy to see them in the morning. I was not engaging in a way that, because they were not like me, essentially, I didn’t know who these people were. And when it came to, and I reflected on it, all the vocational kids in my high school were sent to VOTEC, there was not inclusion in my school whatsoever. Like they were in the resource room, everyone was excluded. So the only people that I understood from my high school experience, and the type of learner that I was, were the college bound kids.

Reflecting, Nica had no real familiarity with the type of student she had in the applied academics class, they were different than she was, and she did not understand them. Her experiences, conditioning and growing up in an upper-middle class community, was one of not having contact or social relations with these types of students in a school setting. Critical self reflection while in the PDS caused her to become more considerate, and as time progressed, more socially responsible and understanding of different types of
students in her role as an educator. On a deeper level, she came to see a portion of her conditioned self...a self that through her own schooling and upbringing was blocking her willingness, not necessarily her ability, to work with these students.

One of the associates in the PDS program who worked closely with Nica throughout her PDS year discussed what it was like to see Nica experience this critical juncture in her teaching.

…it really fundamentally changed the way she taught and the way she worked and she was working with at the time Applied Academics and they were the least, they were the kids that were so bad, they couldn’t even be in the lowest classes. They were completely taken out of all classes and they did all of their work on a team and there was about 15 of them. It completely changed the way that she looked at them and how she wanted to open their eyes. A lot of them had really low reading levels, like 3rd and 4th grade literacy levels, a lot of them were very marginalized and a lot of them worked on farms, and a lot of them were openly racist, so she spent a lot of the year trying to shift paradigms but I am not sure if she would have been really able to do that had her own paradigm not been questioned. [Lisa interview]

Being in an environment where critical observation could be presented in an open forum enabled the process of transformation to happen. “Critical friends” as they are called in Ted Sizer’s Coalition of Essential Schools, played a valuable part in Nica’s overcoming of her conditioned self and meeting this group of students in a respectful and understanding fashion. As Starrat(2004) noted, authentic teachers understand that knowledge is a dialogue between intelligences found in the natural, social and cultural and social worlds implies involvement, in and respect for those relationships. Nica changed how she related to the students, in doing so, changed how she related to her self and transformed her practice.

**Autonomy & Authenticity**

Throughout Nica’s PDS experience she felt relatively autonomous in her role as an intern. Nica described her mentor as an abstract thinker who never really gave
directions, but created a dialogue and ongoing conversation about the class, school, students, lessons, and responsibilities that allowed Nica to create act on her own.

I always felt autonomous, because, you know, the conversations that Mary and I had never were more conversations than directions. So, after having a conversation about what’s next, I felt really autonomous. I had a little direction and knew what the team wanted, but, kind of made me explore an issue that maybe she didn’t look at and kind of made me bring all of my data, all of my resources, all of my feelings to the table and then we could work together and do something that is collaborative. And it is really a synthesis of all our ideas together. I guess that is when I felt most autonomous during the PDS.

Furthermore, when Nica had to decide on her inquiry project topic, her decision to research her professional persona, or as she put it Nica vs. Ms. Iacobazzo, came about after sifting through a number of ideas ranging from approaching race in the classroom to working with at-risk students before she conceived of the more inward looking question of how she can develop an image of a teacher and still bring her natural personality and build relationships to the classroom setting? She found a tremendous amount of autonomy in the process of writing and researching the inquiry project. Particular events that occurred in the Advanced 11 class and also another with her applied academic class brought about the integration of her teaching persona.

In the Advanced 11 class, over the course of a semester, one particular student named Lynette was continuously monopolizing classroom discussions with generalizations about the topics/lessons being presented so much that she was hindering other students from participating and to such a point where Nica’s felt her own self-being smothered.

I was finally sitting there and for the past three months you haven’t said boo because you were afraid and that’s not who you are you really speak your mind if it’s something you are concerned about and I was like “that’s it!” [smacks table] I was like, now Lynette, and first it was impossible, but I started questioning her and everyone looking at me and at the end of class I was like Mary, you shook
them up, I didn’t realize I was holding back so much of my natural enthusiasm, my natural stuff. You know, she was like “Yeah, I think you like freaked them out because it all came out at once, I think that it was good for you and eventually it would be good for them.”

Nica felt fearful and was apprehensive of her own authority and intelligence and being able to declare and utilize it took a profound amount of energy and will. This energy and will Nica had to conjure up on her own.

With the Applied Academic class the incident was a bit more graphic and the resolution collaborative. Nica had the responsibility of proctoring the statewide examinations toward the end of the spring semester. The substitute teacher had the responsibility to administer the examinations but since Nica had been working with this group and knew them well, she requested that she be allowed to aid in the proctoring of the exam and was permitted.

I go in to my classroom and two of my boys are standing out there going like “You don’t want to go in there!” “Why?” they say “You don’t want to go in there!” so they are freaking me out, I say, “Is someone hurt?” well, there is something on my desk and of course there is not a teacher in sight. No one, none of my collaborative team is there, you know, like, it turns out that Mary had a big ball of clay on the desk, and the sub was in there and the kids were watching a movie and the sub was not paying attention and one of the seniors dares a sophomore to sculpt it in to a penis and I had hand lotion on my desk, and I was like so grossed out, I was like here I am making all these inroads, and now it all comes down to this. This like penis on my desk and I was like “Stephen, get rid of this!”

The sense of responsibility that Nica felt she had for the class was heightened due to her knowing the students. The substitute not having any stake in the classroom, per se, as it turns out, was relatively ineffective. Nica was not exactly certain what to do. She understood it as a prank, and she did not feel threatened or interrogated although once her mentor returned, she suggested it be written up as sexual harassment. Nica wanted to find who did it and since it was still early in the year, be able to continue to build a
classroom community. Knowing this was another critical juncture, she sat down with the students, and in a conversational, personable way, told them why she wanted to know who was responsible. She found out. Within the institutional and community boundaries, Nica was able to formulate her personal style and her professional persona in to a functioning and integrated whole. The school dean of discipline handed out a 10 day suspension to the two students involved. Although this was a serious offense, Nica was able to use the experience of the community of professionals around her to help to achieve her classroom goal of building relationships.

You really have to take in to consideration the particular student, the particular situation, the community in your classroom and what you would do then and what you are willing to do about it. And considering all those multiple factors you are just like this teacher and are just as much a part of the classroom experience as they are… I think my professional development [has been made up of being] surrounded by professionals and peers that have had life experiences,

Questions at Heart of Teaching

Considering the changes Nica went through during her PDS immersion, she reflected upon what it was about the PDS that enabled her to learn deeply. She realized that the PDS values that teachers “teach who they are.” Throughout the conversation Nica talked about how throughout the year she tried to figure out why she does the things that she does. In participating in the PDS, learning and figuring out “why we do the things we do” is an important mantra, because in doing so, she was able to bring all of her own school experiences to the core questions the PDS is developed around. Nica surmised that there are a number of core questions at the heart of the Professional Development School philosophy: 1) What is Literacy? 2) What does it mean to be literate? 3) Who are you [the intern] as a learner? And 4) What are the values you bring to this experience?

Metaphor
It is a journey. Thought process, teaching, with yourself, each new year, each new intern, each new set of kids, each new set of ideas, comes with its own path. Its like, oh, I started here and I wound up here. You know, the tertiary road in the middle of a corn field and how do I find my way back. And, it’s a journey and its kind of this winding road, that you have to work through and be ok not seeing the end. And I think that is the point. You know where you came from and where you are going, sometimes that changes. Sometimes this job doesn’t have an end. Or at least I feel. If you want to be a good teacher, you have to keep working, keep churning, keep driving at it.
Lonny
Associate-Alumni

Lonny is a divorced black male in his 50s with one adult daughter and two grandchildren ages 11 and 7. He grew up in a housing project in Norfolk, Virginia and attended k-12 schools in a predominantly white community. Upon graduating from high school he entered the military where he became an air traffic controller and later an instructor in the same field. After being discharged, he attended college graduating with a Bachelor’s degree. He came to Penn State to work on his Master’s degree in Language and Literacy where he met Dr. Jameson and became involved for two years in the PDS during its initial start up as a graduate student associate. He completed his Master’s and is now completing his Doctorate in the Language and Literacy Department at Pioneer State. During our conversation Lonny discussed how throughout his life he has struggled with issues of his own identity as a black male. He is currently on faculty in the School of Education at Norfolk State University in Virginia.

Experiences at the Heart of Becoming a Teacher

Lonny’s journey to becoming a teacher has religious and military roots. During the summers while growing up Lonny attended vacation bible school and as a teenager was selected to become a teacher of the younger children in the camp. He taught the lessons in a modern context and felt competent in his abilities as a teacher. When he saw how excited the students’ parents were about the crafts and projects their children completed with him, Lonny was proud of his work. These seeds of teaching planted a spiritual core beyond race, where he was able to fit in, which has carried him throughout his life.
Transformational learning in the Military

Upon graduating from high school, Lonny entered the military and failed the first block of courses required to become an Air Traffic Controller. At that time, he was told by a white sergeant that “People like you normally don’t make it through the class if they fail so very early.” He was going to be withdrawn from the career field because of this failure. Although Lonny knew he did not put forth much effort in the class, he was upset.

It pissed me off. I mean he . . . who was this man, this white man, to tell me that you can’t do this? You know? Now to put it in a more, a better frame, I was thoroughly, thoroughly upset you know and I felt that this man had this much power over me to tell me that I could not succeed because of my race.

He was given a second chance to prove himself, and found this fear of failure to be a motivating factor in his putting in a determined effort to succeed.

I put forth I mean 150% effort and after that didn’t fail another course, section or anything. I embraced it. It was very challenging, very challenging. But that was the one defining moment that says that something is going on here. And I realized later on the pass/fail rate for the class for minority students was 50%. And so that’s one of the reasons why I wanted to go back because if I was an instructor, then I would have a little bit more say and control over it. And that’s why I went back and I was accepted.

Becoming a role model as an instructor/teacher is where Lonny found that he fit in and could make a difference. It was the power and authority that Lonny was able to have over his own life by becoming a teacher that motivated him. This military incident was a transformative one for Lonny. His failing the class and his fear of the possible consequences of not passing caused him to undergo self examination, and, while he was looking over the internalized assumptions he had about himself, his race, his identity, he felt that he did not want to accept what the statistics said. He was not alone in looking at his own assumptions, finding out that 50% of the people like him pass. Once Lonny began to study more and learned the process of how to gauge and adjust his habits to
learn in the air traffic control classroom. Learning became easy for him, and he felt this learning was authentic; it was beyond his racial identity. The real change came when he reintegrated upon completing the course and later became an instructor of Air Traffic Control while in the military. He became an instructor of air traffic control and was able to look back on where he came from, and where he was at that time of completion and he was satisfied and in control of his life, and, as a teacher, helped others through the same process he went through along the way.

As a “blue-suiter”, which is what you are while in the military, Lonny felt that he was not any race; he was racially blind in his mind and actions. But, beyond the blue suit he was out of touch with himself as a black male. He often found himself using white terminology, or holding white perspectives of his own race. Another incident occurred during his time in the military while he was stationed in Alaska and talking with another black male about going to buy a radio.

I said “I’m going to go buy me a “bro-box.”” And in other words a big box[radio], a box you put on your shoulder. That was, I didn’t, did not realize just how offensive that was you know...to a black male, yes. To another black male or blacks in general, because it’s, it’s a term and a phrase that whites gave that you know. And I, when I spoke it and when I said it I was thinking that it, thinking about it from a white perspective. And that’s why I said a “brobox”. And when I called it a “brobox” I mean he went off. And I didn’t understand why until later on. You know then I realized the, the terms that we called them were “boom-boxes” you know. And then I realized I was out of touch with my own race you know. And that, that caused me to think also, start reflecting also.

While Lonny was reflecting, he still though did not recognize a deeper grounding, or a language base that he could draw from in order to try out new ideas. This though, as resounding as it was, was a “good mistake” as Langer3 would note because it was an act that Lonny learned something of value from. It awakened him in many ways to that

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force, his true identity or self, that was bound up within him which he was out of touch with and not yet able to truly see.

**Experiential Learning in Graduate School and the PDS**

Returning from the military and no longer a “blue suit”, Lonny entered civilian life disciplined and professional, but it was not until he entered graduate school at Penn State and met Joe Kincheloe, the Professor of cultural and critical theory who has written books on the subject of white identity that Lonny began work out his identity issues. Starting with this relationship and the study of “whiteness” is how Lonny became familiar with the conceptual frameworks and theories that helped him better understand his own black identity.

Now once I finally retired from the military and I met Joe Kincheloe and that’s when I started learning about whiteness. And, and, and white identity. And that’s when I started thinking about well I need to start thinking about blackness and black identity. And sure enough that was a eye opening experience to where I learned more about myself as a black male.

During this time, Lonny began critically to assess his own racial perspectives and started through the assignments he was given in class. He tied his reflections to the theories being presented in his graduate courses.

The experiential component of his studies came to fruitions while an associate in the PDS for two years. Lonny’s nickname was “Silence” because during this time he was more observant in trying to figure out the rules of the school environment and how he could best fit in with his new understandings. There were many issues going for Lonny both personally with his struggle with identity and as a part of the development of the PDS organization, which in the first few years was particularly challenging and tumultuous. Discussing this, Lonny shared that “It is a wonder that I know who I am.”
He felt as if he was an outsider and in order to be accepted into this community of highly competitive, predominantly white teachers who are “teaching the best of the best” Lonny had to re-learn all the rules. At the same time, learning about whiteness and his own black identity in this context, he confronted his own self- and self-worth. Being part of the team of people coming from the university to the school district and the school, everything seemed under intense scrutiny in the PDS. Lonny, not alone in these feelings, found the personal and professional components of this environment to be a very new phenomena and also difficult to negotiate.

My problem was the, the organization and the attitude of the teachers. The attitudes of the teachers, and it came out later on, which was like we’re the best of the best. We are the cream of the crop. We are teaching the cream of the crop. We’re teaching those going to Yale and Harvard and Stanford. And so we need to be the best of the best. So immediately after hearing this first of all what went through my mind was well I’m not white. I’m a black male. So there’s no way I can be the best of the best. So the question is where do I fit? And I realized I didn’t fit at all in that, in, in the PDS initially. And so it was listening to the teachers talk you know they felt threatened.

Lonny too felt threatened in trying to find a place, a space where he was able to fit in and find a center from which to operate. It was a time of difficulty in trying to unconditionally accept himself for who he was in this new environment. Lonny continued to find himself though in the teaching realm, an educator in the classroom working to make sense of his own situation and struggles within the context of the classroom.

Critical Incident in the PDS

During Lonny’s second year as a graduate student and his involvement in the PDS, he was named a Holmes Scholar, which is a prestigious, national award created “to enrich the scholarly experience and professional training of talented men and women of color who are underrepresented in leadership positions in universities and professional
development schools.” Winning the award relieved him of his teaching responsibilities at the university so he could focus more of his time with the PDS interns. As in the military, Lonny was able understand how to perform well within the rule laden world of the academy, but he was still working out the issues of his own racial identity. It was not until one day in the teachers’ lounge when an incident occurred that moved Lonny (and other members of the PDS community) to confront the issues of race.

And so one day I went in to the office and two of the interns were sitting down. They were just working. And I walked in and I told one of the teachers that I had just received a fellowship and I was a Holmes Scholar. And so I would not, you know, be teaching classes on campus. So we could actually do some co-teaching you know. And she looked at me and she said “Do you do floors and windows?” And the interns, they looked at her, like why did you say that? And I looked at her and just said “No.” Immediately by nature I shut down because any response that I would, other than the no, would have been negative. It would have been bad you know. And she just kind of played it off. Well anyway I walked out the hallway and then it all came out. I, I said a few choice bad words about her.

One interpretation of the event is that the sense of accomplishment in academia and in the PDS environment that Lonny had felt in achieving the Holmes Scholarship had threatened the white female teacher. As Lonny was extending and offering himself as an equal to a white female colleague in a wish to work together in the classroom

I said I want to co-teach with you, she was saying that you can’t co-teach with me but you can do my floors and windows. You can, you can be my maid. You can be my janitor you know. And that’s exactly the way I took it. It was just inappropriate. It was wrong. I became so angry you know that, that when I went outside it was like oh I need to get this off of me. I mean really I need to get this off of me. And the interns, they just said basically “Where did that come from?”

Lonny did not feel as if he could respond, the question had shut him down completely, he was disoriented, and yet it stimulated the transformative process of his own self acceptance. In thinking through his rage, it was the first time that Lonny truly identified with his own center, his own true identity in imagining the headlines of the local newspaper if he had acted in response to her words, ‘Black Male Pioneer State Student
assaults White Female High School teacher’. The incident occurred in a space where others heard it and in the way the PDS community responded to issues, it became an area of intense discussion and inquiry.

One middle aged white woman, Karen, who was then the head of the PDS from the school district, acted in a critical and a therapeutic way for Lonny. She offered another interpretation of the event mentioning that the phrase can often be used in response to someone who is juggling many tasks. Lonny was doing so many things already that maybe he could also clean the floors and window too since he could do so many things. This helped a bit; he took the cultural context differently, owning his own perspective.

Well, if memory serves me correctly and our conversation, it was to me, who was saying it and where it was directed, which was actually a black man, notice I didn’t say an African American Male, I said a black male, and looking at it from a white female, I was offended, I was ticked off and it was so interesting, how you actually negotiated it from a white female perspective. And it was it was a wonderful conversation that Carol and I had and even trying to share my feelings of how this incident occurred, I guess it took you to negotiate as well. The experience of talking was actually therapeutic…

**Authenticity**

Together, as a community, the interns, mentors and associates delved in to the questions of racial identity. It was approached in the PDS context through inquiry and connecting to readings and theories. There was one text that had a particularly resounding effect on Lonny’s and other members of the community.

Karen: Lonny was the first person who taught me to ask myself the question, what does it mean to be white? You think I had ever thought of that before? Lonny taught us all that year to ask ourselves that question…and we read that piece by Peggy Macintosh…Unpacking White Privilege a very seminal moment in the PDS there.
White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack lists and discusses 26 privileges that she, as a white female, is accustomed to and had never considered or questioned before. This article enabled Lonny to begin to be able to see his own self more clearly within his context of his role as an educator.

Karen said three of my black students are failing the class. And because they’re failing it’s only 75% in my class that are passing. So it’s okay. But what I told her was there’s 100% of your black population that’s failing. And it’s like “Oh, oh, then what can I do?” You know. And then I gave her some text to read. Lisa Delpit was one and I can’t remember the other one. But it, it was how to deal with, with black students with an issue....And that’s when I realized that something’s missing when a white teacher cannot teach The Color Purple or The Bluest Eyes or any of Tony Morrison’s work because there’s something that’s missing. And what’s missing is a black experience because these were black women who wrote from their, from a place that only someone of black consciousness would know you know. And so watching a white teacher just take everything at face value and fail to realize that there’s more you know you need to know or understand or have a black experience.

The experiential component along with the conscious use of theory to inform practice transformed formed Lonny’s identity within the context of the PDS and his role as an educator.

In his journey as a teacher, Lonny was always seeking his own authentic black experience. This transformation occurred in the PDS environment because the environment was set up for inquiry driven personal self-discovery within the professional context of teaching. Throughout this journey, Lonny confronted an authentic experience.

Norfolk Virginia is my home, I was born in a low income area, I was born in the projects, my family was all black also, what is interesting about that, even that community has room and in going to predominantly prestigious white high school, that community had room and then I went to the military, more room, that community had room, then I came to Penn state...whole totally different set of rules that I had to negotiate to be accepted in to all these different communities, and now I am at an HBCU, Historically black college, had to forget virtually every rule here, so I totally had to relearn rules of community from where I first came from, very interesting negotiating all these different communities, It’s a wonder I know who I am.
Throughout Lonny’s life, he was a member of different communities where he had room to escape who he was. That is the “room” he speaks about. His experience in the PDS, brought space and time to converge into Lonny’s inquiry into himself; he no longer had that space to escape from himself. He had to confront his own identity and in doing so, recapture and transform his understanding of himself. In going on to teach at a historically black college following his Penn State PDS experience, he has re-centered his own identity.
Dr. John Jameson
Founder of PDS

“I think we are in a time period in which there is a dangerous generalization of good teaching and a kind of standardization of what good teaching is. That I think leads people to be less connected and sensitive to unique students, and the unique context in which they live and work”

Dr. Jameson is an associate professor of Language and Literacy in the College of Education at Pioneer State University. He is the founder of the Secondary Level English/Language Arts Professional Development School which is currently in its 9th year of operation. He is a married white male with three children. He grew up in Ohio where he attended college receiving a double baccalaureate in English and in teaching. Upon graduation, John taught high school English for two years before his position was cut due to budget restraints. Because of this and his experiences working with students whom he found to be learning at below grade level, he went back to school for a master’s degree in Reading at Bowling Green State University which was nearby. After completing his degree, he worked as a reading specialist at the middle and high school levels for six years. He then went on to the Literature and Language Department at Indiana State University where he completed his doctorate in Language Education. His thesis was an inquiry into an English classroom exploring how the students defined literacy in terms of a social construct. His scholarship explores the social contexts of classroom literacy events with particular attention to the cognitive, social, and political consequences of culturally valued curricular designs. He is interested in the use of hypermedia and technology, and his teaching seeks to construct curricular theories and practices for a more critical democratic citizenry. In this light he has developed a website which is an online forum for discussion and course development for teachers around the
world. He is the author of numerous articles, conference papers, book chapters, and, is a coauthor of a book about teaching English/Language Arts.

Experiences Growing Up

John had a rich array of experiences when he was in elementary and high school which were not a part of the official class or school curriculum that influenced his pedagogy and philosophy of teacher preparation and education.

My 2nd grade teacher took me to dinner at the L&K [a restaurant], and I don’t know exactly why, but she wanted to take me to the L&K and it was a wonderful experience. My 6th grade teacher supported a group of two or three of us in creating a newspaper and it wasn’t part of an assignment and we created a weekly newspaper and we sold it for a penny to kids in school. My 8th grade math teacher used to joke a lot with him and he rammed the paddle against the wall and he told me, don’t tell anyone I didn’t paddle you, and my 9th grade, I started the high school science curriculum in 9th grade rather than in tenth grade…so my 9th grade BSCS teacher had me doing all kinds of experiments. He had me after school we did a whole thing with fruit flies and stuff like that that really wasn’t part of the regular assignments.

These experiences show teachers taking a personal interest in John to show him that there is more to schooling than the formal lessons delivered in the classroom. There is a certain degree of communication, caring and a trust between the teacher and John that is not normally met in the regular social context of schooling. John was granted a position in the school by his teachers to explore a topic and elaborate on the parts he was interested but wasn’t necessarily the topic for instruction at that moment. These are the spaces where another sense of learning was occurring; outside the formal lessons of the classroom, on the social and personal level. John discussed his 11th grade English teacher who had a great effect on John’s college major and choice of teaching as a profession. He noted that his 11th grade teacher went on to complete doctoral work and later became
the principal of the alternative school in the Scarlet Area School District, going on to work with Ted Sizer’s Coalition of Essential Schools.

History and Founding of the SCASD Professional Development School

When John first arrived at Pioneer State University and began working in the College of Education, he immediately noticed there was a division in the program for pre-service teachers. He found that the field experiences and the methods courses were not directly linked in any unifying way. He later realized that the foundations of education courses were also not linked to the field experiences. John knew that these three areas are mutually supportive and informative. The lack of clarity and unity across the divisions prompted John to begin to explore different avenues to create a more experiential, engaging and cohesive program for pre-service teachers at the College of Education.

So, I immediately began to go out to the field with students in my methods course, which was taught the first ten weeks of the semester. And then they had this five week experience, so I was teaching LLED 412 still, I began to do some documenting of what they were doing in the field. I was not very impressed with the expectations. They went Monday-Thurs., and they were never there on a Fridays, and they only had to teach a couple of lessons. And in most cases, they were just watching the teacher one period and teaching that lesson the next. So they weren’t developing or designing curriculum and then you know, trying to understand how it worked and didn’t work, in a reflective way with the students.

John’s aim was to restructure the field experience into something that was more collaborative and situated in the school setting. The groundwork for the founding of the Professional Development School was first in changing the space and time relationship of the pre-service teachers’ experience. A hybrid educator, he developed a close relationship with the Scarlet Area School District Chair of the English Department. Already a certified public school teacher, John forged an agreement with the school.
district to teach one high school English class during the school year. While John was
teaching the interns in the school at the time came in to his classroom for a different type
of field experience. The interns began to observe and participate with John’s work in that
high school classroom in a more relational way. The chair of the English Department was
also teaching on the university campus. Symbolically, this exchange between John and
the chair of the high school English department was one of the first important moves with
the intent of creating a “living laboratory for exploring pedagogy in the language arts” in
the high school which was one of his aims in starting the professional development
school in the first place.

Ideas At the Heart of John’s Teaching

Ambiguity, unh huh (both laugh). The more that I can make things unknown and
unclear, needing expiration and elaboration and explanation, than I think the
better inter-subjectivity that can arise in a class.

Ambiguity is commonly defined as something liable to more than one interpretation,
exploration or meaning. Therein lie the nature of John’s teaching and the essence of the
professional development school. With ambiguity comes a tension: a tension that plays
out over the course of the year by the interns and others trying to figure out which ways
of thinking, working and doing works best for them to meet the standards set by the
context, meet the needs of the students they teach and ultimately survive their immersion
in the profession of teaching. John’s work, inspired by Paulo Freire, also seeks curricular
transformation that fosters a more engaged, democratic citizenry.

I think I had always felt for a long time, even when I was a teacher, that the
curriculum needed to be transformed, because, a kind of traditional model, as
Freire would describe them, were bankrupt, they were becoming largely more
irrelevant to everyday communications and knowledges built out of experience
and so, the idea that every act of language and literacy in the classroom should
serve some communicative purpose and achieve some valued activity in the
community really became basis for my work when I was a teacher. So I have been working on how to actualize that in terms of curriculum models. Transforming the curriculum to a more personal and humanistic form; one that is relevant to the unique nature of the classroom being taught and the person teaching the class. At the heart of the Professional Development School idea about learning how to teach is an experiential idea, but not one that follows Kolb’s classical experiential learning theory of reflection, observing, abstracting and testing. Abstracting ideas is replaced by activity. John is a student of his own practice which is a continued immersion of himself into the school context which he is trying to transform.

I can’t imagine what my teaching would be like on campus if I had not been involved in the schools. But I think it would be more distant from life, the characteristics of life in a classroom. Where I would be advocating the doing of this or doing of that without having the substantial experiential base of trying this and trying that and seeing first hand what this and that is like.

First hand experience, activity and reflection on that activity to see what works best. The concepts of immersion and activity vs. abstraction are at work- that being active and engaged in the classroom is where one learns how to teach. Removing or abstracting ideas from the school environment actually can be perceived as taking away from the authentic nature of constructive learning. The aim being for the students to make sense of the professional school environment for themselves and with others based on their own experience, histories and education; with guidance provided along the way from the insight of mentors, and associates as needs arise. Learning becomes individualized at the cellular level, yet, with the creation of a community of non-abstraction, based in activity and engagement, it makes for an authentic, creative dialogic environment.

We have to make our subjectivities visible to ourselves and we have to learn how to use our representational tools whether they be writing or oral or visual communication tools, in order to express our subjectivities and in order to
interpret each others subjectivities in a social, dialogic way, in order to negotiate some shared representations, quote, understandings, these knowledges about these ambiguous questions, these ambiguous experiences

It is through making representations of the ambiguous experiences of the teachers and the students that a new world is constructed. This new world is based upon the workings of students and teachers own inquiries into themselves, their classrooms and the social contexts they are part.

I would hope that they would express things that indicate they have a greater sense of agency as teachers as a consequence as having a greater awareness of their own values and purposes.

The PDS utilizes a model of inquiry that leads to the creation of new knowledge. It leads to the student-interns asking questions that answer inquiries into their own unexamined beliefs about school, the students, and why they do the things they do. The intern teachers collect data throughout the year based on those questions.

To make sense of students activities and actions and words, now, the maybe the way to call about it, is de-centering, about their own assumptions about what a students means by what they say and do in the classroom. And so, there’s lots of [data], and to be able to do this you need to be able to interpret data so it is a researchers task really,

The idea of de-centering (and then re-centering) is about moving in to that ambiguous space that is blank or unknown and following the inquiry process to new knowledge. In doing so, learning occurs. And in this case, there is a crucial difference between what happens in a university classroom when students are taking a class in how to teach, as compared to what happens when a student is actually learning to teach in the real situated context of a classroom and a school.

Apprenticeship is not just a novice and an expert, it is also a community. So, for them to grow, for teachers to be prepared, they have to be immersed in that community of novices and experts trying to make sense in the world. In the
discipline of education, that experience happens to be, in my opinion, students actions and words and activity. So a teacher ed. program has to have that rich sort of contextual immersion in that community.

The PDS is an alternative program for English Ed majors at Pioneer State. John discussed the selection process.

We have all been involved in the interviewing of candidates for the PDS and have decided that it is really hard to identify if the intern will be successful. And, ultimately what we have come down to is telling them if you are not going to be 100% committed, and if you are not going to give all your efforts, looking for someone to tell you what to think about and what to read, and things like that then the programs not for you. Then you should stay in the traditional program. Interns who have been inflexible in thinking about themselves, about curriculum about students in multiple ways, they have struggled, and they have struggled with their mentors because they do not enter in to that open negotiation about ideas and therefore their relationship begins to be a little strained.

John reflected on what influence the PDS may have had over the course of its time in the high school.

If you could just, you know, have permission and have it run in the teachers work room the kinds of conversation that are going on in there are really productive around the issues of the students and curriculum and school and you know, I just think it is that has changed so much. The kind of sharing that is going on in my classroom, the risk taking, afraid of criticism to the point that you don’t talk about that kind of thing I think, there is a lot. So risk taking, making invitations to do things together, to collaborate, to share ideas, and material and co-develop things.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the individual profiles of 14 members of the Pioneer State University School District-Secondary Level English Language Arts Professional Development School. **Table 1** below shows the names, age, sex, degree sought and the PDS roles of the participants used as a sample in this study.
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<th>Degree Sought/Held</th>
<th>PDS Roles</th>
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<td>M</td>
<td>PhD</td>
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Chapter 5
Cross-Case Analysis

The mind of the education student is not a blank waiting inscription. New meanings can only be appropriated through a confrontation with existing understandings, and by way of a transformation of the existing structure of personal meanings.

Van Huizen, Van Oers, & Wubbels 2005

It is a truism that all work, all art and all professional activity require practice if they are to succeed. This we accept, and in order that we may establish ourselves in the world, it is obvious that we must be at pains in all our vocations, avocations and transactions to practice and assimilate experience.

Karlfried Graf Dürckheim 2007

This chapter is a synthesis of the entirety of data collected throughout the conducting of this study relative to the research questions. It is presented in such a way so as to answer five of the six original research questions that guided the philosophical and practical nature of this study. You will see that Question Three and Question Four are reported together; I made this choice because of the nature of the findings and the relative ease of which the results to the questions were both mutually integral to each other. On a different note, due to the limitations of this case, Question Six- “What best practices are incorporated in Professional Development Schools? Which are not?” was deemed unanswerable within the original confines of this inquiry. The reason for doing this was simply because this study only looked at one secondary level professional development school, though the findings for Question Five “What best practices are related to transformational learning and experiential professional development in the context of professional development schools?” offers some insights and conclusions that address in many ways the essential character of Question Six. This chapter is written as an integration of the multiple perspectives that have been considered prior to conducting the
physical research and any and all emergent themes and ideas subsequently generated by this inquiry. In the sections that follow, each question is presented, a summarizing proposition is offered followed by excerpts of the data supported by detailed discussion and analysis.

**Question 1**

**What is transformational learning in the context of teacher preparation and development?**

**Proposition 1:** Transformational learning in the context of teacher preparation and development is an active organic, constructive process. It can emanate from occurrences in one’s biography—as early as when a child begins school— and is later able to identify, critically reflect, dialogue and act on these meaningful experiences and encounters within the context of learning to teach. In part, it is an elucidation, clarification and reflection of critical incidents as well as the ideas and experiences and fundamental educational question that are at the heart of a person’s motivation and desire to teach. It is a practice of becoming attentive to one’s own depth and breadth of educative life experiences; the valued compositions, implications, and influences of the ideas and questions that one contemplates in their ongoing activity as an educator and how they connect to theory and inform “Why we do the things we do as an educator.” It is a psycho-analytic, self-reflective, active and autonomous discipline and yet is supported and encouraged through collaborative processes.

To paraphrase Mezirow (1991), transformational learning’s focus is on how a future or a current educator learns to negotiate and act on their own purpose, values, feelings and meanings—rather than those purposes they may have uncritically assimilated from others (teachers, parents, mentors, society, textbooks, etc.) throughout their lives and their education in order to gain greater control as socially responsible, clear thinking decision makers in the school setting and their professional realm. The word learns is italicized because it became clear to me throughout the study that the participants interviewed were in the midst of a process of inquiry, learning and becoming; a transformation, that had not yet completed, nor, from this researchers perspective, may ever end, except possibly in the finite way in which any educational experience
culminates at the conclusion of a course, term or school semester. The time spent, teachings learned through immersion, engagement, and realized momentous significance in the Professional Development School (PDS) as their professional preparation and development as educators will continue to be a part of their professional identities and experience throughout their careers. If, as may be the case with the participants, the experience was a transcendent or salient one, it will forever transform the individual and permeate all other professional experiences they encounter (Foshay, in Hopp, 2001). When called up, reflected upon, or evoked, components of the PDS experiences will make constant connections to future lived professional educational experiences. Here are excerpts and analysis of the biographical and school related experiences and critical incidents.

I. Experience and Transformation

A beginning teacher comes to the profession with a personality, a family history, a schooling background and beliefs about teaching that interact with such socializing influences as students, other teachers, administrators and parents (Wildman, Niles, Magliaro, & Mcglaughlin 1989). Much research has demonstrated the impact that teachers’ personal educational biographies have upon their teaching, and their understanding about learning (Munro, 1987, Knowles 1999, Schoonmaker 2002, Britzman 2003, Darling-Hammond & Hammerness 2005). Dewey noted that experience is not a rigid and closed thing; it is vital, and hence growing (1910, p.156). It is the undeniable inner experience that is the one thing that can truly touch, move and compel us to follow it (Dürckheim, 2007). In this light, experiences that have a cumulative transformational effect over a long term are dependent on the individual and their ability,
out of willingness or necessity, to call up memories, to reminisce and utilize the essence of that which is recalled within the context of their preparation and professional development as educators.

I a. School Related Biographical Experiences

Experiences were categorized as either school related biographical experiences and family biographical experiences. This reflects Knowles (1999) notion of biography in that it refers to the formative experiences of the participants which have influenced the ways in which they think about teaching and their actions and dispositions in the classroom. Biography acts as an aid or a lens in deciphering why the interns/teacher does what they do. In his study Knowles (1999) looked at numerous factors in the biographical backgrounds of beginning teachers and conceived the Biographical Transformation Model (BTM) which is relevant here as a model for the transformative power of biographical experiences. In Knowles’ BTM (1999), formative experiences of childhood, teachers and schools are first interpreted by the individual and both have immediate inherent and reflective assigned meanings. Later, the individuals give the formative experience inherent meaning by further interpreting the event. The interpretation is then cognitively transformed into a schema which acts as a filter and basis for future teacher centered classroom practices. This is highly idiosyncratic because there are different interpretations that can be assigned. Through the interpretation, role models and practices are either upheld or rejected. The schema is also organizational and enables information to be categorized so that it can be meaningfully used. Recognizing positive teacher role models advances the meaning of future observed

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4 For a further description of Knowles’ Biographical Transformation Model see Models for understanding Pre-service and beginning teachers’ biographies.
teacher actions. The schema determines the manner in which further encounters learning environments are interpreted and acted upon; it becomes an evaluative tool for examining other teacher practices and is transformed into a ‘framework for action’. The realities of the classroom and context modify the framework for action.

Interns reported having biographical experiences in which they began to form connections to the profession of teaching. Patterns appeared in having a role model or eclectic teacher, learning from an enriched curriculum, and school experiences where trust, and support from a teacher were all important to their motivation and development today as educators. Schemas and frameworks for actions were formed. It was found that many had a rich array of experiences and interactions with ideas that weren’t part of the official curriculum. As well, patterns emerged that participants had deeply personal empathetic and compassionate experiences (and critical incidents), that garnished a sixth sense or a deeper understanding of human life outside of themselves that formed a basic ground for their functioning as an educator.

If I go all the way back to kindergarten, there is a kid, in my class, Bobby Ellis, I remember distinctly that he had these black glasses and like they were, and his shirt was always buttoned wrong, and he kind of smelled funny and he was always my partner for the fire drills, because no one would want to dance with him, or dance with him during music class, or whatever and I you know did it…he was labeled from the town. It was like oh, and there was like, and I just remember feeling a lot of sympathy, I was like gosh I am really am lucky that I am not that person. And I guess part of that realization is that, I could have been that person, it is a matter of luck where you are born and where you are born to, I think that realization that, situations dictate how other people treat you sometimes. And I just never wanted to it to be like that. And I am not saying I was the nicest person in the world, but I had those thoughts. (Connie)

Connie draws from this depth of understanding that emanated from a deeply personal and resonant collection of impressions about another student in her class. She sees her sympathetic teacher-self as partially formed by this experience and it has become part of
her framework for action with the context of her experience learning to teach. George recalls a frame of reference, not from when he was younger, but from when he was a college student on spring break going to work with his mother, a special education teacher.

When I was [working] with my mom, she had a student I think his name was Tyler Grimm and wonderful kid, wasn’t deemed learning support, but everyone knew he needed to be, just the most gracious individuals, he came from a terrible home, his mother was, just now I found out convicted for prostitution, And this kid, I mean, you could go through all the theoretical things but for me he was an Angel in the human form and working with him, my mom said, but Tyler could not get his homework in on time and he never did it in a way that was malicious, or he never gave excuses because it was kind of like, you know, Tyler…so he and I spent a week together, and it was during my spring break, and I was just I told my mother, I wasn’t getting paid for this, he was in the 6th grade, getting up every morning and having the feeling that you could actually make a difference in somebody, you can’t put a price tag on that, you can’t, no matter what you do, to have that type of influence to have that positive impact, it was just amazing, when he left he said, you know Mr. Ritter its been a real pleasure working with you, and he wanted me to get a job there, and I think moments like that, the Tyler Grimm’s of the world, him in particular, I think that solidified it for me. (George)

Reminiscing on this experience had solidified the idea of a career change for George, from television to education. He had this experience prior to becoming an educator, and being able to draw on this grounding occurrence enabled him to move forward confidently in his decision. Georges’ experience created knowledge of an ideological realm, a socialization process of understanding the teaching profession in this incident that became part of his framework for action which he attempted to satisfy in the field of television but found the career lacking compared to his own inherent views. Having reflected on this incident, a greater ability to develop emotional empathy with others by considering their experience or point of view is achieved, the George and Connie are also
better prepared to engage in moral and ethical thinking about individual’s responsibilities to one another and the group (Darling-Hammond 2005, p. 348).

Others reflected on having tried out other fields even after having very personal experiences with education. It was a critical incident that occurred in a television studio for Beth which stimulated her move to education.

I had a bit of a crisis of faith one day when-- there was a lot of incidents going on that semester with all of the Greek life on campus. There were a lot of parties that got busted up, and there was one horrific incident where a girl was raped at a party. And I remember being in the news studio that day, and finding out about that, and the first reaction in my head was, 'Oh, that's terrible.' And the person next to me said, 'Oh, this is great! Do you think we can get an interview with her? What a great story!' And I just, all of a sudden realized that my life would become, if I kept continuing down this path, and I really wanted to be great at what I did-- I didn't want to have to exploit the suffering of others for personal gain. And, I felt that, that is what part of the news industry is at times. It was something that I really disagreed with, and I didn't like at all. There could have been other paths that I could have done in Broadcast Journalism-- I could have worked on different circuits besides just news media, but I all of a sudden realized that it was a very hectic, fast-paced life style, and the people who work those sorts of jobs make very little money, just like teachers, and also are very rude and mean to one another. I couldn't do that for the rest of my life. I couldn't do it. So I really couldn't follow through with that path. And so I was excited to try something where, instead of hurting others I felt like I was having a positive effect. (Beth)

In this brief instant, Beth came to consider many of the professional elements of Broadcast journalism and how they did not match up with her ideals. She considered the ideological make-up of Broadcast Journalism and saw that she did not want to be socialized in this way; that her personality was different. She considered the behavioral element of broadcast journalism along with her own code of conduct and realized hers was significantly different than those of the people around her, considering where she may fit in within this group culture she quickly realized the similarities to teaching,
which she had identified a critical incident from the 11th grade which a teacher gave her a confidence and pre-disposition towards teaching.

We had to write an autobiography for the one English teacher that I really enjoyed, and, at the end of it, he wrote comments about the piece, but at the end of it, 'Elizabeth, you should seriously consider being an English teacher. I look forward to calling you a colleague.' And up until that point, I had completely written off the profession of teaching. I was like-- forget that! I'm getting out of high school, I'm going to college, and I'm going to do my own thing! I'm not going back to high school if you paid me a million dollars! And, one of the things that made me feel the greatest about it was, he got to know me a lot more through my writing. I was so shy in high school! I was that kid who never spoke up in class and couldn't get those words out. I was too intimidated by the rest of my peers, and he still encouraged me to be up in front of a classroom of students! I thought, 'Wow! He really has a lot of faith in me! I don't have that kind of faith in myself!' It was -- amazing. To hear words like that. (Beth)

Similarly this reported incident occurred following a more primary occurrence that happened in her high school English classroom when she was in the 11th grade which can be identified as an being a foundational critical incident in her motivation to teach. Beth’s teacher called her to the profession. Beth’s sequence can be identified as a primary or foundational experience followed later by a ‘secondary’ critical incident that stimulated the movement to teaching. The secondary critical incident brings one back to the primary experience. This pattern emerged, which is quite common among college students of trying another career option or major before finding out that the field does not meet their own ideals of what they envisioned the work to be as compared to what they had conceived teaching to be in relation.

When I was a Junior I was like but no, I can’t, you know, I need an internship, for some reason all my roommates were business majors and I felt like I needed an internship. that it wasn’t good enough to work at my day camp. So I got an internship at Harper Collins publishing, you know this very prestigious [firm] and I left in two and a half weeks because I was in a cold office and no one was talking to me, and no one would be listening so I knew at that moment, that I was
like, what am I sitting here being miserable for when I can be with these kids to experience the variety that they bring each and everyday.

In these two instances we can see that there is revulsion to education at first, but then a return to the calling to teach.

b. Biographical Experiences tied to Specific Teachers

The participants spoke of having a sense of wonder, intrigue and dynamism instilled in them through different experiences that were a turn in their understanding or conceptions of teachers and teaching up until that point in their life these experiences had resonant and myriad effects at the time of occurrence. Upon reflection, their effect is maintained, stable and lasting as a reservoir of resource in professional practice.

My second grade teacher took me to dinner at the L&K [restaurant], and I don’t know exactly why, but she wanted to take me to the L&K and it was a wonderful experience. (Jameson)

I remember a teacher, her name was Mrs. Myers and she was somewhat eccentric and she kind of took me under her wing. She was my 6th grade, no 7th grade teacher, and she asked me to be the editor of the school newspaper… And I remember how important that made me feel outside of you know the ins and outs of all the classroom activities, club involvement, and something extra. And you know I still think about some of the things that you know she told me and how she encouraged me and, and, and that sort of thing. (Cindy)

My 8th grade math teacher use to joke a lot with him and he rammed the paddle against the wall and he told me, ‘Don’t tell anyone I didn’t paddle you.’” (Jameson)

Identified were individual teachers who were inspiring and had formed ideal impression of how the intern teacher would like their own instructional classroom practice to emulate in the future.

When I was still in high school, I really didn't like English class until I met my English teacher, my junior year, his name was Mr. R(?), and he was-- amazing. Because, for the first time, instead of a teacher just being more of an instructor, he was more of a facilitator…And he really just sat there as a moderator, but the fact that he allowed us to have these long discussions, and -- It felt like he really cared
about our opinion, and having us make connections to the literature instead of just being told what to think about x, y and z. He cared about us forming our own opinions. I thought, 'Wow! I didn't realize I could do this! This is great!' (Beth)

In Pam’s case, the teacher was not an English teacher but a Physics teacher who impressed her with his dedication and passion for the subject. She was able to draw from this experience and find the motivation to become an English teacher.

I had a physics teacher when I was in high school who was amazing who was always there for his students, I spent half my day with him because we had block scheduling and we only had four classes a day and I had his class and I had study hall that I spent another 80 minutes doing physics in. For some reason he made me want to do the work, and hem made me want to take an extra physics class even though I was not a science person. I spent a lot of time, he was very influential, like I said, he was a very caring person, and he loved what he did and it was exciting. (Pam)

An eclectic teacher in Cindy’s past made a deep impression as well.

High school I think is where I really referenced the most as being you know the teacher that influenced you to become a teacher. And it was Mr. Holtz. I had him my sophomore year and my senior year. And he was this you know tall, white haired, glasses you know older man and very softly spoken and he was, he appeared to be very traditional. You went in, all the desks were lined up in a row, and he just sat there. And he had, he had odd goals. Like if you yawned audibly you had to stand for the class, the entire class period. And the, the bathroom passes, for the boys it was like this little block of wood but for the girls it was a cinder block. Just like crazy stuff. (Cindy)

It was Dr. Jameson’s 11th grade English teacher who, in many ways has grounded his own practice, in the longer term in that coincidentally came to become a professor in the same community where his 11th grade teacher subsequently came to be a principal of the Scarlet Area Alternative High School.

The only experience I had was with [alternative education was] 11th grade English. It was kind of like an alternative classroom, in the context. I do think that was an important experience for me, because it was eventually a part of the attraction to English as a major. My degree is in English and, my decision to go in to teaching as a 5th year second baccalaureate, was probably also connected to that experience of finding that alternative way that that classroom was run.
Interestingly, that teacher went on to doctorate work and then was the first principal of the delta program here [in Scarlet Area Schools] (Jameson) Biography interacts with context and experiences of teachings in a variety of ways, some of which are difficult to determine. On the one hand, similarly to what Knowles (1999) notes, we can here determine though that the recollections of former teachers and experiences in school had been, to some degree internalized in to the participants own teacher role identities. Yet, these biographical experiences do not over-ride the training, preparation and socialization of the SCASD Professional Development School. My findings disagree with Munro (1987, in Knowles 1999) who argues that what teachers bring with them into training may have more significant effect on their teaching behavior than the training experience itself. In this case, prior biographical experiences are part and parcel to contributing to the transformative effects and components of the overall PDS program. It is because elements of biography are integrated in to the immersion experience and the nature and structure of the PDS demands the intern confront their own selves within the programs institutional boundaries of learning to teach.

Ic. PDS Experiences and Risk

A contributing factor to transformational learning in the context of teacher preparation and development occurs if there is some self imposed risk taking and the putting of ‘one’s self on the line’ with an intern facing a classroom or educational issue that they feel imposes on their own personal and professional sensibilities. Interns discussed experiences when they consciously decided to confront an issue within the context of their participation in the classroom. The issues were ones where an intern may have felt a moral imperative to act, ranging from confronting a student who came to class high on marijuana, reporting a substitute teacher, pushing for a social justice curriculum
as well as feeling the need but uncertain about discussing a sexually mature passage in
Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*.

There have been a couple of instances pretty early in the year we were reading *A Farewell to Arms* and my mentor wasn’t there that day and we had a substitute there that was the mother of one of my students. So this is you know, this is October and so, the reading the night before was when Henry and Catherine’s relationship exploded and they were having a very physical affair at that point and we needed to talk about the sex…I’m going ok this is what I would do if it were my classroom and it would be fine and you know I would try and approach it from an adult manner so the students felt like they could do the same not only do And but I decided that you can’t ignore it. Because it’s a big part of that reading and we talked about it and I was nervous the whole time thinking what am I going to do and the next day when my mentor came back I told her this is what happened and you know we had to talk about it and she goes I know you had to talk about it and it was fine. (Pam)

Andrew confronted a student who came to class high on marijuana.

*Student smoking pot*
I had a student in 420 that decided to smoke pot and come to school high. And I noticed it and it told my mentor and it was called attention to. And taken care of and reported to the office and everything. I could have turned a blind eye picked up on it, but he was visibly, you could tell when he came in. He was stoned. And that was an interesting situation. He got out of school suspension for several days. I felt he left me no other options, with no choice. (Navy)

It was an easy decision for Barb to make about reporting a substitute teacher.

It wasn't necessarily put myself on the line, but I just-- I had a sub come in and, it was the worst experience ever. And it was whether I report what she did in the class or they report what she did in the class. And it was like, she was talking about drug use, and how she goes, 'Oh, I stopped using drugs twenty years ago,' and then she's like, 'Well, not that long ago,' when like the kids are there… The only reason that was putting myself on the line was if I wanted a job in the school district, I felt that I was gonna-- It could have been good and it could have been bad. I thought about, what if she does that in another class when another adult wasn't there? Like, it was completely inappropriate. And it wasn't, like, a five minute discussion. She was going on and on (laughs). And I had to talk to the class the next day, and just-- I don't know. I felt worse for the students than for myself, because a lot of them were uncomfortable. (Barb)

Not being sure of herself, and then making the decision, is an experiential process,
similar to Pam in making the decision to discuss the sexuality in the novel.
One, in the very beginning of the school year I had a student, an African-American student who-- he was a joker, cute kid, good kid. But, he would joke around with everybody, and he had apparently taken, in a joking manner, a dollar or two off of another student and was holding it, basically, saying, "I didn't take it, I didn't take it, I didn't take it." And, James was, "He took it, he took it, he took it." And, this confrontation was starting to get a little more heated. And I mean, like I said, this was the first month, maybe two months of school, so I was really not sure of myself, as to, how far do I step in? Are they joking? Are they not joking? Am I reading this correctly? And I was like, I can't blame; I can't accuse. I said, "If you have this money, you'd be smart to give it back right now, because, although you may be just joking, this joke can go too far and you don't know what repercussions and consequences can happen if it's not seen as a joke by the other party." And I was nervous. I didn't know if it was going to come into some racial issue or that they were going to see me as being too strict, they were just joking, and then I'd become a bit of a joke. (Jen)

I'd Did not Risk Self

Students who did not feel as if they put themselves on the line were conscious of the times when they could have. Many tiptoed around situations even though they wanted to say something or felt it was imperative that they do so out of fear of reprimand, uncertainty, timidity or afraid they would not be able to acquire a position in the SCASD following the PDS internship. Subsequently, two of the interns who spoke of not confronting a situation or not putting themselves on the line were actually hired by the school district at the end of the PDS experience.

When I had to really stand up for something... Honestly? No. Not yet. Because I was working with a very wonderful mentor-teacher, but also a very controlling mentor-teacher. She was the decision-maker in our pair, and it is her classroom, and I am just a small part of it, and... It is very hard for me to speak up when I know that she could make a decision that I don't necessarily agree with or that feels inappropriate. I felt that it is not my place to say -- she has been doing this for twenty-five years. I'm just an intern. I don't have the same level of experience that she does. And so there were times when I wanted to, but I did not. There was a student in our class who lost his mother in a-- she was terminally ill, and then he lost his brother in a car accident. And I've often said that it's maybe not the best idea to talk about death in our first period class, and often she's forgetful, and she brings it up. And I can see him getting really upset and uncomfortable. And there are times when I want to stand up to her after class and say, you know, 'You really
cannot bring up this topic of discussion in class. You need to come up with different discussion questions.’ But I have held my tongue. I haven't said anything. But I feel like that student-- his needs are not being met. And I feel bad for him. (Beth)

No-Job related
No. Because I really wanted to just jump through the hoops and get my certification. So, I was careful not to, in many ways this year I had this little mask on, I am not necessarily my normal teaching self because I want to get through this program, I want…you make concessions in life when you want to get something and so I feel that in many ways I didn’t pick as many battles as I would have in the past or when I was younger. I let a lot of things go that I would disagree with or argue with because I learned early on that it really won’t get me anywhere and that the other person isn’t really listening, so I would be talking to myself. So for me, this year has been very uncomfortable in a lot of ways because I don’t feel like I have been true to who I am as a teacher and that, it’s been odd. It is probably different for people who have never taught and don’t know who they are as a teacher, but that modeling or experimenting is very exciting. But for me it is still exciting for me to do that, but it’s also uncomfortable because I already know who I am. (Connie)

No-job related
There have been moments that I could have [put my self on the line]. I tiptoed around it and I didn’t do it. There have been other moments where I certainly could have gone down paths that I chose not to. And a lot of it is just alike students who are grade motivated. I didn’t go down the path because I see the end so clearly. I need to get a job and I am obligated to stay in this area, so that my life will come full circle if I work here. And I am afraid right now. I still have fear. But I think it will abate. [what are you afraid of] I am afraid of not being able to get a job. You know, kids are grade motivated. You know, getting a job for me, that’s my A. (Jordan)

Lisa, who had been an intern and now a teacher in the district, felt that previous strife amongst the staff was the reason she did not put herself on the line and confront her colleagues about infusing ideas and issues of social justice she is passionate about into the PDS program.

One of the reasons I did not do it this year, we had a lot of, strife in to what types of experiences do we want to create for the interns, in this classroom setting that we had, and I really wanted to push the idea of questioning social justice, I wanted them to, I wanted to talk about racism, I wanted to talk about sexism, I wanted to talk about classicism, I wanted to talk about inequality, I wanted the interns to see those as a way to build a curriculum around them, you just don’t
have to build a curriculum around books you can build a curriculum around social justice themes. And I really thought hard for several different books to create several different experiences and ultimately, the practical won out over the theoretical, because in State College talking about racism doesn’t seem to be something that is practical, it “is something good people should do, but these kids need to know how to grade essays”

II. Critical Incidents

Transformational learning in the context of teacher preparation and development can be triggered by different events, critical incidents which in some cases it can occur through dialogue and “memorable words” uttered by a colleague or mentor. Within biographical experiences, critical incidents occur that are outstanding within the realm of one’s cumulative life experiences. A critical incident, as compared to simply experience, is an isolated event that occurs in the life of a person (or group) that is distinctly and vividly memorable and resonant in its make-up. A critical incident is a memorable occurrence, usually deeply value laden, from prior experience that is isolated in the present for analysis and serious reflection. An event identified as a critical incident awakens new feelings, emotions, or ideas as compared to what the person had previously experienced, thought, felt or believed prior to the incident. It can take place over a short period of time, in a moment that turns on a phrase, over the course of a day, or over a longer period of time, even a period of years. Some critical incidents can be identified as transcendent (Jaruszewicz, 2006) or beyond the range of belief and reason. It is the idea of explicit critical reflection, of imagining alternatives to an experience or an incident and bringing the process of choice into awareness to examine and assess [or reassess] the reasons for making a particular choice (see Mezirow 1998) at a particular time that the transformation or revolution of a point of view, meaning perspective, schema, sentiment, or belief, etc., takes place. A critical incident is a trigger to transformative learning.
II a. Critical Incidents Growing Up

Cindy recalled her first experiences with school and how having surgery at a young age required special attention in school which wound up forming the foundation for her current position as a reading specialist.

When I was born I was born cross-eyed. I could see without a problem. I was the only student in our entire elementary school that had glasses. And I did have corrective eye surgery so I didn’t appear to be cross eyed. But when I was I think it must have been first grade, it was . . . yeah I think it was right after kindergarten cause I had my surgery right around kindergarten, they removed me from the classroom and put me in a classroom all by myself for reading instruction. And I vividly remember working with the teacher. I, I don’t remember what her name was. And she made me these flash cards on a little ring, on a little binder ring, and I thought that was really neat. I remember we got to write books together. She let me illustrate them. And granted I was only in that class for about two and a half weeks but for you know it made quite an impact for me to still remember just two and a half weeks of my elementary school years. You know at this stage in life. (Cindy)

This is a deeply embedded critical incident in Cindy’s memory in which having to go for surgery was physically, emotionally and a socially laden occurrence. It is an experience in which Cindy recalls learning and Cindy discussed other teachers, in the elementary, middle and high school grades that, following this incident had an impact on how she learns. All the subsequent teachers she discussed were creative, and nurturing, and she recalled their practices and use of manipulatives in the classroom, which is a reflection of her own practices she uses in her classroom today. In this case, the formulation of the self in the early years relates and influenced Cindy’s later practice in a way that reflects her professional practice.

Drew discussed a school related critical incident which he wove throughout our discussion, its meaning he identified as being relevant to his preparation and outlook on
teaching and how being placed in a higher track, away from his friends ‘left a bad taste in
his mouth’ as to the process of placement in schooling.

This is something that is actually stuck with me in the back of my mind for ever
since the occurrence. Going from 4th grade into 5th grade a friend of ours she was
a teacher, at the elementary school where I was at, and she was a friend of the
family, she taught I guess it would be considered not the top track but the next
track down and I was slated to be in her class. And because she was a friend of
the family, conflict of interest, they, my parents encouraged me to move up into
the top track or whatever. And I just remember feeling out of place then being in
that top track and I was away from the people I had been with for so long… I
would say it gave me a heightened, *I had an awareness* of being in how students
are grouped within the school system at a very young age. And I don’t know I can
only speak from my own experience, and I don’t know how other young students
feel about that, but I really had a, it was weird to me, just the slots that students
are placed in and how hard it is at times to kind of remove yourself from those
positions. (Drew)

Both critical incidents here discuss a heightened sense of awareness or an experiential
consciousness raising (More 2005). In this light, Mezirow (Mezirow and Associates
2000) defines learning as the process of using prior interpretation to construe a new or
revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to future action (p.5)
with the goals of transformational learning theory being to achieve self emancipation
through self-knowledge, overcome systematic distortions of perception and
communication, and strengthen one’s autonomy through rational discourse (More, 2005).

II b. Critical Incidents During PDS

The PDS advocacy literature suggests that teacher education programs that are
connected to PDS partnerships are designed to develop and promote reflective teachers.
Collaboration, continuous learning and inquiry into practice characterize reflective
teaching (Schoonmaker 2002, p. 62). Up until this point we have been discussing
incidents and experiences prior to the PDS participants identified as being relevant to
their own current teaching. Incidents that occurred during the PDS experience across
cases are now discussed. Knowles (1999) notes that the small and growing body of knowledge about teacher biographies suggest that it is not primarily the teacher education programs that establish a teacher role identity, but rather previous life experiences as they relate to education and teaching that play a larger part in this process (p. 147). Within the context of this PDS program, I found that due to its structure; the activities, assignments, dialogues among the triads consisting of the mentor, the intern and the associate, aspects of situated learning; that prior life and learning experiences relevant to the interns are critically reflected and engaged throughout the PDS experience contributing to their transformational effects in a timely and relevant fashion to the professional development of the interns.

Mezirow describes a process of perspective transformation that considers how people interpret their life experiences, critically examine the assumptions and beliefs that have structured how those experiences have been interpreted, and revise their assumptions until the very structure of those assumptions have been transformed (More 2005). At the center of Mezirow’s theory is the individuals structuring of the meaning from his or her experience (Clark 1993, in More 2005). Self-determined learning can only occur in a situation where there is agreement to participate (Walker, 1999). If an aim of autonomy is to be met, individuals should be properly equipped to make choices that allow them to be both happy and productive member of a school community (see Winch, 1999). And it is the interpretation of the incident and the choice to act on the event in which the transformational learning experience begins to take root. In the following excerpts we see the phases of transformational learning beginning. In the end is greater
degree of autonomy is what became imposed upon Nica through the simple utterances by her mentors.

It was 2002 and I felt like it was an important event to mark [9/11] and I talked to Mary and I devised this activity but I only devised it for my [regular class], I didn’t devise it for, not even considering the lower level kids…and I asked Mary if I should and she said “You can if you want”. And that is when, you know you are on your path, no one in PDS is going to tell you what to do. And I decided no, no, I am not going to do it, they do not value it… I was not happy to see them in the morning. I was not engaging in a way that, because they were not like me, essentially, I didn’t know who these people were. And when it came to, and I reflected on it, all the vocational kids in my high school were sent to VOTEC, there was not inclusion in my school whatsoever. Like they were in the resource room, everyone was excluded. So the only people that I understood from my high school experience, and the type of learner that I was, were the college bound kids, mainstream, exactly, and so, that Sept. made me fall off my chair, it was the first time I had to encounter the type of learner I was, what kind of person I was what kind of teacher I wanted to be.

The leader of the program asks a seemingly simple question that triggered engagement in self-determination as a central aim of Nica and below in Ben’s education. As Mezirow (2003) notes, autonomy in discursive democracy involves a moral dimension. In Nica’s case, she confronted her past and reflected on her actions. Ben confronts his future.

“What do you want to learn?” That was the moment. I write about that a lot. Asking me that question empowers me because my answer was I want to learn about democratic classrooms. I want to learn about why the teacher has a need for control, on, and why people haven’t given, don’t give students the chance to answer that question for themselves. And so I went to my mentor and I said this is my, this is going to be my inquiry democratic classrooms in education. And we just chuckled. Yeah that’s what I’ve been working on. I’m like all right. And at that point we stopped it being mentor and apprentice.(Ben)

In these examples we can see how transformative learning was stimulated by direct intervention by Dr. Jameson. This was done in order to foster the development of the skills, insights, and especially the dispositions essential for critical-self reflection on assumptions necessary and effective participation in critical dialectical discourse- which
are all essential components of democratic citizenship and required skills if transformative learning is to take root (Mezirow, 2003).

Triggering a year long self-study which wound up becoming a chapter in his own dissertation, Lonny’s transformative experience caused him to further reflect and become more critically conscious of his own and others racial identity.

And I walked in and I told one of the teachers that I had just received a fellowship and I was a Holmes Scholar. And so I would not you know be teaching classes on campus. So we could actually do some co-teaching you know. And she looked at me and she said “Do you do floors and windows?” And the interns, they looked at her, like why did you say that? And I looked at her and just said “No”.

Immediately by nature I shut down because any response that I would, other than the no, would have been negative.

Lonny’s immediate response was to shut down, but what followed and what transpired for Lonny over the course of the following weeks and months was a critical self and community engagement and interrogation of racial identity, and viewpoints of the community members on the topic.

They definitely influenced my, my notion of what I teach because I don’t know if you remember seeing it but there was that whiteness. That wasn’t a part of their, my curriculum at that particular point. This young lady did not have to give a presentation on whiteness. But there’s, it raises my consciousness and it, and it raises their, the students’, consciousness also. And so all of these incidents reminded me that we all should know who we are and where we fit in and even me as a black male. You know I have a position. I have a position now again is right here. Let’s see. There’s others, there’s white, especially at the school you know well I guess it will get better eventually. But at State College High School and I believe that they have a different way of thinking and they have a position now in the world. The key was for me to know and for to inform my students this is what’s going on in the world. This is where you fit. You know. If you’re a black male this is where you fit. If you are a white female or a white male this is where you fit.

III. Conversational Learning and Rational Discourse

Critical-dialectical discourse or reflective judgment (Mezirow 2003) and conversational learning are fundamental to transformative learning; they are the
instrumental and communicative components of engaging personal experiences and critical incidents into the collaborative process and nature of the PDS program. They offer the vehicle for the participant to begin to create an integrative understanding of his or her experience as a guide to action (Mezirow 1994). Discourse is directly referent to the dialogue that involves the assessment of beliefs, feelings, and values involving topics referred to from the point of view from a frame of reference (Mezirow 2003).

Transformational learning involves dialogue-inquiry enabling individuals to make self discoveries where their feelings, images and thoughts are unified with their actions (Wade, 1998). A simple phrase in a professional context can be triggers or turning points to transforming professional lives. Words uttered in a timely moment and critically reflected upon can be liberating or hindering, offer guidance and warnings. In this case, it was words that were the triggers to many of the critical incidents and experiences were reported. “So, what do you want to learn?” “Do you do floors and windows?” ’Elizabeth, you should seriously consider being an English teacher. I look forward to calling you a colleague.’ “You can if you want” Conversational learning, critical dialectical discourse, are further elaborations necessary linking experiential learning to transformation. This is a unlike a traditional method of learning that places primary emphasis on abstract and conceptual dimensions of knowledge, conversational learning equally values the learners’ emotional, sensual and physical engagement in the learning process (A. Kolb, 2002 p. 68). The cognitive and the rational dialogues that followed these utterances as well as the dialogues, conversations and discussions between the interns, mentors and the associates within the context of PDS and are active elements
of the transformative learning process that takes place in the PDS. Figure 5.1 A reconfiguration of a transformational professional learning experience

IV. Core Professional Ideas and Questions

The core professional ideas, experiences, incidents and questions (CPIQ) the participants held at their center, or closest to their hearts, offer additional insight to the collective constructs that makes up the organization. This collective organizational consciousness (Pruzan 2001) is formed by the interns, and makes up an integral component of transformational learning in the context of the teacher professional development school. Immersion, Engagement, practice and rational discourse are encompassed within the stable, structured, organizational beliefs and goals. It is the interns’ professional ideas and questions that act as a constant, central force within the small PDS institution and its motivation and collective ability to function as a transformational environment. Figure 5.1: A Re-composition of a Transformational Professional learning Experience(see below)
There are a couple of core questions that are really at the heart of the PDS. One is what is literacy? And what does it mean to be literate? And if you were to ask me as a junior in high school it means you are able to read, you know. And so, that is one of the core questions. One of the core questions is “Who are you as a learner and what kind of values do you bring in? Another core questions and this is my opinion (laughs) of the PDS is, We teach- one of the core values here-We teach who we are. And so if you are teaching who you are and all that stuff about being a learner and where you come from and experiences you’ve had in the classroom and you use literacy all play in to that. And so I think with conversations in seminar and with conversations with Mary and with my associate, a different population person of person I never met in my life, those questions started to work…and I think the PDS as a community of, we had a great word for it, it is not critique it is not criticism but it is like, it is not hurtful, [a critical friend](Nica)

The process is transformational in the acting out, interpreting, individual engagement with, the central ideas, as well as in the constant progression of individually
and collaboratively answering the compelling professional questions that are at the heart of the participants practices. The interview questions asked elicited the Core Professional Ideas and Questions (CPIQ) that guided practice and offered insight and clarification into understanding “why the educators do and what they do as educators.” What we hear is a discussion of the core professional values and purposes evident in the lives of the participants ranging from issues of empathy, compassion and understanding of students to a foundational belief in the power of relationships. As Palmer (1998) notes, we teach who we are from within, from the heart; where integrity and authenticity emanate. As you will see, the ideas, and questions cover a broad range of topics, all relevant to the education. Lisa talked about the questioning of power structures as being a central idea to her teaching.

I enjoyed my educational experience but by the time I started studying for a master’s degree I had been cheated of a lot of experiences. We had never talked about questioning where knowledge comes from or questioning the power structures that create certain conditions for education to happen. And so, I would really say that the experiences that are at the heart of my teaching didn’t necessarily happen when I was in school, but it was when I was studying for my masters degree at UMASS Boston. I studied with Donaldo Macedo and he really opened my eyes to say that education is a place of cultural struggle and that idea of being able to help people in becoming more critical and change society through teaching in schools, is probably what lies at the heart of my teaching. (Lisa)

Ben discusses a religious or spiritual grounding at the center of his practice stemming from his Christian background.

There’s a lot at the heart that I hold close to the center. My mind just first goes to stories. And I have a good friend of mine who’s a priest and we kind of see each other as doing the same exact thing because he’s teaching a book and I’m teaching a book. And we both recognize the fact that we learn through narratives and being Catholic you know looking at Christ as the teacher he told parables he told stories. That’s all it is. (Ben)
Jordan, who was faced her own struggles throughout the year as an intern linked her desire to change the world to her experiences working at the local Environmental Center after she dropped out of college. Her ecological consciousness promotes her own transformative practice.

I think it is tied in to my work in the environmental movement. I think it is an idea of saving the world [small chuckle]. Initially when I was young and impressionable, it really was an idea that I could make a big change, and I became more conscious myself, I realized that small changes are the most important and accessible. It is very difficult to make a global change. But I have the idea that I can affect a person or some people, and that drives what I am doing. (Jordan)

Connie holds the teaching critical thinking skills and her empathetic personality as Paramount.

I really think it is important to learn to think critically, and any way that I can get kids to do that, and my normal tool is literature, and you can use any text, so really for me critical thinking is at the heart of what I do…Because I think, so often I think work with kids that weren’t the good kids. I have never, ever had a bad student. And I know that kid say that kid is so bad, or that girl is so mean, I feel that, my ability or my gift in life, to be cheesy about it, I really think and see the good in every person. And maybe it is because I have had different life experiences… (Connie)

Cindy maintains a sense of equity in her practice.

Well you know going back to my elementary school years, I always do think about being equal, being fair, not judging upon appearance, background, those sorts of things. And that is constantly . . . and I guess you know your memories are constantly in your thoughts with regard to when you step into that classroom and what’s happening with the interaction between everyone. (Cindy)

Nica believes in relationships in the classroom and how she can support the growth and development of them through different measures.

I really believe in relationships. And, I think that relationships really make a difference in my classrooms. Whether for the good or for the bad, I really foster a sense of community where you know, that we talk to each other as human beings, not as a superior to an inferior or to an authority figure.
From the beginning our lives lay down clues to selfhood and vocation, though the clues may be hard to decode (Palmer 2000, p. 15). The intern participants having chosen to be part of the PDS have already done the important work in decoding their own paths and pasts to teaching.

**Question 2**

**What is the relationship between transformational learning and experiential professional development?**

Apprenticeship is not just a novice and an expert, it is also a community. So, for them to grow, for teachers to be prepared, they have to be immersed in that community of novices and experts trying to make sense in the world. In the discipline of education, that experience happens to be, in my opinion, students actions and words and activity. So a teacher ed. program has to have that rich sort of contextual immersion in that community. *(Dr. Jameson)*

**Proposition 2:** Transformational learning in the context of experiential professional development is the learning of an idea, a concept, a method, a practice, or a body of knowledge relative to a specific profession through a commitment to the community and professional environment that maintains the knowledge base that is to be learned. Immersion, awareness of, engagement in and inquiring about the realized momentous significance of the social and relational aspects of the professional learning environment act as the foundation for transformational learning and experiential professional development to occur. The activities, dialogues and discussions that take place through the social and professional interactions form a bridge for transformative learning to occur.

**Legitimate Peripheral Participation and Situated Learning**

Legitimate peripheral participation and situated learning are two useful concepts in understanding the relationship between experiential professional development and transformative learning. Legitimate peripheral participation or situated learning encompasses the social and relational aspects of learning within a community of practice. Legitimate peripheral participation or situated learning are activity theories which are not simply concerned with doing as disembodied action, but are referring to *doing* to transform some object, with a contextualized activity of the entire system-not an isolated
activity (Engestrom, 1987, 1993; Kuuti, 1996 in Barab & Plucker 2002) Here in the PDS, interns are immersed completely in the community of practice and learn through participating on a daily basis over the course of one school year in this environment. The participation model for establishing authenticity is predicated on the assumption that the authenticity of an activity is dependent upon the extent to which learners engage in authentic practices of a community (Barab, 2000). Learning occurs through discourse, dialogues, participating in activities and the complex web of social relationships that exist in the community that embodies their practice, the Scarlet Area School District and the PDS community within this larger context. In this process, authentic learning occurs though the immersion. Legitimate peripheral participation refers to not just local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities (Wenger 1999, p. 4).

When ideas or concepts about schooling and learning to teach are abstracted in the university classroom, it can make for a limited and inauthentic experience for a student during their field experiences or start their first teaching job. When considering situated learning it makes no sense to talk of knowledge that is de-contextualized, abstract or general (Smith, 2003). In the realm of an authentic community of practice, a higher degree of awareness is reached due to the reality of the context; ‘being there’ as an apprentice educator/intern enables a truer response that has significant relative meanings in responses to the realized momentous experience with students, colleagues in the school context. The intern is not beholden to a pre-conceived, suggested or studied outcome as
in a classroom, but can utilize their understandings in the particulars of the moment in the actual environment.

Entering the PDS community is a transformative process. It first requires de-centering from the university classroom and re-centering to the school district community of practice; it is about moving from a known environment to a more ambiguous unknown one. The interns must trust and then following an inquiry process to new knowledge. In doing so, learning occurs for the intern. There is a crucial difference between what happens in a university classroom when students are taking a class in how to teach, as compared to what happens when a student is actually learning to teach in the real and situated context of a school and classroom where they are following their own inquiries to figure out the environment. It can be an unsettling experience.

There have been a lot of times I haven't felt harmony within this program. That I really thought-- I mean, I'm a structure based person. I crave it, and so this has been really kind of-- I mean, I feel successful in it, but it's been really kind of unsettling for me, because, it's just like, okay, I don't know, I have to figure out, and I don't know how to figure this out. I just have to do it, and it'll come. So, I mean, there have been a lot of times where I was just like, 'Man, I wish that I were sitting in a lecture hall and being told, and then just having those eight weeks.' Although, those eight weeks would not have made me feel comfortable at all going into my first year. So, I mean, in that aspect, this is completely invaluable. J: This immersion.
Jen: Yeah!...
J: Sort of you are just doing it?
Jen: Yeah! I love it! I love that!

In the PDS, the interns are not told what to do. They learn to make up their own minds.

Entering the unknown environment comes with an entirely new set of problems the novice has never encountered before. This is the essence of the immersion, and the tension and the responses of the interns is where learning begins. They can no longer rely on their previous learning experiences. By learning in the situation and being in the
moment, the intern is able to make their own sense and meaning; creating their own paths, learning in collaboration with the other interns and forming their own perspectives, side by side with their mentors and the other working professionals in the community.

Learning in the classroom can exist only in the abstract, in the mind. It is the creation of an unknown for the interns to figure out so they may encounter and own the embodiment of a professional experience that the PDS seeks.

There are two fundamentally different experiences and ambiguity is something that is at the heart of an activity which is very much tried to be planned against, it can be planned against in the abstraction. I think it again goes back to the idea of abstraction vs. activity because in the abstraction you can control what is literally learned and you can control what is presented in the order which it is presented and how it is done and you can talk about it. When you thrust someone in to an activity, you have no idea of what is going to come out, you have no control over all the random variables that happen in this activity and you have to be comfortable with the ambiguity and what comes out is not at all certain. What comes out of these experiences, you have no idea. (Becker Interview)

Dr. Jameson’s method is revealed by Lisa.

He never gives you an experience of the abstraction—of talking and reading about supervision, and that is the way that he does everything; mentors don’t take classes on how to be mentors; they are given an intern. Interns have some theoretical grounding, but again they don’t have to take any classes, like I had to take at A&M where I took a class on how to make a billboard and how to run an overhead [How to Teach 101] and I really think that that effects his organizational structure as well. And he never makes things, something that drives people crazy about him is that he never makes his thinking explicit, then that would be taking it in to the abstraction level and he wants to know what you get out of it. (Lisa)

The dynamic tension generated in this active PDS environment is embodied in the learning process.

That is what this whole model is about that if we had learned how to write a lesson plan when it did not matter, when we weren’t writing lesson plans for our students and knew how that lesson plan was going to work in the classroom it wouldn’t have made half as much sense as it does now. And to know what my lessons looked like before I came up with a solid clear rationale for why I was doing what I was doing and to see the difference between what happened when I
didn’t do that and what happened when I do that now. I realize that like you …part of this whole immersion model, this inquiry model is that you feel your needs when you need them. (Pam)

Feeling your needs when you need them, or approaching the situation when arises. Ben reflected and acted on the learning moments as they occurred.

And that’s how I learned to do it you know to constantly reflect and act—reflection and action like (snaps fingers). You know I’m going to make mistakes, all right, but I know I’m aware of this and I’m here and okay. (Ben)

Here Britzman’s perspective is important in understanding of being in the context for the interns to be able to give meaning to that which they are doing and learning

“The difference between mere circumstance and lived experience is our capacity to bestow experience with meaning, be reflective and take action. Without an awareness of potential and given meanings, and our own capacity to extend experience through interpretation and risk, without this active side, our capacity to participate in the shaping of experience is diminished (Britzman 2003 p.51).

Being active and engaged in the community classroom is where one learns how to teach. Removing or abstracting ideas from the school environment takes away from the authentic nature of constructive learning. The aim is for the students is to make sense of the professional school environment for themselves and with others based on their own experience, histories and education; with guidance provided along the way from the insight of mentors, and associates as needs arise. Learning becomes individualized at the cellular level, yet, with the creation of learning through a community of non-abstraction, based in activity and engagement, it makes for an authentic, creative dialogic and transformative environment. It is through the meaning making representations of the concrete professional community experiences that a new perspective is constructed. This new perspective is based upon the workings of students’ and teachers’ own inquiries into
themselves, their classrooms and the social contexts they become a part of through the immersion. Learning as increasing participation in communities of practice concerns the whole person acting in the world (Lave and Wenger 1991: 49).

**Questions 3&4 (combined)**

To what extent is transformational learning and experiential professional development relevant to teacher preparation? And, to what extent do teachers identify transformational learning and experiential professional development as being relevant in their professional training?

**Proposition 3-** Transformation Learning and experiential professional development is relevant to teacher preparation and development through the participants’ acknowledgement of the responsibilities of their own professional preparation and their becoming aware on a personal and a professional level of the greater concerns and issues involved in the field of education. We also see the relevance of transformational learning and experiential professional development through the analysis of metaphors that intern teacher identified that show the manifestation of symbolic and creative thinking about how teaching and learning occurs and has influenced the participants own growth as educators through participation in the PDS.

*Relevance* is how pertinent, connected or applicable some information is to a given matter. Considering the relevance of transformative learning and experiential professional development to teacher preparation and development, we can assess relevance in terms of the interns cognitive processing and synthesis of the PDS experience.

An input (a sight, a sound, an utterance, a memory) is relevant to an individual when it connects with background information he has available to yield conclusions that matter to him: say, by answering a question he had in mind, improving his knowledge on a certain topic, settling a doubt, confirming a suspicion, or correcting a mistaken impression. In relevance-theoretic terms, an input is relevant to an individual when it’s processing in a context of available assumptions yields a POSITIVE COGNITIVE EFFECT. A positive cognitive effect is a worthwhile difference to the individual’s representation of the world – a true conclusion, for example (Wilson & Sperber 2004).
Interns knew that their experience was different than those of their peers in the traditional teacher preparation program at Pioneer State. Beth saw the length, breadth and scope of the reflective inquiry PDS model coupled with the standards of practice and competency gained through the one year immersion as similar to their first year of teaching and that if it found a wider audience, education would be the better for it.

I feel like, instead of having six weeks where you're sitting in a classroom and you're kind of watching-- when, normal student teachers, they basically-- from what I observed, sit in the back of a classroom, observe for, let's say, ten weeks, and then teach, you know, three or four weeks, reflect for two weeks, and then they're done! And, I just-- I can't imagine feeling prepared after that! And going to teach a classroom of students-- you'd be fumbling! For years! Because you have to learn lessons over and over and over again. And, from other parts of the educational process that I've experienced at Pioneer State-- they've been nothing like PDS. It's all very generic preparation. You know, you have to make fictitious lesson plans for lessons that you will never teach, which is ridiculous. You want to be able to teach that lesson and then reflect back on that lesson. So the next time you do it, you can realize how to do it better. You know? And, it just-- it doesn't make any sense to me at all. And so, I feel like, if there were many programs like this, throughout the country, it could really make things so much better for students, for teachers, for everyone, you know? (Beth)

Transformative learning in the context of teacher preparation and development is a practice of becoming attentive to one’s own depth and breadth of educative life experiences. Participants identified its relevance in their training when they discussed their awareness and commitment to the professional responsibilities and understanding of the students they serve. Exactly what the participants become aware of from their inquiries, reflections, engagement and immersion is informative to the relevance the interns place on the experience. An aim of the PDS, according to Dr. Jameson was

I would hope that they would express things that indicate they have a greater sense of agency as teachers as a consequence as having a greater awareness of their own values and purposes. (Jameson)
In its essence, this is a transformative aim, essentially valuing a greater sense of
competence, and autonomy in one’s action and control over one’s self as an educator, and
how an intern becomes aware of and learns to negotiate and act on their own purpose,
values, feelings and meanings in the context of the school. One aim of the PDS is clearly
for the students to become transformative type learners. To have a better understanding of
themselves, and why they do what they do. As Ben said “Oh man. What have I been most
aware of? Myself. My prejudices.” But becoming self-aware within the context of the
school, and that there are others who are different yet you must interact and have the
ability to educate others is relevant.

I think it makes you very acute and very aware of the different social worlds. I
think that is one thing it makes you very aware. (Nica)

The having and holding an authentic understanding of one’s self as a person is
instrumental and organically important in being able to be a teacher who is able to work
within the contexts of different social worlds. As individuals make self discoveries, their
feelings images and thoughts are unified with their actions (Wade 1998). Lonny saw his
sense of self-worth, self-identity and agency grow, and he become more aware of a
greater sense of personal value and his truer essence as an educator enhanced in the
classroom.

It made me think. It made me also, ever so conscious of my response. As far as
my . . . it raised my level of consciousness on what is appropriate, what’s
inappropriate, why the statements are made. And the key is to share that with the
students. You know like share with them that I think it’s, how can I say that,
especially when I talk about white privilege. That’s normally my first example.
But that there’s a, a different type of people or other educators that if they are
white that they may not be aware of that unearned privilege that they have.
(Lonny)
Connie, who had taught before, struggled throughout the year with learning to teach again and having to re-look at her prior learning experiences, and her ego, within the new context.

I think I learned from one of my mentors that I really had to check my ego, that my past experiences were not valid and I basically needed to do things her way because my way just wasn’t right. I realized that I could, I felt very frustrated, because we both thought our way was correct. But I realized that now was the time to experiment, now was the time to try her way. And see if it could work for me and have more than one way. Because I know that there are so many different learners and know that I try different ways...[what happened?] I tried it her way and it worked. And, so, hey wow look at that. And I felt had I done it my way, had she let me do it my way it still would have worked, but, now I have two different ways to do a discussion. For me, now the fact that I got past that egocentric stubbornness, and realized that I am not going to learn unless I try new things. To me that was very critical; that I have to let go of the self in the situation. Because it is not about me, it is about what can be best for the kids and if I know more things about how to teach, that is better for the students, not, oh, Connie has such a great way of doing discussion. No, she has more than one way of doing discussion.

Transformation involves movement from an attitude of ego-centricity to one of ego-transcendence. The process of transformation produces a ‘person-becoming or a person in process’. The new self freely accepts a future that freely accepts a future that rejects the old self (Wade, 1998). Connie became even more attuned to the community and to her students’ lives and needs.

I’ll go to their games, I’ll watch their plays, and say you did a great job or I see them in the paper I mention it, they don’t, they haven’t been getting sleep I’ll ask them if they are doing ok. It is all these little things combined, I think it is an awareness. It is noticing that a kid is falling asleep everyday in class and asking how they are feeling. You know, keeping an eye out for when their stuff is displayed. It is such a huge thing for a teacher to say, “Wow, I really like the pottery you had displayed out there. Such a little thing for us, but I think it creates that [nurturing environment]...(Connie)

Personal transformation provides a foundation for the development of honest authentic and caring relationships (Pizzi 1990, Jennings 1993 in Wade 1998). True community in any
context requires a transcendent third thing that holds the persons involved accountable to something beyond themselves (Palmer 2001). In Connie’s case the third thing was the best interest of the classroom students. For Jen transformation came about through her reflecting on the course she took prior to entering the PDS taught by a Dewy scholar at Pioneer State, and seeing how a deeper understanding of ecological consciousness became integral to her experiential practice.

Not aware of depth of learning and teaching
I wasn't even aware, I think of what educational theory and policy meant while going through that class until maybe the last week and then, all of a sudden, it was like, everything came together. You know, she was teaching eco-wise, just, eco-friendly articles, eco-friendly philosophies. And then, intertwining educational philosophy within that, and I don't think I was questioning it so much. Maybe at the very beginning, but then I just fell into a routine-- this is what we do, this is what we do. And, by the end, it just all kind of-- blossomed. And I was like, 'Oh my God. That was an amazing, amazing, experience I just went through. (Jen)

The experience in turn fostered more holistic connections and engagement in the PDS environment and laid the foundation for her ability to see education from an alternative rather than traditional view.

Jordan’s journey was one that brought her face to face with her own self as a high school and college student. Having been arrested for shoplifting, and failing out of college were negative experiences that inhibited her. She wanted to move past these negative aspects of her life. Jordan’s personal transformation was one of redemption.

I have a lot of inhibitions so I see it on a very surface level. I had a lot of inhibitions and I was afraid of my failings, I was afraid of little things like my inability to spell well, and I was afraid of things I don’t know and I didn’t know how I could possibly learn them. (Jordan)

She was able to move away from fear, by first acknowledging herself and the world around her. It was an authentic response; one that brought her closer to her own views and perspectives on the world. Shutting out the news and newspapers was one way of
getting in touch with her own voice, yet also accepting the suffering of the world and agreeing to participate and make a difference in it now that she has moved past herself.

My worldview changed on a lot of levels, I actually did something for the first time this year that I have never done before. I stopped watching the news and reading the paper. And I was sort of tiptoeing around that when I first had Alex, my son, because I was scared of what I was reading and once you become conscious of all the suffering (whispered) it becomes a little too much and I was afraid that I was bringing this child in to this world that has so many problems. And never had I wanted to be more aware and be more up to date so I could have these informed conversations with my students, but I am freaking out about what is going on in the world around us and I think that is part of the fact that I feel this accountability for even more kids and they are growing up in this world with all this suffering and awfulness (Jordan)

The transformative learning experience coupled with experiential professional development is one that brings time and space together. Past, and present become now; the future is only relevant as being an always present reality-realizing the significance of the moment by having an awareness of one’s circumstances of the self in the present environment.

Metaphor as Synthesis of PDS Relevance

The use of metaphor is a way of shedding new light on an already existing phenomenon, by looking at and speaking about that phenomenon from a totally different perspective. In this way we obtain transfer of meaning, and thus an opening up of awareness (Huebner, 1985). Because metaphors reflect experience, they are snapshots of life (Nelson 1997). In the snapshots here we see the imaginative responses to the question can you create a metaphor for your participation in the SCASD PDS?

At the core of Connie’s metaphor is her authentic self which she is aware of yet covers up to suit different situations.
Trying on different masks and some of them are uncomfortable and some of them work really well. Some of them are really ugly (Connie)

Ben’s responses drew from different literary and film contexts. The sense of self as a colorful, imaginative and experimental individual is what emerges.

The PDS is the wardrobe for the Narnia…The movie The Matrix because it’s like taking a blue pill and suddenly you find yourself in this test tube all slimy and icky and you’re like wait a minute. This is really what the world is? You know…It’s like it’s, it’s eye opening and it’s like that you know when Neo touches the mirror and it’s like whoa! (Ben)

Ben though reveals a becoming more closely embodied to the self in a more authentic way. Whatever events transpire, it is the intern in the environment, not some outside force that is in control of what is happening.

[The PDS] really does a nice job pulling the curtain and letting you see that there is, there is no wizard behind the curtain, and it’s,…that you know.

Many interns utilized a journey metaphor to describe their experience in the PDS. As Wade (1998) notes, transformation is a journey without a final destination. The destination here that exists is one of surviving and learning in the here and now. What emanates though is a strong sense of understanding the authentic self and its learning in the PDS environment.

It, it made me aware of the path that I’m on and it made me aware that though it’s the same mountain that we’re all climbing we all create our own way up. (Ben)

It is a journey. Thought process, teaching, with yourself, each new year, each new intern, each new set of kids, each new set of ideas, comes with its own path. Its like, oh, I started here and I wound up here. You know, the tertiary road in the middle of a corn field and how do I find my way back. And, it’s a journey and it’s kind of this winding road, that you have to work through and be ok not seeing the end. And I think that is the point. You know where you came from and where you are going, sometimes that changes. Sometimes this job doesn’t have an end. Or at least I feel. If you want to be a good teacher, you have to keep working, keep churning, keep driving at it. (Nica)
Barb likens here experience to the film *Finding Nemo*, where the hero of the story is removed from their safe home environment and must find his way back through dangerous waters.

Just keep swimming! (laughs) Did you ever see Finding Nemo, where, you just keep going, you know? Keep questioning, keep-- don't let the little bumps in the road, whether it's an off-color comment from a student-- don't let it phase you. Learn from it and keep going! (Barb)

Learning happens as a natural occurrence

…a happy vagabond, who just wanders in and out of experiences, learning from all the different things that happen to her, none of them are planned, none of them are set out to meet a greater goal, a lot of life is…do this, do this, do this, it really has helped to deal with just, you are always learning, no matter what happens you are learning. And you may not be learning what people may want you to be learning, but you are always learning. [very momentous] and spontaneous and that is how I felt all my learning was in the PDS. (Lisa)

For Drew, the PDS is a daring adventure where you are in control of your free fall.

Its almost like, parachuting for the first time, jumping out of that plane and you have that parachute on your back and you know its going to open, at least you think it is going to open, and you free fall for awhile, and then it is time to pull the chord and maybe it doesn’t open right away, maybe you get a little shaky and your thinking maybe the reserve will open and then the reserve opens and hopefully it opens up and you are going to land somewhere that it is safe and everything but there are always those moments when things don’t go right and it scares the dickens out of you, but then it all seems to work out and there’s strong people in the PDS program. They let you flounder as much as you need to flounder but I think there are people that are keeping an eye on you even if the idea is that you are promoting your own learning and your own questioning. So I think maybe it is not someone else that finally pulls that reserve shoot. You pull it at the last moment and things work out. (Drew)

Transformation is individual change in the deepest sense of the word, a form of rebirth (Wade, 1998), as George discusses.

This experience has been like a rebirth. A reinvention of me. In that it has forced me to think about who I am [and] understand, challenges that have come about. And I think that is one thing great about being in the classroom setting, you have all of theses experiences that most student teachers do not. PDS is like a, it is like
a reinvention of who you think you are and your identity and I think it makes you more of, from your individual standpoint, you are a more compassionate individual, more understanding individual and that could be strictly from my own individual self, but I think the experience forces you to think about how you will reinvent yourself, because you will, whether you realize it or not. The experience is going to force you to do that. I don’t see how you could come in to the experience and not be changed in some way shape or form. You will be. So I would say it is like a reinvention, a rebirth of yourself. (George)

Question 5

What best practices are related to transformational learning and experiential professional development in the context of professional development schools?

Proposition 4: Transformational learning and experiential professional development is a unique personal and professional process and practice. These best practices were identified in the context of the SCASD Secondary Level English language Arts School District. They are presented here in the spirit of experimentation and innovation and not necessarily as fixed or rigid practices that are applicable to all professional development schools or small organizations working in teacher preparation. Best practices are considered within the contexts of which they were ascertained and should only be applied after the careful study and consideration of the unique aspects of the people and policies of the environment one wishes to transfer and apply them to.

Experiential, hands-on learning activities offer a powerful medium for promoting transformative learning (Taylor 1997a) Cranton and King (2003) outline five practical strategies to promote or encourage transformative professional development: action plans, reflective activities, case studies, curriculum development, and critical theory discussions. All of these are strategies I found to be employed in the Scarlet Area School District Professional Development School. It was clear that the community worked hard to cultivate a perspective, environment and expectation of reflective practice, thereby creating a solid basis for transformative learning (Stein & Farmer, 2004), which from an educational perspective is an interactive process (Wade, 1997). My findings further suggest the following four practices to aid in cultivating an environment conducive to
promoting transformative learning among teachers in a field experience/professional
development school.

**Practice 1-Authentic Immersion-The Clock and the Calendar-reality student-teaching.** Designing the Professional Development School program around the school district calendar, not the university calendar, and requiring the intern teachers to be governed by many of the same work rules as their mentors is considered a best practice in the light of this study “This is like your first year of teaching, with scaffolding.”

The interns followed the school district calendar as far as holidays, professional development days, school/work hours, and were governed by many of the same rules their mentors followed regarding leave time, sick days and other school-employee regulations. Interns were required to be present for the entire school year according to the State College School District Calendar and participated in the regular professional development day workshops, department meetings and other school-wide experiences. They did not follow the Pioneer State University calendar year longer holidays or days off as their peers did. They took the same holidays and vacation days as the other teachers in the community.

From the very beginning, in the retreat week, they're saying, you know, 'This is going to be like your first year teaching. You are a part of this community. You are going to, basically, be a teacher. You have a lot of the same responsibilities. You do a lot of the same things.' So, from the very beginning, they wanted us to feel like equals, you know? (Beth)

This can be considered a transformative structural adjustment in the professional training and development of the interns. It adjusted the students’ spatio-temporal dimensions or space and time dimensions, to the standards of the local school district teaching professionals rather than to that of the college student. It also altered the intern work standards, in the structural element of learning to teach to the standards of the school district, not adhering to the college learning standards which are altogether different. The
clearly-articulated standards of professional practice are essential in helping both the
novice teacher and their mentor communicate effectively about and keep all eyes focused
on high quality teaching and increased student learning (Moir & Glass 200?). The interns
frame of reference is altered from one where they focused simply on being a college
student and doing well in class, to the set of professional norms and expectations of a
classroom teacher. Interns began the PDS year two weeks before the college semester,
and reported to the school district each morning before the first bell; staying until the end
of the day as any employed teacher would. Non-occupational behavior was controlled,
because of this new schedule, students social, work and sleep habits were different than
those of their peers, being aligned with what it will be like when they are employed as
teachers, creating a new standard for the intern to follow.

I feel like, instead of having six weeks where you're sitting in a classroom and
you're kind of watching-- when, normal student teachers, they basically-- from
what I observed- sit in the back of a classroom, observe for, let's say, ten weeks,
and then teach, you know, three or four weeks, reflect for two weeks, and then
they're done! And, I just-- I can't imagine feeling prepared after that! And going
to teach a classroom of students-- you'd be fumbling! For years! Because you
have to learn lessons over and over and over again. And, from other parts of the
educational process that I've experienced at Pioneer State-- they've been nothing
like PDS. It's all very generic preparation. You know, you have to make
fictitious lesson plans for lessons that you will never teach, which is ridiculous.
You want to be able to teach that lesson and then reflect back on that lesson. So
the next time you do it, you can realize how to do it better. You know? And, it
just-- it doesn't make any sense to me at all. And so, I feel like, if there were
many programs like this, throughout the country, it could really make things so
much better for students, for teachers, for everyone, you know? (Beth-)

The immersion process took the interns out of their comfort zone. The school district as
the classroom became the experiential playground for learning to teach, rather than the
university campus and the lecture halls which have all the associations of college life for
interns to deal with. Learning to teach in the school district replaced the college
structures, and the students became bound to a new form, one that has a professional
configuration, which they are, at first initially unfamiliar with and must figure out for themselves.

There have been a lot of times I haven't felt harmony within this program. That I really thought-- I mean, I'm a structure based person. I crave it, and so this has been really kind of-- I mean, I feel successful in it, but it's been really kind of unsettling for me, because, it's just like, okay, I don't know, I have to figure out, and I don't know how to figure this out. I just have to do it, and it'll come. So, I mean, there have been a lot of times where I was just like, 'Man, I wish that I were sitting in a lecture hall and being told, and then just having those eight weeks.' Although, those eight weeks would not have made me feel comfortable at all going into my first year. So, I mean, in that aspect, this is completely invaluable. J: This immersion. C: Yeah! J: Sort of, you're just going to do it. C: Yeah! I love it! I love that!

Practice 2: Initial Selection, Mentor-Intern Match-Ups- Students come to be involved in the PDS through multiple pathways; self-selection and application, counselor guidance, and outreach. There is a selection process that includes written assignments and an interview for screening purposes. Matching the mentors and the interns is a complicated, fun and flexible process that takes into consideration multiple factors before a match is made. It is transformative in it applies a human and a criteria based process to the selecting and matching process. “It’s like dating.”

“The comparative impact of initial socialization makes considerable difference in the life of an occupation. Where such socialization is potent, the predispositions of newcomers become less important through time; the selves of participants tend to merge with the values and norms built in to the occupation. The opposite holds where socialization experiences are weak; in that case, the attitudes, values and orientations people bring with them continue to influence the conduct of the work. (Lortie, 1975 55-56)

Selection into the PDS program along with the immersion into the school district culture is the interns’ initial induction and socialization to the teaching profession. Although only a small portion of the Pioneer State University students studying to become English teachers apply to and are selected to participate in the PDS. The students selected are ones who display an ability to pursue their own learning in a spontaneous way and exhibit autonomous characteristics that would lead them to succeed in the PDS program.
...we look for some degree of dependence in structure, and somebody who seems to be overly dependent on being told what to do, is somebody who we are not comfortable, is somebody who we have reservations about. (Jameson)

One component of the PDS that helps to create the authentic immersion experience for the interns is the annual Mixer Day. On this day, taking place about two weeks before the official school year begins, prospective interns, who have been admitted and accepted to the program, come to the high school and spend the afternoon meeting the 13 mentor teachers. There is a luncheon and the University Associate- - as well as the District Associates are present. After lunch, there are 20 minute round-table, question and answer sessions between the mentors and the interns. There were groups of three interns and one group of two interns who rotated from table to table at the UA’a direction. Groups of three mentors sat at the tables which the interns rotated around. The University Associate, after lunch, started the mixer off with the following story… “There was a group of rabbis in New York City who saw that their flock was beginning to marry out of the faith. So the rabbis decided to have a mixer with the people of the faith to get to know each other better so there could be more marriages. Then, after the mixer, the rabbi’s decide who will wed each other.” The round-robin discussions lasted twenty minutes and during this time, each of the mentors described their teaching style and what they were looking for in an intern. The interns asked questions ranging from what the mentors teach, about discipline in the mentor’s classroom, why they decided to teach and so forth. The mentors asked the interns how they came to finds the PDS, what their strengths were their background, etc. Both trying to ascertain and discern who would be the best match. The mixer was very lively and there was lots of high decibel level, genuine laughter and discourse. During the four 20 minute sessions of the interns
rotating, the discussions all came to a fevered uproar. The District Associate, who eight years before had been the first intern to pilot the PDS program, said to the group, at the end of the rotations, about the matching process is that there is some ambiguity built in to this process as well, “what you start out with in the beginning of the year…things shift, and may change, you may wind up with two different mentors…you may not windup with at the end.” Students and mentors may find the perfect match now, but may switch and find someone else. “The ending is a surprise for everybody.”

Most of the students selected already had a predisposition to experiential learning and the educational disposition of the program. Below are comments and statements made by the interns during the Mixer day about why they were interested in the PDS.

Wanting a “hands on” experience. (experiential learning)

“Want to learn teaching right from the start” and “be involved”(engagement)

I heard the PDS is really challenging. (Connie)

Does not want to be in an authoritativative environment. (alternative)(context)

Does not believe in the traditional method of teacher training (alternative)

Wanted to teach through respect-in a respectful environment. (context)

“I am anxious to get in a classroom” and teach and learn

Do not believe in the other way, more traditional program, it does not make sense”

Learn through experience, not from watching.

Interested in Hands-on learning, implied learning.

Graduate of State High-Local, can relate to the students
Grad of State High

[I wanted to]“be involved in a program that was a year long”. 
“One year is better”

Motivated by Dewey’s *Experience and Education*—and influenced by Dr. Pardi, a Pioneer State University Dewey Scholar

At the end of the twenty minute sessions, Dr. Jameson again spoke and first thanked the Mentors for “opening their arms to the interns”. Following this the interns went in to a separate room with Dr. Jameson to talk about who they think they would like to be paired with. Each of the interns and mentors is given a ranking sheet to rank the mentors 1, 2, 3 and ones they do not think they can work with…rate inters with “*hearts, stars and daggers*” as the University Associate put it.

The mentors stayed in the “Chatter’s Café” at their tables and discussed and also rated the interns. They followed the same process regarding each of the interns, taking notes during the discussions. Their feelings and inclinations were shared with other mentor, but not exactly formally in public. While this was happening, the District Associate was walking around tables to table sharing her impressions with the mentors about the different interns.

After the interns and mentors were through ranking each other in terms of desirability to work with and potential matches, the UA and DA collected the ranking sheets and photo copied them so they both each have a copies. Doctor Jameson and the District Associate then went through a process of reviewing the ranking sheets and ultimately deciding, which interns will match and work with the mentors at the start of the year.

**Practice 3: Placing Inquiry at the Center of the PDS Organization**: Putting inquiry in the center of the EPDS organization allows for a constant flexibility as well as questioning that are the nature of learning and knowledge. It allows for openness in understanding the possibilities of learning and the myriad conceptions and forms that
learning takes. This is evidenced in a number of places; one is by the wide ranging nature of the interns year long self selected inquiry projects, essentially an action research project that culminates in a public presentation in a local conference. The questions and ideas held at the heart of the interns practice, as well as in the guiding principles outlined in the PDS handbook act as transformative sparkplugs within the experiential learning context.

I think the PDS is a critical juncture in your life, and I was, I knew in college what I needed to do to get a good grade. I knew. A teacher could come in, a professor could come in and like total I guess, size you up, I knew exactly what to do to get my A and be out…. [how to game the system.], Right. And that was what I did all through college and I was very successful at it. And when I came to PDS, shortly after a few weeks, Mary said she didn’t use points was going a few points, and the whole idea of learning and trusting the process and like doing something to find, like to explore, not just get an A or just to get the end result. That was when inquiry smacked in to me. And, I wasn’t resistant at all, I found it liberating. (Nica)

The SCASD PSU PDS has at its core a culture of inquiry. In this light, cultural leadership is a process of reality construction that allows people to see and understand events, actions, objects and situations in distinctive ways. In schools, culture and symbol give meaning to everything going on, it is the process of making meaning out of the day-to-day events that occur throughout the year. Cultural and symbolic leadership is also value laden and it has the ability and power to stimulate people to great action and higher purpose beyond themselves. Culture is not something an organization has, but something that an organization is. In this light, the inquiry model (Beach and Meyers 2001) structures intern activities around their actual immersion into the teaching environment, identifying the issues, questions and tension of the situated learning environment, contextualizing that which is inquired, representing the ideas in a personally and professionally relevant and inspired form, critiquing that which is learned and finally transforming one’s perspective and frames of reference based on the process. The process utilizes, at its center, empirical research techniques of wondering about ideas,
observing, note-taking, interviewing, juxtaposing and categorizing in order to elaborate
and learn from the model. It is powerful and multifaceted educational stance and
component of the PDS that has a deep initial and ongoing resonance throughout the
organization. This is the essential structure of a ‘meaning making’ process within the
PDS organization. The SCASD PDS culture informed by inquiry learning is
characterized by nine attributes;

1. a community of learners in which members with a range of experience and
knowledge contribute with equal power and voice”.
2. a negotiation of the purposes and consequences of each activity for personal
identity, social relationships and greater shared understanding
3. potentially infinite directions for members to organize experiences to
serve/question personal/community valued learning purposes
4. A strong reliance on first hand experiences, and the analysis of patterns in those
experiences to generate knowledge (experience ideas/texts in action instead of just
adopting ideas already defined
5. inviting all members to share descriptions of their experience to expand and
share the base for analysis, not to establish right and wrong answers
6. authoring and sharing symbolic representations of the ideas synthesized
through experience (talking, writing, drawing, filming, documenting, etc)
7. continuous questioning by all of the value of particular words, actions and
artifacts to accomplish desired activities and knowledge
8. continuous revision of activity and knowledge to better serve the immediate
interests and needs of all community members (embracing change and the local)
and to facilitate the movement of ideas and people across boundaries of space,
time and culture.
9. through ongoing social interaction, continually inform each other’s
understanding and next inquiry. (SCASD PDS Guidebook p. 6-7)

Dr. Jameson revealed that at the heart of his teaching is the idea of ambiguity or
admittance to more than one interpretation of an idea. The culture of the PDS
organization is one that is a reflection of the consciousness of its leader; clearing a
mental-existential-constructivist space for interns, teachers and associates alike to
critically explore personally and professionally relevant teaching ideas that drive their
desire to ‘do what it is they do as educators’.
Ambiguity

Ambiguity. [Both laugh] Uh huh, yeah. The more that I can make things unknown and unclear, needing expiration and elaboration and explanation, than I think the better inter-subjectivity that can arise in a class…thus we are all positioned to have to explain more. Therefore we have to make our subjectivities visible to ourselves and we have to learn how to use our representational tools whether they be writing or oral or visual communication tools, in order to express our subjectivities and in order to interpret each other subjectivities in a social, dialogic way, in order to negotiate some shared representations, quote, understandings, these knowledges about these ambiguous questions, these ambiguous experiences. (Dr. Jameson)

The ambiguity that exists at the core of Dr. Jameson’s philosophy is not one of intention, because it does not have ill-defined preferences (Feldman, 1991) In this case, it was clear that at the center of the PDS is the idea of improving the literacy levels of the students (as well as the interns) in the classroom; all energy and inquiry worked toward that end. The transformational effects occur through an engaging in an understanding of and engagement with the core PDS beliefs and goals aimed at meeting these overriding clear and distinct PDS community beliefs and goals.

• Allow future teachers to be immersed in all aspects of teaching
• Make the “pre-service” experience more like the first year of teaching, with extra support
• Test pedagogy in action, put theory into practice, and co-develop and implement curriculum
• Promote better relationships and communications between communities, secondary schools, and universities
• Improve instruction in public secondary schools
• Afford mentor teachers the opportunity to examine pedagogy in a supportive community
• Inform and rethink teacher education through practice
• Promote scholarship and inquiry as part of teaching activities
• Bridge the gap between universities and secondary schools through collaboration
• Create reflective practitioners
• Encourage collaboration between faculty at all levels of experience
• Create synergy and transform theory into practice
• Reduce isolation and uncertainty
• Create equal access for students and increase student consciousness
• Encourage new teachers to seek collaboration
• Develop a whole faculty identity for interns: a broader view of institution and access to the school year’s history and culture
• Continually improve curriculum through co-planning and multiple viewpoints of pedagogy
• Increase access to successful literacy practices
• Develop a collegial identity for interns, mentors, and associates
• Transform theory about literacy pedagogy into classroom practice and publish about our experiences
• Promote collaboration as a form of democracy
• Humanize education for and with alienated students
• Enact educational reform by changing the program for teacher education, and thereby changing institutional structures
• Advance inquiry as a form of classroom learning, instead of bits of knowledge in class containers
• Construct a community of practice, professional development, and reflective practitioners [Document-Secondary English PDS Guidebook]

**Practice 4-Critical Self Reflection through Journaling and Textual Connections**

Critical self-reflection is a fundamental aspect of transformation learning. Linking the aspects of critical self-reflection to text-based, conceptual, and theoretical ideas and frameworks about education, teaching and learning, and utilizing journals and dialogue and forums to elaborate the links between the landscape of the personal and the landscape of the professional is a powerful transformative practice.

“And it is all when we were doing things, like what Dr. Jameson prescribed. It is making connections between a text and your life, and talking about, some bigger issue.” (Jordan)

Reflection is a process of reconsidering experience through reason, and reinterpreting and generalizing the experience to form mental structures (Fenwick, 2000 Mezirow 2003 in Cranton 2006). Critical self-reflection is the type of thinking that serves to challenge our notions of prior learning (van Halen-Faber 1997). Reflection is a structural part of learning from experience and critical self-reflection is a central component to transformative learning. As important as critical self-reflection is, in the process of teacher preparation and development, the process can be one of riddled with uncertainties and nervousness. In the PDS, critical self-reflection is an instrumental component, and often the interns are able to reflect on those notion that are so centrally
important to them that their lives are able to speak through their work, but this is more a practice of a more seasoned educator. In the beginning stages of learning to teach, linking our notions of prior learning to textual and theoretical perspectives the transformative process of reframing an incident, or experience takes root and become further informed to alter frames of reference and world view.

I think that reflection is a critical tool to help connect the intern to the students, to get them to switch from what it is that I am doing to what is it that is going on that I can maybe influence. But when I have interns that just write about themselves, and never get beyond the point of writing about themselves, and their feelings and their nervousness, I don’t really find it that helpful, they can write volumes and volumes and volumes of like neurotic crap so I think the type and the quality and the information involved in the reflection, you know I was reading this article that my mentor gave me, I was thinking about this experience after reading Dr. Jameson’s book I can now reflect, if I add some sort of theory [it is grounded] exactly, it is grounded. (Lisa)

Particular texts are selected at the beginning of the year that offer frameworks and arenas for dialogue, discussion and journal writing among the participants.

I think it starts off with the things we do, I mean we start off with Frank Smith, the book Learning and Forgetting and all of that but like an understanding, that like, you may not fit in to that club then how do you gain access to that club, the membership to that club and so that we are all part of these different clubs and so how do you take that in to account? I think we read Dewey, we also read Freire, and by reading some of these theorists and by experimenting with those ideas in your classroom, to kind of help you maybe understand it, better I guess. So I really kind of saw it, “Oh right, not everyone learns the same way, and : Oh right, you don’t go home you go to work. And always kind of keeping in mind that we maybe that school is maybe not a place for everyone and how do we make that bridge between what goes on outside that is meaningful for them and school.

For Lonny, reading Unpacking the Backpack of White Privilege, he was better able to understand his own blackness, or racial identity, by reading about the deconstruction of white privilege, which, in doing so forever changed his life and his subsequent teaching.

Peggy McIntosh actually looks at 40 different ideas or issues that help well actually that she identifies as unearned white privilege and it’s great. It’s, it’s
really wonderful. And I require each of my classes to read that which, when, whenever they come in. We’re going to talk about this. And with the black students they actually like what’s her problem? We know these things you know. But then the white students will say this has nothing to do with me you know. And yet still Peggy McIntosh is a white female you know who had to actually deconstruct everything about herself (Lonny).

Transformation is followed by feelings of excitement, satisfaction and freedom as well as sadness associated with loss of the old self (Wade, 1998).

I think in terms of the PDS program overall the one practice that we were asked to do was to reflect in journal form. I went through all of the stages of mourning with it…And it has been completely transformational in the way I am thinking. I felt like I was going to be really wrapped up in my ego, I would not be able to take constructive criticism; I was worried about all those things at the beginning. And, this reflection has allowed me to release my ego. And when people speak to me critically, not cruelly, but critically, I have no problem. In fact it helps and I think about it and I process this in a different way. That has not changed me just as a teacher that has changed me as a person. And I think I had to be open to that. (Jordan)

Pam, even though she did not complete the journals as she was supposed to, understood their power in the written and dialogic way.

We’re supposed to be keeping a constant journal and I don’t do that all the time, but, talking to other interns and to other teachers and also journaling and going home and talking to other teachers made me much more reflective about what’s going on and asking questions and wondering what I could do differently or wondering why what did or what possibly reasons were there for the outcome in the class. (Pam)

If the interns take the process of critical self reflection and the relevance of outside texts as a model and informer in their own lives, they can see the power of praxis and their ability to constructing their own worlds.

And you know, on a larger level, you are also learning, as an intern that your classrooms are texts, they are written, they are rewritten, they are changeable, they are malleable, they are coauthored by everyone there. But the classroom can be read at a basic level. You can read your classroom. And when we shift the definition of a text from something that is static and done, to something that is constantly created and can constantly be rewritten and added to by any number of people, I think we can change our understanding of reality. Because then if
everything is a text and everything can be changed, and a life can be a text, it can be rewritten if you have the authority as the author, (authority) to do it. And I think that, can empower young teachers, and I think that idea is important to get across to students, that the world, especially high school students who have never really questioned, maybe, you know they never really questions what is reality they just take it for granted, if you can get them to questions, wait a minute, if everything is constructed, then anything can be reconstructed. That might help them then lead to change things they don’t like. It kind of offsets the cynicism of “Ahh, what are you going to do? That is just the way life is.” (Lisa)

It is in this way that praxis is informed by an emancipatory interest which preserve the interns the freedom to act within their own social situations in ways which enable their students to be in control of that situation, rather than the ultimate control of their actions residing elsewhere. Emancipation or transformation is reflective, responsible, but autonomous action. (Grundy 1987).

**Practice 5-Subbing for the Substitute (Goofus and Gallant theory)**-- a high level of autonomy and a feeling of competence was reported when students discussed subbing for the substitute. The presence of the substitute teacher acts as a salient other in the classroom, in conjunction with the mentor, with whom the intern compares, contrasts and projects their own professional practice. Subbing for the substitute provides the intern with a composite of the salient other, along with their mentor, necessary for the development of a positive teaching identity.

My study did not delve in to the depth of the relationship between the intern and their mentor, although it was clear the interns had dedicated, nurturing and professional relationships with their mentors that went beyond mere training in classroom instruction and went in to the myriad of attitudes and dispositions of an educator. Portner (2002) noted that mentoring takes place within a working relationship, and the development of a working relationship requires active participation of both its parties (p.5). The intern-mentor relationship in the PDS was compared by many to the matching up of mates in marriage. If a relationship was not working, the interns or the mentors could request for a
new partner, and this happened each year, almost as a matter of fact, and although it may have seemed a minor crisis for the intern or the mentor at the time, the PDS program is flexible enough to be able to respond to this happening. Interns spent a significant portion of their day right next to their mentor, watching, observing, engaging and most importantly, sharing and collaborating in the day-to-day responsibilities of running a classroom. The interns and mentors met outside of school and had weekly planning meetings in their homes or met regularly at a local dining establishment to reflect, talk and plan for the coming weeks. The mentor and the substitute teacher represents a salient other, or someone in the classroom environment whose role it is to act an ‘other’ who communicate and interpret the implicit and explicit standards the intern uses for evaluating their own performance in the classroom. As Borich (1999) notes the role of the significant or salient other in the development of a teacher’s self-identity cannot be overemphasized. It is the significant other who either nurtures or inhibits the developing teacher to talk freely, ask questions, and learn from the relationship. The Goofus and Gallant theory the substitute teacher is the Goofus, having a flawed teaching practice, where the mentor teacher is Gallant, the epitome of practice who teaches ‘correctly’. With the sub present, the intern is able to see the many positive aspects of their own practice, enhancing their professional identity. At the same time, the willingness on the part of the intern to become and take the risk and become engaged in the process is equally as important in creating the environment for, and the development of a healthy sense of self esteem and an intern’s ability to transcend the environment.

I wanted to get involved. I mean the first day I got up to the chalkboard my, my teacher explained something, my mentor explained something and immediately that feeling was there like “Oh, I can do this.” There was that little fear. It was almost stage fright...It was almost like I could take a breath. And then as soon as
I started to realize what teachers did do observations through sessions, through inquiry, you know, I never, I never felt that I couldn’t do it. So I’m not sure if that’s the same as being autonomous. But I mean I needed to learn how to teach. I needed those skills. (Cindy)

The interns were not bumps on a log but new branches growing on a tree. There was significant room within the mentor-relationship and PDS program that lead to a conducive environment for the nurturing and freedom necessary for autonomous growth and transformative learning.

Well, we plan together pretty much every week, we get together every Sunday. Yeah, I would say almost at least three times a month at least four. We’ve gotten together for a couple hours at a time. We really do, we spend a lot of time together we have 1st and 2nd period together. 1st period we have study hall and 2nd period is our prep period and again I would say 95% of the time we are together, whether it is in the office here, or if we have to go somewhere else of in our classroom. So, we spend a lot of time together. (Drew)

As much as it is a mentor/intern relationship, like a marriage there is a synergy, or a magic that is created when a duo are well matched. This synergy or magic involved in the mentor/intern relationship though emanates from an attempt at a more leveled approach to the relationship, a collaborative teaching relationship between the mentor and the intern is a component part of the PDS.

PDS is about needs…PDS is about Trust…PDS is about magic…Serendipity, chance, luck spontaneity-the world is anything but an orderly place. Co-teaching automatically takes knowledge out of the realm of pre-authorized truth and supports a dynamic experience between two teachers exploring the world-comparing notes, exploring multiple hypotheses or interpretations, setting up an environment for thinking and inventing ideas about the world. (PDS Guidebook p. 5)

Feeling comfortable and having a trusting and working relationship between the mentor and the interns had the ability to create a flow and fail-safe space for deep learning to occur.

Right at the beginning [I felt autonomous] because my mentor Marni she, is very, an abstract thinker and she provides lots of directions but never gives the
direction. She’ll be like, in two or three days we’ll be talking about Emerson and go about your business. And so, I always felt autonomous, because you know, the conversations that Marni and I had never were more conversations than directions. So, after having a conversation about what’s next, I felt really autonomous. I had a little direction and knew what the team wanted, but, kind of made me explore an issue that maybe she didn’t look at and kind of made me bring all of my data all of my resources all of my feelings to the table and then we could work together and do something that is collaborative. (Nica)

The interns spoke of times when they felt autonomous within the relationship and during the certain activities in the PDS experience. It was when they felt most autonomous that they also were most confident in their abilities. This happened while interns were composing and delivering the units they planned and also when they had the opportunity to act as a substitute teacher-when they were subbing for the substitute or in full control of the classroom, with their mentor not present or not aiding in any way. These experiences enabled the intern to test their skills and competency first hand among the students. Subbing for the sub, teaching own units and filling in for the teacher is a way for the interns to transform their tacit knowledge, gained from previous classroom experiences observation of their mentor, etc. into explicit knowledge that they can articulate and continue to refine as they grow throughout the immersion experience.

Whenever a substitute teacher comes in the room, and they're usually at a complete loss!...-- when my mentors are there and they realize, like, 'Oh! You've got this!' They sit back, they crack open a newspaper, they're done for the day. And I have a whole classroom, all eight periods to do whatever I want, to get this done. And I feel so capable, like, I was like-- if this is just my classroom next year, I could do this. This is-- I am meant to this, I'm ready to do this (Beth)

Today my mentor was out for half the day, so I was the person in charge. I have a sub, but, they sit in the back and really don’t do anything. I am the teacher and the kids respond to it. Like today, today is a confident day. I can point to those two things. I think once the students saw me as, yeah, I’m still the student teacher, but, I really do think that they hold at least look at me as a teacher because he wanted to know if I would possibly be around that he could have me as a teacher next year and that makes you feel really good. That makes you feel really good. Those were some confidence boosters. (Drew)
Subbing for the substitute was also the time when one intern felt most authentic in her practice, looking inward and teaching in her own style, and through her own experiences.

I think there were a number of times and it was usually when I was subbing, when the other teacher is not in the room, because I was able to sub because I have a degree. So, usually my most authentic time in the classroom would be when I was alone in the class with the kids or the days when my mentor was in and out, in my lesson. Because so many times I taught a lesson that was not my lesson and to me that is inauthentic. I can still be authentic within it but if I am not the one that has created, bit I can do that, and there can be authentic moments within it, bit I believe when you take someone else’s, work, because it is not who you are, you are not coming from that place inside (Connie)

Barb had the experience while observing a substitute teacher in her mentor’s classroom that clearly violated the standards she had learned for the classroom and was compelled to act and report the incident; she felt it was her duty and responsibility.

I had a sub come in and, it was the worst experience ever. And it was whether I report what she did in the class or they report what she did in the class. And it was like, she was talking about drug use, and how she goes, 'Oh, I stopped using drugs twenty years ago,' and then she's like, 'Well, not that long ago,' when like the kids are there. And it was extremely unprofessional, but I thought that me saying something-- like, she's involved in the school. So, I don't know. Like, she could have found anything in the classroom that I did that she didn't think was appropriate, not that I think I did anything wrong, but like she could have came back at me 'cause she obviously knew it was me or the students telling on her. (Barb)

Practice 6: Organically Planning Emergent lessons units, case studies inquiry projects, and other activities. Students in the PDS learn to write a lesson in the context of the classroom in which they are working along with their mentors and the other interns. The lessons are driven by the emergent context of the classroom and the curriculum. Learning to formally write a lesson does not occur at the start of the semester, but normally a few months in to the year, when the students feel the need for more information on how to better execute their ideas and reach their particular students in the class. Unit planning is done in conjunction with their mentors, fitting the intern unit in to the larger semester outline. Topics for inquiry projects emerge through the process proposed by the inquiry model and are driven by the interns own search for meaning in the school learning environment.
Schools that create environments that support risk taking and experimentation by teachers also builds teachers' sense of autonomy (Short, 1994). The interns are required to plan and teach a unit for one class over the course of 4-6 weeks which they create entirely on their own, after discussion with their mentor. The units are not prepared before the year begins, nor are they prepared outside of the school. They are written as a component part of the curriculum. They are written on the interns own with guidance provided by the mentor. They write and teach the unit lesson plans, as well are required to write daily reflections on classroom activities that go along with each day’s lessons. This exercise becomes part of the students overall teaching portfolio necessary to display in their portfolio at the end of the year. This happens early in the PDS experience and it is within this exercise the intern deeply learns about writing lessons, classroom management. Their reflective relationship with their mentors becomes functional and instrumental.

I think the poetry unit, which was like kind of my first unit, I guess... it was one of the first ones where I think I had a lot of autonomy was this poetry unit. And I just was flowing with good ideas and everything was-- And the kids were liking it. It was just-- I don't know. It was really good. (Barb)

I was given the opportunity to teach a whole unit on my own. And I taught something I felt very strongly about we read Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath which is one of my favorite novels and it was. So it was something I felt very strongly about and I talked with my mentor a little bit and I bounced a few ideas off of her and she gave me feedback and which was great. But I was given the opportunity to do, whatever I felt was the best course to teach that novel. Following it, and again, there were things during the unit, that I did , the explanations could have been clearer, I can think of a couple of assignments that didn’t go the way I planned but then I can think of a few more assignments that were so, just excellent, I loved the results. You can just tell from watching the students, during the lesson they were connecting and making connections. That’s where, that month long unit that I prepared all on my own, I can point to that to say that was the point I really felt the most on my own

An Inquiry Paper and presentation is also required for all interns to complete. For the students receiving the Master’s degree, this paper is submitted as their thesis required for
graduation. The inquiry paper is a self-generated project based on the questions “What do you want to learn within the context of teaching and learning?” The topic is not assigned, and most often is a topic that is near and close to either the issues the teacher has faced in the classroom is has been interested in or motivated them to become teachers.

Yeah, probably my inquiry project. But that was involved in my lesson plan so I think that that's probably what I was kinda...J: Do you think you've had ample--you've had a good degree of autonomy within the past year? K: Yeah. I think it has a lot to do with my mentor. She-- not that she's not there to support me, and not that she doesn't want to work with me, but I think she knows that about myself that I would, kinda, rely on her too much, so she kinda backs away so that I do.(Barb)

Inquiry Project
…and also you felt pretty autonomous when you did your inquiry.
I would say, when I'm in the classroom and, there are many times when my mentor will just let me take over certain class periods for a week at a time. It can be if I'm teaching a unit that's kind of labeled 'my unit,' and so I'm in charge of teaching specific class periods but then-- there are other times when, honestly, she has other work to do, whether it's papers to grade, or things to look at, and so, she will just let me have the class.

One intern was able to see a more synergistic expression of the collaborative environment she experienced when working on her own units and lessons.

I think this model, I think this model does not provide for that if you are really doing the collaboration. The teaching is never about you, its about the students. And so I don’t know if I’ve ever felt completely autonomous, but, there have been times when, or you know, units when, I have definitely taken the lead and done most of the work on my own. But, even then, I didn’t feel like yes I was doing it on my own, and I felt really good about my lesson or knew that I needed to change something or whatever. (Pam)

The process of conducting a year long case study had a transformative effect on Jordan, having a chosen a student with whom she identified with who later dropped out four months in to the school year.

I think everyday there are little critical incidents but one actually happened very early on as part of our assignment for our PDS program we were required to do a case study… And he had actually dropped out of school in ninth grade and he had
to repeat everything except 9th grade English because he was quite competent in that area so they allowed him to move in to 10th grade English. But he was just struggling on so many levels, and a lot of his home situation, while so much different, and so much worse than mine in so many ways, and I could really connect with him on those level and I worked very, very closely…. He dropped out of school. [he dropped out of school] yes, he dropped out of school and that happened 4 months in to school and I was devastated.

Conclusion

This cross case analysis chapter synthesized findings from the 14 profiles and responded to the dissertation research questions. In the next and final chapter I will discuss the implications and conclusions of this study.
Chapter 6
Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of education is to show a person how to define himself authentically and spontaneously in relation to his world—not impose a prefabricated definition of the world, still less an arbitrary definition.

Thomas Merton

Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse.

Parker Palmer

Experiential knowledge is certainly the beginning of all knowledge, but it is definitely not the end of all knowledge. It is necessary but not sufficient. The voice from within can occasionally be wrong even in the wisest of individuals.

Abraham Maslow

Conclusions and Implications

This chapter answers one broad question: What conclusions and implications for theory research and practice can be surmised based on this inquiry? In answering this question, I attempt to ascertain how this research inquiry has moved the professional discussion along. The final chapter is organized as a brief review of the findings, and they are discussed and conclusions are drawn on the research questions, conceptual framework, methods, process of the inquiry and findings. Finally, I present the limitations of the study and concluding insights and implications for theory, research and practice associated with the preparation of teachers through transformational learning and experiential professional development.

In this research I investigated transformational learning and experiential professional development in the context of one Secondary Level English Language Arts Professional Development School. The participants of this study included intern teachers, mentor teachers and university and school district personnel involved in the design and
delivery of the Professional Development School (PDS). In Chapter One I outlined the reasons for this study and declared that rather than conceptualizing the process of teacher development as being lockstep through a series of universal stages regardless of setting or experiences, my aim was to emphasize the interrelationships between teachers’ learning and development and the context of teachers’ learning. In the case of this study, the context for learning how to teach was the interns’ involvement in the year long Professional Development School. I noted there are both personal and organizational components involved in the becoming of an educator that do not necessarily follow a set of stages. Now, I more clearly see the experiential and transformational aspects of becoming a teacher that organizations such as a school district, colleges of education and Professional Development Schools can foster and develop as instrumental and active aspects of new teacher development within a professional context. In human beings, [and those learning to teach] the process of ripening and maturing, in contrast to the natural ripening of fruit, is not accomplished automatically. It requires conscious collaboration (Dürckheim, 2007 p. 51). It is through an intern’s growing development of an autonomous practice within the collaborative professional school environment that the necessary seeds of transformation are planted; it means actively and enthusiastically being legitimately immersed and engaged in the process of learning to teach with others, mentors, students, and others, that brings about any degree of personal and professional transformation.

I chose to conceptualize field experiences through an individualistic, psychoanalytic, experiential and transformational approach and found the process and inquiry to be multi-faceted and generated a significant amount of data. “The life stories
of teachers explain that the practice of classroom teaching remains forever rooted in personality and experience and that learning to teach requires a journey into the deepest recesses of one’s self awareness, where failures, fears, and hopes are hidden” (Kagan 1992 p. 164). It is partially in the biographies of teachers that may explain their practice and classroom teaching. On a personal level, for the life of a future teacher to become relevant in their training and development, a critical and theoretical self-reflection and engagement with the experiences and critical incidents of one’s life and an allowing of integration occur, essentially, making sense of the past in the cognitively realized present momentous professional environment. Transformation occurs through bringing together of the personal life experiences deemed relevant to education within the professional realm. Critical engagement and practice is filtered through not merely self-reflection, but coupled with the immersed engagement in the relevant (educational, organizational, cognitive, etc.) theories and professional practices of the school environment.

As one last example, I want to share with you the concluding remarks of Jordan, who, having struggled mightily in her journey to becoming a teacher, faced her failures, fears and hopes throughout the immersion; those hopes and fears did not remain hidden within the context of her professional development, nor did she miss the realized momentous significance of the opportunity to integrate her personal life experiences with her preparation as a teacher. Jordan’s educational history became engaged in the realized significance of her learning to teach in the PDS. Her comments encapsulate her transformation of perspective.

Everything is different. I have what I wanted in who I am that I never expected to be, which is great. I didn’t have a lot of faith in myself. But I have a lot of faith in myself now and I see that I am capable and competent. I, one of the things that has changed, I remember then looking at teachers in a very idealized way, I
thought that teachers were this one way, that they knew everything and they were so together and they were so enviable, and I did think that even though I would have liked to have been a teacher, I don’t know how, I will ever get from here to there. And now, I see now, that teachers aren’t really that enviable, [laughs] they are really just people. (Jordan)

The problem facing educators who prepare future teachers is not that the students have not had enough experience, but how the people who prepare them can utilize their students’ own educational, biographical, and school related life experiences in a useful, engaged and active way that develops a practiced awareness to the professional responsibilities of becoming [being] an educator. It is in the present moments, without abstraction, a practice of engaged critical reflection, of praxis, in the new professional perspective while immersed in the classroom and school context. My findings support the idea that interns in a self-selected, authentic professional immersion teacher preparation program, like the one studied here, have a significant stake, active professional community commitment and a heightened awareness during their training and prior to employment that, as a result, may make a significant difference in their personal and professional grounding as future career educators.

One of the central questions of this study was a philosophical one: “What is transformational learning in the context of teacher preparation and development?” In defining this answer I came to realize that there is no one specific model, mode or route to transformation; based on my findings, transformational learning is a practice and is a liberating force in the clarity it brings to an educator’s understanding of why it is they do what they do in the classroom in relation to their own sense of autonomy and the connections to their own lives, and the lives of their students which, in turns strengthen their professional connections. The incidents and experiences within the development of
a transformational mind-set and practice will be unique with each person, and in different contexts and circumstances.

The Composition of a Transformational Professional Learning Experience Revisited

In Chapter Two I presented a conceptual framework and diagram of a transformational professional learning experience (TPLE) that was a result of the review of the representative literature. A transformation begins the moment the person decides to enter the professional realm of becoming a teacher. In this case the students made a further decision in their third year (or before) after being in the traditional university classroom environment to become involved in the PDS and through a progression of ascertaining their own interest and evaluation by the PDS administration, are selected as interns. Being selected, their backgrounds, attitudes and perspectives on education mesh with the overall intent of the PDS educational paradigm as presented to them prior to becoming immersed. This is a transformative moment. At the start of the fall term interns are oriented to the program and to the school and district, prior to the official start of the district school year through workshops and a mixer day to meet and match up with mentors in a social environment. Upon immersion, the concrete authentic professional context of the learning environment is presented, and the students are joined with their mentors to collaborate with each other. There is a leveling of the learning space in this practice of matching, where although the mentor is the embedded professional, the interns have a leverage for learning within the relationship because of the particular situated, year long approach to learning. The legitimate, peripheral participation, between the mentor and the intern, coupled with a natural mutual praxis is a transformative way of action.
In the context of the professional development school, transformation continues at the time of the immersion when the intern’s natural, organic connections to prior school related experiences and critical incidents are realized into the present moment. Through a series of inquiry assignments and a process that entails identifying areas of interest and tension around what to learn, which entails contextualizing the situation for personal understanding, representing learning through different modalities, the intern seeks to balance the professional sphere on a personal and a social scale; in doing so, a transformative realm is created within the PDS. This is a cognitive and an active process. This transformational method includes elements of wondering, recollecting, observing, reflecting, juxtaposing thoughts, ideas and concepts and a conscious, cognitive, imaginative, yet practical effort. Critical rational discourse occurs, whereby both implied and explicit notions of the interns’ biographical school related experiences become critically engaged within the context of learning to teach. At the same time, due to immersion, new professional-school related experiences are occurring on a daily basis, and within these experiences, critical incidents occur that may also manifest elements of prior biographical and school related experiences. That this is all played out within an authentic professional learning environment, the school context, becomes an important factor along the way of transformation. The interns are critically, autonomously and collaboratively engaging within the realm of the concrete authentic professional environment. Within this process and territory the interns and mentors practice praxis, a cycle of action-reflection-action. Through this complex activity, within this milieu of learning to teach, they are constantly tapping in to their teaching presence by bringing the ideas and questions and experiences that are at the heart of their teaching into practice.
Doing this the interns create new personal and professional insights, fostering further autonomy, competence, educational connections and new knowledge, and at times, some form of transcendence. This practice leads to a profound autonomous contextual integration into the institutional culture and society, and hence the interns become critically conscious human beings developing the mindset for a transformative practice as an educator. Presented below is a reconfigured diagram of a conceptual framework based on the findings as a result of conducting this study. It is a newly rendered composition of a transformative professional learning experience.

Figure 6.1 A Final Re-composition of a Transformational Professional Learning Experience

“When you experience education fundamentally differently, there is a better chance that what you create in your own classroom will be fundamentally different. So the theory goes. So I would say that being, that learning through doing and going through the inquiry cycle yourself and learning how to be a teacher, one of the things I think it does is it sets up teaching as more than just a job. It is your intellectual passion. Hopefully, having more young teachers where
teaching is their intellectual passion, and not just their job, could then transform what they do in the classroom” Lisa

The idea that comes to mind is difficult to define in English, but the Japanese term ‘seimi soku shimei’ or ‘the way to use one’s life’-is evidentiary and helpful here. The interns school related past and present are critically engaged and realized in the moment where learning to teach ideally becomes an intellectual pursuit and passion. The PDS experience is not something to merely complete but the interns learn to become autonomous in a professional environment and become skilled at a way to live, how to put their own life to use within the professional institutional context in which they will continue their practice in the future. Learning a way to use one’s life is a transcendent ultimate, and once found, an authentic wisdom and transformational practice is learned for one’s teaching practice.

Implications for Research

On a structural and organizational level, the Secondary Level Professional Development School is embedded at the core of the school districts English department. At the university level, although it has utilized the resources available to them well, and there is a margin of commitment at the highest administrative roles in the college, the PDS model still reaches only a relatively small number of students who are becoming teachers. It does not serve any other certification areas or academic discipline. One question that inevitably arises is “Should all Colleges of education be creating and instituting professional development schools? It is within the administrative/leadership roles, relationships and allocation of resources that the PDS’s will either be brought to the core of a school’s of education and districts or not. It is a leadership issue and an issue of professors willing to face the difficult, usually challenging bureaucratic policies of
working as an engaged, yet scholarly hybrid educator like fashion. Further research needs to be developed around the feasibility of creating scaling-up projects, looking at focused school district and departmental commitments to the creation of PDS’s in the different curriculum areas, i.e. humanities, foreign languages, science, physical fitness, etc. At the same time, studies that look at the day-to-day collaborative efforts between colleges of education and school districts are an area of future research which should be looked at. One important question is “What are the transformative effects of a particular university department on the local school districts efforts at improving instructional practice?” A research effort that seeks to look at this question from a qualitative and a quantitative perspective is sought. Research that looks at practicing teachers 3-5-7-10 years since participating in a PDS, and the effects are also necessary in ascertaining the validity of the PDS model of teacher preparation.

My research sought to identify areas within the professional development school context when interns experienced transcendence and I found only minor evidence of this occurrence. Some interns spoke of the times when they received feedback from their students as being when they felt as if they had the ability to rise above and outperform their own ideals. Although intern teachers discussed times when they had confronted their own ego in relation to their position with their mentor and students, rather than overcoming their ego needs, the ego was reported as the interns ‘Achilles heel’. Further studies looking at overcoming ego in pre-service teaching may offer insight in to how to prepare students to serve the best interest of children and students.

This study took a broad approach and accumulated a significant amount of data relevant to transformational learning and experiential professional development. I believe
further research specifically focusing on the critical incidents and disorienting dilemmas that occur during an intern’s participation in a professional development school environment would further elaborate on the kinds of conceptual perspective changes that pre-service teachers experience in a year long immersion program. Additional studies need to be conducted in Urban Professional Development School environments, with a mixed race/ethnicity pool of pre-service teachers. There is also a need for studies being conducted about transformative learning and pre-service teachers who intern teach in environments that are significantly different than the types of schools they attended themselves. Additional studies of small learning environments across national borders into international contexts are necessary as well.

**Implications for Theory**

Transformative teacher preparation sees its primary responsibility as nurturing in the intern an integration of the personal and the professional biographical and school related experiences into a critical engagement in the day to day context of the professional realm of teaching. Mezirow (2001) discusses transformational learning as a process, one that encounters steps and rational discourses that are triggered by critical incidents or disorienting dilemmas. Kolb’s theory of experiential learning also grounded this study: learning from experience happens through a concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. My findings add to the theory that transformational learning is certainly a process, yet, can become a *practice* in an expert context through critical self-reflection tied to contextual theory and through activities and collaborative dialogue revolving around the core ideas, questions, experiences and incidents that motivate and inform one’s professional inclination and
discipline. In considering Kolb’s theory in the light of this study, abstracting knowledge as a component part of the PDS is not a concept that is utilized in the immersion community as part of the regular, day to day learning experience. (Although students do plan and prepare for an annual PDS conference held in May where they present the findings of a year long inquiry) An ambiguity that exists prior to any learning experience is acknowledged and it is not planned against within the PDS, and in doing so, creates an autonomous space that allows for the personal and professional interpretation of events. This is the organic practice of becoming personally comfortable with the myriad possibilities that can come from the professional learning environment. Learning in the PDS requires a constant thinking on one’s feet, following through and inquiring about the ideas and questions that emerge by your involvement in the professional community.

The metaphors interns constructed offer insight in to their views and impact of the PDS on their development. My study only scratches the surface on the depth of insight that can be garnered by further elaborating and accessing the metaphorical constructs intern teachers utilize to make sense of their experiences.

Implications for Practice

Based on this study there needs to be additional opportunities made available to more education students in colleges and universities across the country for year-long authentic clinical, professional immersion experiences. This PDS served no more than 15 students per year, a relatively small amount when considering the number of secondary student teachers at Pioneer State who embark on their field experiences at the same time. No other teaching certification areas, besides at the elementary level, have developed a professional development school organization in the school district or the university. In
practice, the creation of more PDSs linked to different subject/certification areas, and to the distinct university and school district department need to be created and more carefully considered and supported by district and university administrators.

The finding that intern teachers felt most autonomous when they were substitute teaching was a curious one. Having another person, not necessarily the mentor in the classroom as a salient other, a person that the intern teacher feels more qualified than, is a significant in realizing the importance of a collaborative school community where intern teachers are able to become actively engaged in classroom teaching from the beginning. On a practical end, more interns, or student teachers should have the ability to be in the classrooms where substitute teachers are teaching, even for observation purposes in order to inform their own practice.

Taking risks during the field experience did not occur as often as I had expected. The moral imperative to act and speak out was reserved to collaborative dialogues with the other interns. The moments when students did risk themselves, there was real tension, and vivid real effects on their presence. The experience was one of significant meaning in relation to their immersion. Unfortunately and ironically, the two students who reported tiptoeing around situations where they felt the pressure to speak or act, and did not, were actually hired by the school district. Further study in to the willingness of in-service teachers to be able to take risks within their training may offer profound insights in preparing a more active and engaged teaching force.

One of the practical findings is one of the exercises of reflective inquiry and contextual, theoretical application. I can imagine a class exercise where future teachers
would identify and write down biographical and school related critical incidents and experiences and then identify the educational and theoretical foundations of the incidents.

PDS immersions are essentially internships, and in other fields, internships have certain cachets attached to them. It is common that internships have distinct screens attached to entry and often a particular desirability among the people seeking them. The availability of a PDS option within the college of education is a way to add a particular distinction to the training and preparation of teachers. A process for the mutual selection of mentors, rather than random assignments of interns to cooperating teachers should be considered before placements in any type of field environment. A matching process of personalities and interest beyond mere subject matter.

School districts can develop daily, mutually informed and ongoing relationships with a college or university and its faculties for pedagogical, instructional, and academic support on a department to department basis. A distinct classification of school district personnel should be created to encompass the roles of hybrid educators and increased and continued support from the university level for faculty members who collaboratively commit and engage in school district cultures over an extended period of time and design and operate professional development schools. At the same time, at the statewide, as well as at the national level, with a slow movement towards a more national, standardized approach to public schooling, issues of common preparation elements, and a sharing of best teaching practices within the ranks of the teaching profession will continue to arise. In this light, utilizing the final composition of a transformational professional learning experience, there are opportunities for a nationally administered, cross-state, experiential teacher professional
development immersion exchange program that could have a transformational effect on classroom instruction.

In the operation of this PDS there was a tension and ambiguity that existed among the interns during and throughout the process of the acceptance of these reins of individual inquiry, learning and the cultivation of the customs of autonomy and collaboration in professional practice. Authentic leadership acuity is necessary in order to orchestrate the process of negotiation, confidence building and integration required to form a transformative professional culture that instills a vision of a professional practice. In this light, creating a transformational learning environment in a Professional Development School is a Collaborative Work of Art. In this case there is a deeply collaborative and qualitatively driven organization that recognizes the valued contribution of all members to creating an integral program. Because of the intensity of the collaborative nature of the PDS environment, this may provide a possible turning away from this type of critical, personally engaged, daily inquiry that takes place due to the challenge it fosters. Also the practice of critical reflection upon personal and professional auto-biographical experiences and incidents and linking them to the professional context through theoretical ideas is relevant transformative practice yet, is difficult, and personally challenging work.

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of this study is that it took place in a predominantly white, middle class, suburban/rural community that is unique in its proximity and historical relationship with a large research university with a global reputation. The university and the school district, by many measures, have a significantly high quality of learning.
resources available which other communities and smaller colleges and universities do not have at their disposal for the training and development of teachers. There is already a level of synergy and integration between the two learning contexts that contributes to the viability and strength of the program. The second limitation of this study is that there were only 14 participants who participated in the complete study, which is a small sample and all were white and middle class except one male, who was African American. The third limitation of this study is my limited access to participants following their experiences, or graduation from the PDS. Although I did interview alumni, they were still part of the PDS and had a direct interest in its continued success. Two of these alumni who were not currently involved, I interviewed upon their returning to visit the PDS during an Alumni Weekend. Having interviewed a wider sample of graduates of the program as well interviewing interns over the course of the following year as employed teachers would contribute to broader findings.

Final Comments

Right timing, safety, and the direction of an inner guiding principle are also necessary for the restructuring or transformation of basic patterns within the human psyche (Brown, 2001 p.1). In this light, the process of promoting a transformational learning environment in a collaborative community bears political and social responsibilities that go beyond the classroom and the school. School leaders must help to show the intern is linked to larger change efforts – school reorganization, democratic schooling, and social justice – and to the expanded roles of teachers as leaders and activists.
Through the conducting of this study, the transformation that one goes through in becoming a teacher is an authentic process and unique to each person who endeavors to meet the trials of preparation. In the practice of transformational learning and experiential professional development I have found that the interns did not set out to organically change their deeply held understandings and perspectives; it became a practice due to their immersion in the PDS. As described throughout this paper, the practice was a human one, a natural one, and, a vital instructional component of the PDS.

A transformative teaching practice is an active organic, constructive process. It emanates from occurrences in one’s biography—as early as when a child begins school—and is later able to identify, critically reflect and act on these meaningful experiences and encounters within the context of learning to teach. In part, it is an elucidation, clarification and reflection of critical incidents as well as the ideas and experiences and fundamental educational question that are at the heart of a person’s motivation and desire to teach. It is a practice of becoming attentive to one’s own depth and breadth of educative life experiences; the valued compositions, implications, and influences of the ideas and questions that one contemplates in their ongoing activity as an educator and how they connect to theory and inform “Why we do the things we do as educators.” It is a psycho-analytic, self-reflective, active and autonomous discipline, and yet is supported and encouraged through collaborative processes. An authentic transformative teaching practice requires a journey into the deepest recesses of one’s being, beyond narrow egocentric concerns to a compassionate and empathetic understanding of all living things. Within this understanding, an active and engaged, civically responsible classroom presence forms. Finally, and in conclusion, with all that has been written here in this
dissertation, there is a qualitative difference between the words and ideas that describe a reality and the actual manifestation of that reality (Loori, 2002) into one’s pedagogical practice. Therein lie the challenge…and the joy.
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Appendix A

**Instrument- Pre-Interview Survey-**

What is your educational background; where did you attend elementary and high school, what was it like you attended, the area in which you grew up, some of your memorable educational experiences.

What experiences are at the heart of your desire to be a teacher?
What questions lie at the heart of your work? What ideas are at the heart of your work?

What specific incidents or experiences while growing up can you identify as being influential in your desire to become a teacher?

What are one or two experiences over the course of the past year as an intern that you can identify as being “critical incidents” or “outstanding incidents” in your development as a teacher, as a participant in the PDS?
Appendix B

Interview Questions: Protocol

CRITICAL INCIDENTS
Can we talk about the critical incident you identified…

Reflecting upon this incident, how does it influence your teaching?
Have there been any “critical incidents” during the year which really challenged your desire to continue teaching? What happened?

How do you believe this critical incident influenced your ideas about teaching?

How has your view of this incident changed over time? Expanded, contracted? Been more relevant in certain situations?

Has your involvement and experiences in the PDS changed your view of teaching?

AUTONOMY
Why is becoming a teacher important to you? How is it relevant to you as a person, as a member of society? (Relevance)(Autonomy)

Where have you found motivation to become a teacher? What motivates you throughout your day, week, semester, courses?

During what PDS activities have you felt the most autonomous-free of external influence or control? Explain.

The first rule given to interns is to take initiative. During the year, as a PDS interns, have there been any times when you acted on your own initiative? Why? What stimulated the action? What happened? What did you do? What was the outcome?

Have you come upon any single idea about teaching and learning during your time in the PDS which you want to further commit yourself to as an educator?

During what PDS activities have you felt most in harmony with the PDS environment?

CONNECTEDNESS
How has this incident (from growing up) been relevant to your PDS intern experiences?
Can you make any connections between the experience and pds experiences?

During what PDS activities, if any, have you felt the most closely connected to the other interns, to the students in the classroom, to your mentor…to your family…to society, to humanity…? (Connectedness) In what way...
Do you feel yourself to be a part of a community of learners? Tell me about your relationships with the other interns. How does it affect and influence you?

Tell me about your relationship with the students you teach? In what way do you feel connected to them?

Tell me about the connection between you and your mentor. How does it affect and influence you?

Do you see any connections from participating in this PDS to other areas of your life? World events? Humanity? (Connectedness) (A, B,C)

Have you ever felt, while participating in the PDS part of something larger than yourself? Explain?

**AUTHENTICITY**- “Open awareness fosters authenticity, consider that two of the deepest manifestations of authentic existence are love and creativity, and that both take us beyond our narrow egocentric concerns (Adams, 2006 p. 28) Journal of Humanistic Psychology

As you have been part of this PDS, what have you been most aware of regarding the art of teaching…about yourself, about society?

Have you been made to feel like a Teacher? When you believed you were being true to your self…authentic, [and professional] in your duties (authenticity)? Tell me about the experience.

Have there been times when you were able to respond to something that happened spontaneously? When you were not sure what to do and you had to respond…creatively? Did you have any outstanding “creative incidents” as part of the PDS? Explain.

Did any ethical dilemmas ever arise during this past year? Explain.

**TRANSCENDENCE**-surpassing others of its kind

Have there been moments during your participation in the PDS when you felt very capable- extremely confident in your abilities, like you could surpass yourself and do GREAT THINGS, now and in the future…? (transcendence) (A,B) can you explain what you were doing, what activity,

How has your worldview changed through your participation?

How do you think you changed by being a part of this PDS?
Can you identify any PDS experiences as being transcendent?

How has this PDS experience changed you? Your point of view on teaching, society, etc.

Can you write a metaphor or a simile to encapsulate your experience in the PDS?

**IDEAL TEACHING**
What is your image of an ideal teacher?
What do you think is the ideal image of a teacher projected from the collaborators of the PDS? Or isn’t there one?

What ideas about teaching do you think are most clearly demonstrated, delivered, reinforced by PDS collaborators?

What is the topic of your research inquiry? Can you tell me about how you selected this topic? And your process of learning through it?

If you were to compare your experience in the PDS to something, if you were to create a metaphor of your year here, what would it be? Why

Have you had any “intellectual incidents” or arguments while in the PDS?
INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH
The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Transformational Learning: The Preparation of New Teachers through Experiential Professional Development

Principal Investigator: Joseph A. Polizzi
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State College, PA 16801
(814)865-1487 jap383@psu.edu

Dissertation Advisors: Paul Begley, Bernard Badiali, J. Stefkovich, R. Kubina

1. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to…
The purpose of this study is to explore, analyze and define transformational learning in the context of a professional development school.

Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to...
Participants will be asked to talk with me about their experiences and impressions they have had while involved with the State College Area School District Professional Development School and be recorded via audio tape. Additionally, participants will be asked if they will allow me to observe them while they are involved duties and classes and activities with the SCASD PDS. Participants may be asked to provide, at their discretion any documents they believe may be useful to my study.

2. Discomforts and Risks: Discomforts include the initial discomfort some people may feel by being tape recorded. Beyond this, there are no potential discomforts or risks involved with this study.

3. Benefits: The benefits to you include participating in a study that is affiliated with the Penn State University College of Education. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated by the graduate student, namely Joseph A. Polizzi, who is conducting this study.

The benefits to society include the potential of offering insight into improving the operation and functioning of Professional Development Schools across the US and around the world.

4. Duration/Time:
Each interview will require approximately 1 hour of your time. If necessary there will be follow up, checking interviews that would last less time.

5. Statement of Confidentiality: The Office for Research Protections and the Social Science Institutional Review Board may review records related to this project. All data will be kept confidential and stored under lock and key. Participants will be given
pseudonyms in order to protect identities. The only other person who would have access to this data will be my dissertation advisor.

6. **Right to Ask Questions:** You can ask questions about this research. Contact either me at 814-865-6779 (jap383@psu.edu) or Dr. Paul Begley at 814-865- with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University’s Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775.

7. **Compensation:** There will be no financial compensation.

8. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form for your records.

______________________________________________
Participant Signature       Date

______________________________________________
Person Obtaining Consent       Date
Appendix D
Sample Profile Template

NAME: C*** O***

ALIASES: Obie, Ben

AGE: mid 20’s

ROLE: Intern Alumni, practicing teacher

DEGREE SOUGHT: Bachelor’s

HOME: Pocono’s, Pennsylvania

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: Catholic Elementary and High School

ORIGINAL INTERESTS: Maths, Engineering

OTHER IMPORTANT BACKGROUND INFO: Father is a reading and special ed teacher.

MIXER: xxx

INQUIRY PROJECT TITLE: Democratic Classrooms

THEME/LEARNING MOMENT: “So what do you want to learn?” Who are you in your movie?” Write the script…

Why Becoming a Teacher is Important: becoming a better person through reading…

Motivations to teach: 126-he loved reading…junior and senior year in high school English teacher…reading the romantics and others….lead him to become a better person…

Ideas/Questions/Experiences at the Heart of the Matter: spirituality, community, democratic classrooms-explored in PDS-mentor in agreement

spontaneity- closeness with students-Dig,

133“learning to become better people through reading”

177-4 years to graduate-one who can stand in front of a group of students and say, I made a mistake, and you will too…
spirituality – comes from catholic upbringing, priest friend who teaches, father, spirit of learning, spirit of history, 193-telling of parables…
Critical Incidents Growing Up: Historical Summer Travel with Father (a history buff) throughout New England to the Colonial areas… (spirit of history) (family)
Being a prankster…

Critical Incidents While in High School: Junior year English Classroom-reading the Romantics…reading Animal Farm,

Critical Incident in PDS: “So what do you want to learn”

Critical Incidents Post PDS-Receiving Unsatisfactory evaluations during the first year on the job.

Taking Initiative/Self on the Line:
Autonomy: a good deal of Autonomy…being true to self…during the unsatisfactories…
PDS Activity as Critical in Development as Teacher: “So what do you want to learn?” Democratic classrooms, 331 a flowing mentor intern relationship, mentor was interested in same topic… ‘The moment”

Connectedness:

Family- father is a teacher, initially upset he decided to become a teacher “I am my mother’s son in the classroom”

Students- 9/11, spontaneity in the classroom, dig, synchronicity with students (467)

Society-feels more disconnected from society-an alternative thinker

Humanity-a more human teacher…one who learns..not only teaches...

Literature- many connections from his life to literature-High School, The Romantics, Animal Farm, PDS-Lord of the Flies, Freire, Meyers, Post PDS-On the Road, Kool Aid Acid Test, “Who are you in your movie”

Mentor- synergistic relationship with mentor…on the same bus going furthur331

Authenticity: has become aware of self, become aware of prejudices, 421-428. not split up like doctor of poetry…has the language to express…452-freire-pedagody of oppressed…
Ideal Image of Teacher that PDS Promotes: one that knows themselves
Transcendence: Digging story, transcendence
Metaphors: Wardrobe for the Narnia, Matrix-taking the blue pill
### Appendix E

#### Critical Incident Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Personal Critical Incident</th>
<th>Professional Critical Incident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>H.S. English teacher commented on Beth’s paper that he “looks forward to having her as a colleague.”</td>
<td>-Newsroom at university-A rape occurred at a college party and a peer wants to exploit for news value. -Grading papers for first time-realizes her position and need for rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drew</td>
<td>-In the 4-5th grade being moved to higher tracked class and being separated from friends. Close Relationship with Grandfather?</td>
<td>Bombing a lesson because he did not prepare enough for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barb</td>
<td>-None identified.</td>
<td>PDS experience altered her sense of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam</td>
<td>-Close relationship with grandmother</td>
<td>Substitute teaching and talking about the sex scene in A Farewell to Arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>-HS Classroom-Animal Farm- Trip with father to Boston…</td>
<td>Leader of PDS asking “So what do you want to learn?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Volunteering with mother, a SPLED teacher, and meeting student named Tyler Grimm-</td>
<td>Girls talking in class, reacted as if he were still in TV saying “your show is cancelled” i.e. going off on students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jen</td>
<td>-None identified</td>
<td>Mid-State Literacy Council students asked for recommendations, (Jen reconsidered her impact)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connie</td>
<td>Dancing with boy no-one wanted to dance with- defending students who were labeled by teachers, town.</td>
<td>Mentor relationship forcing Connie to confront ego and teach a lesson in a different way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>-Being arrested for shoplifting -Leaving college for ‘poor scholarship’</td>
<td>-Conducting a case study of a student who was she saw as similar to herself and who wound up dropping out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>Following eye surgery, 3 weeks working with a reading specialist…</td>
<td>-Creation of PDS Monopoly board game for colleagues and interns in PDS to play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nica</td>
<td>Harper-Collins internship experience.</td>
<td>-Post 9/11 “What is the American Dream?” bulletin board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>-Reintepretation of childhood view of a Latino and white holding hands</td>
<td>-Clay penis put on desk during standardized testing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and at supermarket realizing all
workers were Latino and all
customers were white while working
with Donaldo Macedo during grad.
school.

**Larry** (associate-
alum) While in the military, failing the first
block of courses necessary to become
an air traffic controller.

Comment from fellow teacher “Do
you do floors and windows?”
Joseph Aragona Polizzi was born on August 28th, 1968 in Brooklyn, New York to Monica and Paul Polizzi. He graduated from South Side High School in Rockville Centre, New York in 1986 and from LeMoyne College in Syracuse, New York in 1990 with a B.A. in English and Communications. He attended Hofstra University in Hempstead, Long Island graduating in 1993 with a M.S. in Secondary Education. Upon graduation he was awarded a New York State Senate Fellowship on the Senate Education Committee where he worked on policy issues ranging from school violence prevention, charter schools legislation and the professional development of teachers. He left Albany, NY in 1995 for New York City where he worked in numerous small progressive public high schools teaching Humanities and English to high school students. He was awarded a Fulbright to teach English in Pécs, Hungary during the 2000-2001 school year. Upon completion and returning to New York he entered The Pennsylvania State University where he pursued a PhD in Educational Administration Leadership graduating in August 2007.