ZOMBIES, HAUNTINGS, AND CONTAGIONS: A STUDY OF EMBODIED NEOLIBERAL

EDUCATION REFORM

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EDUCATION REFORM

The central question of this dissertation is, "How does a full-service community school interact with neoliberal education reforms as demonstrated through its teachers?" First, neoliberal education reforms are defined as those reforms that rest on free-market principles that include, but are not limited to: choice, accountability, opening of public sectors to private investment, competition, and individualism. Second, Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) are defined as any school where social, mental, and health services that benefit the entire community are deeply connected to the school itself. In some cases, these services are housed within the school. The result of these types of partnerships is a fully integrated combination of community and school, where both have a vested interest in the growth and prosperity of the other. Thirdly, the choice of the word "interact" is intentionally made as to leave room for a myriad of ways that these two worlds come together and to not foreclose any possible descriptions of such an interaction. Lastly, the locus of this interaction is the teachers within the school. This is done for two reasons: the first is to hone the specifics of the study, and the second is to give voice to teachers, who are the subject of much derision as a result of the neoliberal education reform efforts. Eventually, this dissertation moves away from teacher practice and into how such reforms are embodied in teachers and students by relying on several theoretical metaphors. These embodiments are then considered vis-á-vis the Full Service Community Model.

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Chapter One

This research started with the question, "How does a full-service community school (FSCS) interact with neoliberal education reforms as demonstrated through its teachers?" While the spirit of this larger question remains, the research moved to focus specifically on one particular year at Polk Community High School as it contained many issues relevant to this main question. In order to walk the reader through how this research started broadly and worked its way into the specifics covered later, this project begins, in Chapter One, with an introduction that includes a look at the following: researcher positionality, urban education reform discourse, neoliberalism, and curriculum studies and cultural studies. Chapter Two presents a literature review of neoliberalism education reforms and full service community schools. Chapter Three covers the methods used to conduct the research. In Chapter Four, the findings are discussed. Finally, Chapter Five provides analysis of these findings in consideration of the first two chapters of this dissertation.

The lines of inquiry that stem from the main research question are numerous and required a fair amount of preliminary theoretical work in order to clear the way for effective research. For the purposes of this study, I defined neoliberal education reforms as those reforms that rest on free-market principles that include, but are not limited to: choice, accountability, opening of public sectors to private investment, competition, and individualism. Second, I defined FSCS as any school where social, mental, and health services that benefit the entire community are deeply connected to the school itself. In some cases, these services are housed within the school. The result of these types of partnerships is a fully integrated combination of community and school, where both have a vested interest in the growth and prosperity of the other (Dryfoos, Quinn, &

Barkin, 2005). (These definitions of neoliberalism and FSCS are expanded upon in Chapter

Two.)

Thirdly, the choice of the word "interact" was intentionally made as to leave room for a

myriad of ways that these two worlds come together and not foreclose any possible descriptions

of such an interaction. Lastly, the locus of this interaction was the teachers within the school.

This was done for two reasons: to hone the specifics of the study, and to give voice to teachers,

the subject of much derision as a result of the neoliberal education reform efforts. In other

words, the purpose of this study was to gain a greater understanding of how neoliberal education

reforms materialize in the practice of teachers in an FSCS.

In order to answer this main question, this research relied on a framework that was

informed by critical ethnographic work, as this frame was best suited to answer the main

research question and raise others as the work moved forward. With this in mind, this research

kept several potential questions in mind as it progressed, including:

- In what ways does an FSCS model support or counter neoliberal education reforms?
- What effects does neoliberal reform have on the community and vice versa?
- What are the curriculum effects of the FSCS model, neoliberal reform, and the interaction between the two?
- Do teachers demonstrate a certain level of resistance to the neoliberal reform efforts?
- How do both of these reform models and their interactions demonstrate themselves in the teachers' practice? In their interaction with their students?

While these additional questions propelled the research forward, as discussed in Chapter

Five, hard answers became irrelevant to the understanding achieved. In other words, this

research became less about answering specific questions and more about presenting an

understanding, albeit an incomplete one, of the interaction between neoliberal education reforms

and the teachers and students within an FSCS.

As stated above, a critical qualitative framework informed this research as it presented the best means of research in answering the main question. However, as will be discussed at greater detail later, the use of the word *critical* is a conscious one for the following reasons: 1) To examine neoliberal education reform as hegemonic. 2) How such hegemony, as it relates to teachers, comes to represent a power dynamic which could result in oppression. 3) Highlight and honor the voices and stories of the participants of this research as a means to challenge such power dynamics and 4) Engage in a self-examination/reflection on the part of the researcher in regards to the data as it is collected. Critical ethnography offered a unique blend of theory and method that sought to examine issues of power and oppression while providing a voice for the oppressed and marginalized (Carspecken, 1996; Madison, 2012). Additionally, as will be seen in the subsequent chapters, the choice of *critical* involves a level of self-reflection on the part of the researcher that allows for a constant, recurring evaluation of the research methods used and make changes to continually move the research forward. In the case of this study, while it began and was informed by a framework that pulled from other ethnographies and discussions of methods therein, it evolved to a narrower qualitative study.

This process of elucidation begins in this chapter with an examination of myself as researcher through an account of my own past experiences with urban education reform. Next, it covers the field of curriculum studies as manifested in both the reconceptualization (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2008) and postreconceptualization (Malewski, 2010b) movements. In keeping with these movements' commitments to interdisciplinary work, it will allow an exploration of other theoretical perspectives as they relate to the question and purpose of the study itself. These perspectives include postcolonial theory (Andreotti, 2011; Chakrabarty, 2006; Fanon, 1967; Spivak, 2006; Tsing, 2005), critical geography (Helfenbein,

2006, 2010, 2011; Soja, 2010), and cultural studies (Giroux, 1992; Grossberg, 1996, 1997; Hall, 1996a, 1996b; Helfenbein, 2008; Wright, 2003; Wright & Maton, 2004). More specifically, this chapter presents a theoretical framework that contains elements of a postreconpetualized notion of curriculum theory and specific theoretical threads of cultural studies. However, this is not merely a theoretical framework, but more important, an ethical base from which the research sprung. In other words, this research was an evolving process where the ground shifted, presenting new questions and difficult findings. As such, I relied on curriculum theory and cultural studies to guide my ethics as a researcher and keep a steady balance. Indeed, this base was instrumental in the research focusing on neoliberal education reforms in the first place.

The history and effects of neoliberal education reform have been well-documented by some (Apple, 2001; Ravitch, 2010; Taubman, 2009). What makes it more disturbing, from a historical view, is that while previous U.S. public school reform efforts have done very little to change the nature of schooling in United States public education (Kliebard, 2004; Tyack & Cuban, 1995), neoliberalism has had a profound effect on the practice and narrative of American public schools (Taubman, 2009). While they have always had some resonance in the discussion of U.S. public schools (Kliebard, 2004), words such as "choice," "accountability," and "standardization" have become common parlance in education reform discussions to such an extent that anyone who questions the words themselves is looked at as a lunatic. We have indeed found ourselves in what Pinar (2004) termed "the nightmare of the present." However, the metaphor of nightmare invokes the necessity of an awakening of which now there seems to be little chance of happening. Calls have been made to engage in this fight (Grumet, 2010; Ravitch, 2010), but it seems daunting given the extent of which neoliberal reform efforts have become a hegemonic force, making effective resistance difficult to organize. The past inequalities of U.S.

public education (Kozol, 1991, 2005) have become exacerbated by neoliberalism (Watkins, 2012a), while possible solutions that would address class inequality as a means to aid public education have gone largely ignored (Anyon, 2005).

It is the contention here that curriculum studies and cultural studies, as will be discussed later, has the necessary makeup and tools to provide a possible means to better understand how neoliberal reform is affecting public education—such an understanding can then lead to more effective action in terms of intervention. To begin, within the field there is an explosion in the areas of interest and study, as well as meaning and understanding (Slattery, 1995), that can lead to multiple approaches to the oppressive nature of the current hegemony. While this multifaceted approach can produce tactics and solutions unexplored here, the qualities of postreconceptualized curriculum studies gives rise to several possibilities.

By offering a trajectory of research that is neither theory nor material, but rather a thoughtful combination of both, curriculum studies gives understanding and support to those within schools. As Helfenbein (2008) notes, such an approach often recognizes what is at stake for those who are often the subject of research. The stakes have been raised in terms of neoliberal education reforms as they continue to have a profound effect on teachers, students, and schools. This is especially true given how the latest accountability efforts continue to tie teacher pay and school funding to test scores. To acknowledge the stakes within schools, work within curriculum studies must reject the theory/material divide. To discount theory as unusable by teachers or say that practical work is beneath scholars is to ignore the ramifications that an unimpeded march of neoliberalism holds for the future of students, especially historically-oppressed minorities and the poor. Additionally, as Grumet (2010) noted in her keynote address at the Annual Bergamo Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice, curriculum

theorists should engage in areas of policy that heretofore have been treated skeptically, e.g. the Common Core Standards. This is not to say that academic work can be the only source of counterhegemonic actions and moves. Indeed, by presenting a theory/material combination in which the line between practitioner and theorist is blurred, counterhegemony can be highlighted and championed in all contexts (for an example see Muñoz, 1999).

The strength of such a balanced blend of theory and the material is that it guards against any justifiable trepidation about ventures into policy and/or practice. Theory can serve as the conscience of the scholar as she or he treads carefully in the world of policy and reform. Indeed, the move towards direct engagement by scholars in more traditional education reform work should never be taken lightly, but abstention is not an option. An example of such a move can be seen in the Committee for Curriculum Theory in Policy's (CCTP) mission statement and response to the Common Core standards (Committee for Curriculum Theory in Policy, 2011). Here, the goal is an infusion of theory into the very material world of education policy, which demands deliverables, such as policy statements, that serve as counters to the positions and tactics of neoliberal education reforms proponents. These deliverables may be the essentialized notions of education of which curriculum theorists are wary, but these moves are in the spirit of what Spivak (1993) calls "strategic essentialism" which "works through a persistent (de)constructive critique of the theoretical" (p. 3). In other words, to employ strategic engagement with policymakers does not mean to abandon theory at the door, but at the same time it means we cannot be dogmatic in its application. With these things in mind, if the move of curriculum studies is one of careful engagement, then the theoretical core with which it works must serve as a catalyst for continued engagement, not a retreat from it.

The standardization of curriculum through a national standards movement and high-

stakes testing is a central aspect of neoliberal reform efforts (Ravitch, 2010; Taubman, 2009). The belief that curriculum can and should be standardized is epistemological at its core, but what cannot be ignored is how such a process affects the lives of those who directly interact with this new curriculum, an ontological matter. Scholars have examined the effect of standardization at an epistemological level (Au, 2009; Siskin, 2009; Sleeter & Stillman, 2009) and have also concurrently looked at the effects on the subjects of this process (Kohn, 2012; Noddings, 2007; Valenzuela, 2009) as well. This research saw itself as a balance between epistemological and ontological concerns within curriculum studies that might help work against these reform efforts by pointing out their limiting of our conceptions of knowledge, while simultaneously demonstrating the negative impact on the lives it claims to be helping.

To fight such reforms, scholars cannot merely talk about abstractions in terms of what counts as knowledge in the U.S.—important discussions to be sure. Rather, what must be painstakingly pointed out is the detrimental effect the standardization of curriculum, and therefore knowledge, has on teachers, administrators, students, and communities. Indeed, the effects of such reforms do not stop at the schools themselves, but instead ignore the societal effects on students' education (Ravitch, 2010) and opens up urban areas to private investment and exploitation that is often seen in gentrification (Helfenbein, 2011). Conversely, work must continue that highlights this unity in a positive sense, such as liberatory curriculum that results in students with a greater sense of self, as demonstrated by Schultz (2008). In this research, as is discussed in Chapter 5, the ontological effects of neoliberal education reforms had a dramatic effect on the overall climate of the school itself.

Researcher Positionality: White Privilege and Urban Schools

I am what I am not yet. –Maxine Greene

I tread lightly to begin this research with myself, which runs the risk of permeating the rest of this work with self-indulgency and navel-gazing. However, my work is tied so closely to my own personal journey, it would have been a disservice to those I work with and hoped to help if I did not acknowledge the me intertwined with the we. More importantly, as will be discussed later, my own history is tied to the history of the research site itself—James Polk Community High School[1]. Indeed, because curriculum theory and cultural studies had guided this work, both fields insist upon a closer examination of the research as self in order to fully understand the world he or she chooses to study. And while I take such an insistence seriously, the loudest voice originates within my inner being—that if I am to ask others to bare themselves to me, I must do the same. If I am to be critical of the world around me, I must start with a critical examination of my role as researcher. And finally, if my eventual aims are to fight oppression, I must be honest about from whence those goals and objectives stem.

With all of this in mind, as I look inward, more reasons for beginning this way materialize. There are links between my own story and to the areas of education I wish to research. Indeed, according to Pinar (2004) and his conception of currere, any attempt to understand curriculum begins and ends with the inquisitor or researcher. Pinar (2004) and others (Pinar et al., 2008) posit that in order to better understand curriculum, it is helpful to move from the noun form of curriculum, which originally means "the racetrack," to the infinitive form of currere, or the "running of the race." To do so invokes the journey so far, which includes a form of knowledge attainment: education as experienced by the researcher. In other words, my own journey, from my K-12 education to teaching high school theatre, is informed by various encounters with(in) schools and education. In order to fully understand "the lived experience of

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[1] Pseudonyms are used throughout to protect the identities of participants

schools" (Pinar, 2004; Pinar et al., 2008), I cannot ignore my own lived experience as it is informed by school—especially when such an examination might provide insights into larger issues of the education reform discourse I seek to unpack. It is a discourse that, as of late, has become saturated by neoliberalism.

The moving parts of this research are complicated and numerous, making a starting point difficult to pinpoint. For my own work, this further reinforces the need to begin with an examination of myself as researcher so that the context of this study becomes clearer. As to avoid the pitfalls of retrospection mentioned earlier, I seek to connect my own experience to the larger, current education reform discourse.

As I will do several times in this dissertation, I look to Hall's conception of articulation (Grossberg, 1996). In this case, I use cultural relationships and interrelatedness as the focal points of an introspective examination of my experiences.   Along with cultural studies, postcolonial studies proves useful in this personal examination.   Hall's work within cultural and postcolonial studies presents a bridge to other postcolonial scholars (Chakrabarty, 2006; Clifford, 2006; Spivak, 2006) that seek to decenter and dislodge the Euro-centric history that has come to define the entirety of knowledge for all places, resulting in a world where the subaltern is rendered voiceless (Spivak, 2006). Additionally, Fanon (1967) places an emphasis on the subjective as a means to examine larger societal and historical issues. The postcolonial project is twofold: an examination of the construction of such a history and the (re)inscribing of a new history. As Charkrabarty (2006) writes, "The idea is to write into the history of modernity the ambivalences, contradictions, the use of force, and the tragedies and the ironies that attend it" (p. 342).   Such a rewriting is often marked by an examination of space and place, which seeks to examine how the West and the colonized, developing world are defined by and through their

relationship to one another. The spirit of the postcolonial project shares a kinship with an area of curriculum studies. Pinar (2004), for example, seeks to dislodge and disrupt through an examination of the South's role in curriculum. This had led others (Helfenbein, 2010; Whitlock, 2007) to examine how place plays, so to speak, in curriculum. Indeed, the marriage of these theoretical frameworks provides one possible avenue to dislodge or disrupt the ways neoliberalism has informed the current discourse.

The discourse of urban education reform needs this dislodgment as it places white, suburban schools as the centered norm. With such a center, the periphery "other" it defines, and is defined by, is urban schools with a mostly ethnic minority population. In other words, urban schools are positioned as problems in need of fixing when compared to the achievement of affluent, predominately white schools. The point, however, is to see the fluidity of their relationship to each other and note the slippage inherent therein. To do so can lend itself to the dislodgment of the history of education reform, and also quite possibly alter the continual march of neoliberal reform as well. Indeed, the inherent problems of the othered urban school has now been turned against and placed upon on all schools to justify the application of neoliberal reform efforts as way to "save us all." Helfenbein (2011) traces these theoretical links and links the "urbanization of everything" to a capitalist globalization move. Indeed, the othering of developing countries has furthered neoliberal globalization on a much larger scale, leaving a trail of environmental and global destruction (Tsing, 2005). The result is that those who once thought their local schools exceptional while simultaneously believing the American public school system in shambles might now equate both as in desperate need of reform.

I have been inspired by the work of Whitlock (2007) to explore how personal narrative might provide a starting point for an examination of the dichotomy mentioned above. The

inspiration comes from her ability to critically self reflect and, at the same time, examine the possible connections between the personal and the relatable discourses. Indeed, this is the very key to how personal narrative can dislodge, disrupt, and add the layers to which Charkrabarty (2006) speaks. It is with these inspirations that I present a personal narrative of my participation in a student exchange program between a mostly white, suburban/rural high school and a mostly black, urban high school during my senior year of high school. Such a process illuminates the shifting relationship between these two types of schools by confronting how this exchange program allowed me to confront and (re)enforce the "other" as urban school. This personal narrative is by no means a totalizing endeavor, but, rather, a place to begin, to ask questions, and it guided this research along the path it took. Indeed, the selection of this personal narrative is not accidental in the larger scope of my work—the research site was the very building I visited in this personal narrative. No doubt time has passed and things have changed for both myself and the school, but to examine this narrative provides insight into my own researcher postionality and, on a larger scale, the role of all those with a similar backgrounds who work with urban schools. More specifically, it illuminates how everyone's notion of schools, schooling, and education form their views of education on a much larger scale. The specifics of our own lives in schools empower us to generalize that experience for everyone else.

The Inner-City Student Exchange Program

It was 1994 and our football team was pretty good that year. In truth, this was only in comparison to the abysmal results of the years previous. It could also be the team basking in the afterglow of an idealized version of my high school experiences overall. This romanticization happens concurrently in both the past and the present. My past self was determined to make that year memorable and my present self fondly looks back on those days of innocence. To be clear,

I did not play on the team, having long before given up any notions of toughness by demonstrating an unwillingness to be tackled or tackle someone else. However, I did see myself playing a pivotal role in the team's success, as I was to be one of the leaders in the student section of the stands. It was considered a right as a senior to stand in the front row, leading the charge, and cheering in a loudly obnoxious way—a tradition seen and participated in from the rows behind, until finally it was your turn. These traditions, representing my normalized view of school and schooling, played heavily into my senior year experience. I would (and did) follow them religiously. To participate in them somehow guaranteed that my memories would last because they were meaningfully typical for a typical high school senior. In other words, I would remember myself as the all-American teenager because my actions would mark me as such.

These memories included attending every football game, home and away—no distance was too far, no schoolwork too pressing, no curfew too early. My Friday night routine was set for the fall semester and to alter it was blasphemy. After every game several of us like-minded student-fans would wait for our friends who were players and cheerleaders to come out of the locker room so that we might all go to Taco Bell for some late night food. It was important that we all participated in the rituals together so as to reinforce them by the quantity of people involved, not necessarily the quality of the experience. Variations in the routine existed; parents out of town led to a party, or someone's birthday led to the more expensive dinner at Olive Garden, but the structure was consistent and to be honored.

As Tugendhat (1986) suggests in his theories on identity formation vis-à-vis a social process informed by language and society, my peers, real and imaginary, local and global, informed my identity's construction. Much of my identity at the time was informed by a generalized other that included my current friends, along with a myriad of other sources in the

media, that told me what being a high school senior in middle America meant. There were things that did not jibe with that construction: I was in show choir, starred in plays, and had my family's influence as well. However, even these things were defined in relation to, not instead of, the very strong idea of teenage life. Show choir and plays I explained away as my "thing" that I did in spite of my own uninformed idea of my friends' negative opinions (their actual opinions did not matter), and my family was defined as the obstacle to a senior year full of memories by imposing their own rules and opinions. At the time, I did not recognize this carefully constructed reality as constructed at all, but rather a representation of what I believed to the be the normalized experience of an American teenager.

I track these experiences not to simply reminisce but to demonstrate that I lived in a carefully socially-constructed world that had very little room for any different perceptions, let alone actual examples, of teenage life. However, at the time, I did not view this reality as constructed, but rather the norm. Indeed, my experience was felt as normative because the larger societal discourse shaped it into a position of privilege. The routine of my high school life was the only one to consider and my privileged position made it difficult to fathom anything outside of my own life. This normalization masked the privilege inherent within such a white, middle-class, and teenage experience. In other words, the social construction of my world was not in an existential manner, but rather my privileged subjectivity made it seem as though I was merely participating in a normative experience by adhering to the traditions and following the routines. It is into this world, with me as its privileged center, that I was confronted with an "other" I had no need to consider up until its interruptive moment.

As the season progressed, the team and its fans were looking towards sectionals with a certain level of hope. We all waited to see where we would play and against whom. To our

surprise, our opponent would be a school no one expected, a school from the state's capital or, in other words, an inner-city high school, one that was destined to close at the end of the year. To top it all off, we would play the game there. The concept of an inner-city school, let alone one that was closing, was so foreign to us that misconceptions and stereotypes started to creep into our conversations. Could we still attend the game? Would it be safe? How will they treat us? Would there be fights in the stands? All of these questions were no doubt informed by the countless movies we had seen, not actual experiences. Films such as *Lean on Me* (Avildsen, 1989), *Stand and Deliver* (Menendez, 1998), and *Boyz in the Hood* (Singleton, 1992) painted these schools and areas as places so foreign to us that they did not even factor into our perceptions of school at all (Trier, 2005). Now, through the connection of a high school football game, the images and perceptions flooded our minds, as we had to make sense of this new "other" as it moved into closer orbit with our world.

The elephant in the room at this point is most definitely race. I hesitated to define my privilege earlier as necessarily white privilege, as race was a concept I never had to consider, but with the impending collision of my world with this unknown one, the racial elements are clearer to recognize. It is no coincidence that the films mentioned here center on African-American and Latino school experiences; *urban* is/was a loaded word that meant minority students with low socio-economic status. Privileged as I was, I did not need to consider my own race, let alone other ones. In my senior class there were a handful of African-American students, and outside of those few, there was zero racial diversity. My concept of an urban school was closely tied to my concept of minorities as well. Combined together these concepts represented a world of which I had no knowledge and no reason to learn. The only association I made was immediately to violence and my own personal safety. Could I even venture into this new world? Could this

immediate emotional connection explain the reluctance of so many to understand what is different from them? Our fear was tangible and real, and what's more, it was seen as perfectly reasonable. We would have been hailed by authority figures as sensible for not attending the game, none the wiser of what would have actually happened.

As with most decisions then, a collective agreement was made that we would go to the game, but with conditions. We would caravan together (a sign of our privilege was that we had enough cars for so many students to go). And, we would all sit together in the visitors' stands, and "back each other up," so to speak, if trouble came to pass. The game came and went, no one was threatened, no one was harmed, and it was generally uneventful. Our team lost, not in a blowout, but not very close either. The football season was over and we walked away with our perceptions of this school neither denied nor confirmed. From my own perspective, the school still remained an unknown—the only thing that I was struck by was the relatively poor condition of the field and the stands. Others might have felt this general inconclusiveness because it would certainly help to explain what came next.

It is interesting to note that even though nothing untoward happened to my friends or myself, my conception of the school did not change. Here I was, unscathed and unharmed and the only real takeaway was that the school's field was in worse condition than ours. Did I only choose to see what would reinforce my perceptions? Or was my position of privilege so entrenched that I did not have to consider any actual experience with the "other"? Indeed, the strongest aspect of this memory is the plan we came up with after our little excursion. It is here that a tourist gaze (Urry, 1992) begins to take hold, one that viewed the school as a new land to be visited or experienced, but not really understood.

Out of this general confusion came a solution, not only to the social rupture this game presented, but how this still unresolved concept of the urban school could become more concrete. While most of my memories are clear from this year, I am not sure how the idea for a student exchange between our school and the inner city school began. As a member of student council, I know the idea started there, but specifics are in doubt. I believe our faculty sponsor presented it as a way to address the conversations we were having about the football game and it was universally accepted. Contact was made with the opposing school's student council and the dates were set for students to visit, consecutive Fridays sometime in January. With ties established and plans laid out to explore this new place, my concept of an inner city school began to crystalize. But would it be anything different than my previous conceptions?

Our group of student council members, all seniors, visited first. We were each assigned a fellow classmate that we would follow for the rest of the day. My student was the student council president and star of the basketball team. He was a tall African-American and I was a short white kid, but we seemed to hit it off. As the day progressed, I perceived a sense of sarcasm and a tendency to buck against authority that I valued. It could be that this was all my own perception and not actual reality as I looked for some link of commonality between us. We both cracked jokes with his friends and swapped stories of practical jokes pulled within our respective schools. However, I remember that in the back of mind I always had the feeling that the experience was about more than simply making friends. I was here to learn something about this unknown place and culture. The memories of that day are blurred, so I do not want to embellish them, but I do have two very distinct ones. The first is of sitting in class led by a substitute teacher, which in most school settings is a recipe for, at least, a nonproductive hour or so. Whereas the most mischief my classmates and I would engage in with a substitute was to get

him or her off topic and waste the time period, this class was on a whole other level. The teacher tried and tried to get the class started, but nothing happened. Students were loudly ignoring her and the period never achieved a level above my own conception of chaos. I remember feeling nervous and somewhat frightened, but was reassured by my companion's status among his peers that I would be unharmed. At one point I asked him if it was always like this in class, to which he replied something along the lines of it not being that bad and could be far worse. Next, he gave me a look that I recognized as "watch this" and leaned over to a fellow classmate, a male, who then proceeded to stand up and yell at the teacher. The entire class fell silent to watch the scene play out. Eventually, the student was led away from the class and the teacher left. She not only left us there unsupervised, but she never came back. My fears were confirmed, but in a manner that left me feeling exhilarated. Here I was, protected by my guardian, experiencing the very danger I had come to expect that day. I would braggingly recount this story at various times throughout the rest of the year in an attempt to demonstrate my worldliness.

My second memory is of the pep rally held in the gym later that day. The school had just won the city basketball tournament as the underdog; the school board was closing down the school at the end of the year and the students were reveling in this success. I remember being both amazed and envious as the pep rally was entirely run by the students with the adults in the room standing on the sidelines. While our own pep rallies rarely got more than a few students excited, this one seemed boundless with students cheering, singing, and dancing everywhere from the bleachers to court. It was difficult to tell where the leaders of the cheers and the fans themselves began and ended. A sort of organized chaos moved the action forward until the end of the day bell rang and the students moved out into the world truly pumped up for the weekend.

Here the tourist gaze (Urry, 1992) is crystalized and formalized into a student exchange program. A formal student exchange program demonstrates that this was more than a casual meeting of possible new friends, but rather an expedition with the goal of learning something new about us and this other school. Did we consider how this might benefit the other school? If it was discussed, I have little recollection. I will return to this question later, but I want to tease out how the experience was a controlled one. Considering the rules and regulations for how the exchange was to proceed, what we saw in the school and how we saw it was controlled. I was not paired with a student with disciplinary problems or a delinquent. It might not have been an accident to place me with a student who would protect me and ensure that I would come away with a positive impression of the school. This controlled experience furthered the feel of a learning expedition in the spirit of a colonial area researcher who was to carefully catalogue his or her experience.

To examine the first scene with the substitute teacher is to offer a stark contrast in how worlds are socially constructed and the role of the subject therein. My student opposite possessed an enormous amount of sway and power demonstrated by his ability to increase the level of chaos simply at a moment's notice. While my own social construction was done in strict adherence to what I perceived as the norm, his was an exercise in power and self-assertion at which I could only marvel. And yet, was this what I perceived as an exercise in agency? Or was he simply constructing what he thought I expected? Was he subject to the discourse that constructed him as the "other" and he was playing the part? Was I witnessing what Fanon (1967) describes as the black man living up (or down) to the white man's expectations? Did my presence create a rupture in his world that (re)enforced his conceptions of himself and me? In that spirit, was the pep rally a performance put on for us? Where the students trying to prove or

disprove our preconceptions? Was it truly chaotic or only in comparison to our own controlled school chaos?

A week later we reciprocated in the hosting duties, following a similar format. Students were paired off and shadowed students for the rest of the day. The details of this day are less clear outside of a faint notion of wanting to impress my newfound friend, the same star basketball player from my visit. Likewise, I am sure I wanted to impress my friends at school hoping that a star basketball player's status would elevate my own. The day ended with our own more gentrified version of a pep rally of which I would serve as emcee, an honor any other time but with increased importance given our guests. I hesitate to say more because my memories are so cloudy so I have no idea what our guests thought as we were to never speak once they boarded the bus returning to their world.

This is the saddest example of the privilege I took for granted. While I can never be definitively certain, my hazy memories of the urban school students' visit indicate I did not care as to whether they benefitted from this experience. I could argue that the possibility of discussing it with them was not pursued, but that speaks to a lack of expectation in terms of caring in the first place. My memories of emceeing the rally were more important to my normalized school experience than whether or not our guests had a worthwhile experience. Indeed, I never felt pressured to perform or put my best foot forward, but was more concerned with how my new "friend's" presence benefitted my own status. In the end, the only thing that mattered was how my experience benefitted me.

I recognize the inherent problems of offering up my personal narrative as possible insight in the current context of education reform. I do not offer it has a metanarrative or even one that represents the entirety of the events I describe; but as I mentioned earlier, I do believe it can

serves as small metaphor for the history of public education in this country. If it is nothing more than a story, so be it, but stories can be parables. With these caveats in mind, what can be learned? To begin, the very concept of an exchange program between schools less than 30 miles apart seems ludicrous at face value. However, it speaks to how foreign the schools (and the teachers and the students and the communities, etc.) were to each other. In our sense, the inner city school represented a foreign land that was to be explored and catalogued. It is not too much of a stretch to see urban schools still represented as "frontiers" waiting for neoliberal reform to modernize them. As Tsing (2005) notes, frontier-making homogenizes all developing nations into unrefined lands full of untapped resources, thereby making it easier to justify neoliberal globalization. I would contend that because of the familiarity of the "frontierized" urban school by the general public, the move by neoliberal education reformers to make all schools frontiers has not proved difficult.

It is also striking to me that exposure to the urban school did not necessarily challenge my preconceptions but, in some cases, reinforced them. The chaotic environment seemed to be in line with what I understood as a hallmark of an urban school, even though I emerged from the chaos unscathed, as my wellbeing was never really at risk. While such an exposure seems to echo Spivak's (2006) notion that to reach towards the subaltern from a privileged position through a Western lens is problematic, I do not believe she thinks we should not reach at all. It becomes pointless if all that is done is a reach towards the subaltern and little to no critical reflection takes place. This seems to be the case in my own example as there was very little in terms of a meaningful discussion after those two days. For a time, the only thing I took away from the experience was a t-shirt I bought while at the inner city school—a token of a trip, a

souvenir of my tourism, but not a touchstone of a deeper understanding of those who I had visited.

It is here that postcolonial theory can be helpful in the understanding of urban schools and the neoliberal efforts to reform them. To be clear, I do not seek to equate urban schools to the developing world that is still affected by the legacies of colonialism. To do so would be a disservice to both. However, I believe that postcolonial theory can point us to the ways in which neoliberalism, which has a strong connection to globalization (Andreotti, 2011), shapes the reform discourse to paint urban schools (and eventually all schools) as frontiers of violence, underperformance, waste, corruption, and incompetence. Additionally, as Andreotti (2011) notes in her discussion of Spivak, it is not enough to simply deconstruct how the "other" is constructed, but it must also be combined with a hyper-self-reflexivity that acknowledges the complicities and complexities in the relation between privileged and the oppressed. And this, it seems to me, is the larger lesson to be learned. If we are to truly understand how neoliberal reform has gained so much traction in our schools, we must first understand how the urban school as the constructed "other" has come to be while at the same time, not ignoring our own complicity in the construction of such a discourse by identifying our own place of privilege as critics and researchers. Then it might be possible to uncover other histories that challenge its commonsense place in the discourse of education reform. To uncover a history that has been buried by years of ignorance is difficult. However, if I was able to uncover a personal story that sheds a small amount of light, others must exist. For example, I yearn to hear the star basketball player's telling of this tale.

While the data continues to mount as to the ineffectiveness of neoliberal reform, perhaps if this data is combined with the counterstories, as demonstrated in Buras' (Buras, Randels, &

Salaam, 2010) work,, the dangerous effects of neoliberal education reform will prove too much to ignore. More specifically, as is discussed in Chapter Five, the ontological effects of said reform might be the most destructive of all.

My own personal journey serves as a starting place for two different avenues of exploration. First, I believe my background to be similar to those who would reform urban schools relying on a neoliberal ideology. The narrative describes a perspective that many of them might have: a privileged position viewed as the norm, which informs their vision of what urban schools are and are not. This dichotomy, when unexamined, leads to dangerous assumptions that tend to leave schools as "frontiers" destined to be tamed. At best, the urban schools were seen as beneficial to us and our authority figures only because they exposed new cultures to the middle class, suburban, white kids. This ignores that such a "tourist" view only reinforces the perception of the urban school as "other." Secondly, my politics and values have changed radically since my days in high school or even as an undergrad in college[2]. As someone who has changed his mind and can reflect back on his experiences with a critical eye, I think the examination of how I changed deserves exploration. I do not offer myself as the missing link to changing the hearts and minds of Middle America, but I hope that my own personal reflection can inform my own work as I move forward, paying special attention to my researcher postionality as I continue to work with and in urban schools. It is why I place it here before the theoretical discussion that follows—a signifier of its importance.

The Trajectory of Curriculum Theory, Neoliberal Education Reform, and the Possibilities

of a Cultural Studies Theoretical Core

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[2] I offer up as Exhibit A my participation as a page for the 1996 Republican National Convention.

It seems presumptuous to crystallize a fluid field of study such as contemporary curriculum theory. However, such an effort is undertaken here as it served as an ethical base for this research as it moved forward. Curriculum theory's place within the larger field of curriculum studies makes such an attempt complicated as well. Indeed, the two cannot be separated. To understand curriculum theory, one must first look at its place within curriculum studies and search for breaks, divisions, and similarities.[3] The purpose is not just for comparison's sake, rather it allows the scholar to grasp the fluidity of curriculum theory as best as she or he can. Therefore, the intent of this section is not to describe the field of curriculum theory. Instead, the goal is gain understanding of how it has traveled and where it is going. In other words, it might be better to think of curriculum theory as a process or a trajectory, than as a field of study. To look at the field as a continuing journey as opposed to a still-life portrait not only allows greater appreciation of the field itself, but also of how future work might take shape. Within this trajectory, this research places itself as an extension of the ideas that have come before.

This section will look at the reconceptualization of curriculum studies (as outlined in Pinar et al., 2008) as a marked point of difference between the more general fields of curriculum studies and curriculum theory. The detailing of the reconceptualization is not meant to be historical in nature as this may border on a talk of gossip involving scholars choosing one side over the other. Instead, this section chooses to look at the reconceptualization as an intellectual moment that shaped the field to the extent that one must seriously consider it—at least for the

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[3] For the purposes here, contemporary curriculum theory is taken to be the large body of work most often associated with the reconceptualization (Pinar, 1988b; Pinar et al., 2008) movement. Furthermore, it sees contemporary curriculum theory working within the larger paradigm of curriculum studies. It is not to say that the field of curriculum studies is bereft of theory, but rather, it views "theory" in the more traditional sense than the contemporary curriculum theory scholars discussed here.

purposes of this study. However, it is too simple to say in a linear sense that anything after the

reconceptualization is postreconceptualization. Instead, as others have done in similar "post"

discussions in other fields (Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1996d), I seek to critically "set the post" in

curriculum theory by thoughtfully discussing what work as informed by the reconceptualization

looks like. This is done not merely as an intellectual exercise, but as a vital ethical

contextualization of the specific work in this dissertation.

Indeed, the discussion of what curriculum theory *could* look like is a driving force as a

means of capturing a field of study in motion. Recognizing past divisions, both within and

between curriculum studies and theory, allows for a discussion of how future work might

overcome such divisions. These divides—theory/material and epistemology/ontology—are

informed first by the reconceptualization of the field as outlined by Pinar (2009) and the reaction

to this by others (Hlebowitsh, 1999, 2010a; Westbury, 1999; Wraga, 1999) and secondly, by the

work characterized in the collection by Malewski (2010b) and the work of other scholars in

clarification of the field itself (J. G. Henderson & Kesson, 2009a, 2009b; Pinar, 2007; Schubert,

2009a, 2009b).

In other work (Helfenbein & Huddleston, 2013), the move to bridge the divide between

theory and the material has been termed a "move towards the concrete." This move towards the

concrete does not mean an abandonment of theory or the abstract, but rather a call for a more

thoughtful combination of theory with the material. Furthermore, such an undefined

combination is sought in the epistemological/ontological divide as well, in which the endpoint is

not simply knowledge or the formation of it, but a serious consideration of the self and how it is

formed. These combinations, or negations of dichotomies, acknowledge the aims of past

curriculum studies research while simultaneously including the intellectual moves the

reconceptualization entails. This should not be seen as prescriptive for the field, but rather a humble attempt at presenting what it sees as a productive path forward for the benefit of the work here. This path forward is informed by an interpretation of the continuing journey of curriculum theory, not simply a sermon or a call to arms. The context that has shaped the journey so far indicates that a move in this direction is probable, or at the very least, hopeful. In other words, this dissertation relied heavily on the understanding of curriculum theory as outlined in this section, but did not presume it to be the foundation for all work in this field.

All that being said, to deny that some part of this research *is* a call to arms would be incorrect. Indeed, the context of the times in which we live serves as a link between a postreconceptualized curriculum theory and a cultural studies of education. These times are neoliberal ones and the effect of neoliberalism on public education in the United States is drastically dangerous (Ravitch, 2010; Taubman, 2009; Watkins, 2012b). It is my contention that any combination of a postreconceptualized curriculum theory and cultural studies must seriously take into account the current state of education reforms. So while I do not presume to dictate how curriculum theory research goes about it, I do implore it to seriously consider a move towards the concrete that tackles the changing landscape of public education as it relates to reforms.

It is worth reiterating that I am not trying to totalize a field—if only to underscore that I do not wish to do the same with the other area of study I wish to discuss, a cultural studies approach to education. All of curriculum theory does not relate directly to cultural studies and vice versa. A crucial element in deciding how to use both is to locate the ways in which these two fields do connect, especially through the context of neoliberalism. This results in a more specific examination that provides for a practical application to this research. In other words,

when curriculum theory and cultural studies come together, where is this new combination going?

My interpretation of contemporary curriculum theory offers many possibilities in terms of potential research. However, this interpretation is not complete. Therefore, I rely on cultural studies as a theoretical core of curriculum studies, thereby ensuring work can emanate but always remain in gravitational orbit. Before it can be placed in the central core position, it would be helpful to posit what a cultural studies approach to education looks like. Much like setting the "post" in postreconceptualization is important for an understanding of how that field is moving, cultural studies needs a similar examination in order to deal with its own fluidity, and it is done to better ground this research as well. To do so, I examine four areas in which cultural studies can inform educational research as posited by Helfenbein (2003). These four areas are: materialism, (anti)anti-essentialism, social constructivism, and radical contextuality. Helfenbein's (2003, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011) work provides a marriage of curriculum theory and cultural studies that allows for the inclusion of my interpretation of postreconceptualized curriculum theory. Additionally, these four areas of cultural studies serve another purpose, a return to cultural studies as embodied by Stuart Hall. The starting point for cultural studies, as far as this dissertation is concerned, is Stuart Hall[4]. At the same time, while Hall represents a seed for cultural studies, his work provides a clarification of key tenets as they relate to the context of today's work within a cultural studies of education approach.

The Field of Curriculum Studies: Setting the "Post"

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[4] The contributions that others (Grossberg, 1996; Grossberg, Nelson, & Treichler, 1992; Hebdige, 1991; Williams, 1977; Willis, 1981) have made to the field of cultural studies are fully acknowledged, but I choose Hall as a starting point because his work can be categorized as largely responsible for an explosive growth within cultural studies (Fiske, 1996).

The field of curriculum studies is in a state of flux due in large part to the concept of curriculum itself being in a similar state. While the field of curriculum studies was declared "moribund" (Schwab, 2004) in 1969, the field has continued to exist and morph perhaps in spite of traditional institutions of public education ignoring it altogether. This fluctuating state has historical beginnings that continue to have ramifications for today's curriculum scholars. While the notion that curriculum is the knowledge taught in schools, the parameters and characteristics of such knowledge seems to be always up for debate. In other words, by maintaining an unfixed notion of curriculum, the study of it will likely follow suit. Kliebard (2004) presents an apt metaphor for this historical legacy of curriculum when he writes,

> Curriculum fashions, it has long been noted, are subject to wide pendulum swings. While this metaphor conveys something of the shifting positions that are constantly occurring in the educational world, this phenomenon might best be seen as a stream with several currents, one stronger than others. None ever completely dries up. When the weather and other conditions are right, a weak or insignificant current assumes more force and prominence, only to decline when conditions particularly conducive to its newfound strength no longer prevail. (p. 174)

Kliebard's metaphor demonstrates curriculum as not only a moving target (a stream), but also a moving target with a shifting, internal organization as well. In other words, a stream moves but it also ebbs and flows, rises and falls, its pace a trickle or a rapid current. It should not be misunderstood that such a dynamic is a direct cause of curriculum studies' unfixed nature, but rather that the different viewpoints within curriculum studies are trying to account for the many different moving parts that the concept of curriculum itself represents. In this section, I will identify the schisms within curriculum studies, keeping in mind Kliebard's stream.

The identification of the multifaceted nature of curriculum studies presented here is threefold. The first is along the lines presented by Pinar (2009) as traditionalists, conceptual empiricists, and reconceptualists. While it is important to note that Pinar sees these groups

working together, there is a stark contrast between the first two groups and the latter. For my

purposes here, this distinction marks the difference between the larger field of curriculum studies

and the subgroup, curriculum theory. In other terms, the difference between developing

curriculum and understanding it (Pinar et al., 2008). This division is furthered by the way some

reconceptualists have come to define their differences and development (Miller, 1988; Pinar,

1988b, 2004, 2009; Pinar et al., 2008), the reaction of some in curriculum studies to this split

(Hlebowitsh, 1999, 2010a; Molnar, 1992; Westbury, 1999; Wraga, 1999), and the countering

volley by others to this reaction (Malewski, 2010a; Pinar, 1999b). Lastly, there is a split within

the reconceptualists enclave itself, marked by the work collected in Malewski (2010b). This split

is a result of those at the forefront of the reconceptualization movement seeking further

definition of the field of curriculum theory[5] (Pinar, 2007; Schubert, 2009a) while simultaneously

interacting with the generational legacy their work has produced (Malewski, 2010a, 2010b).

These distinctions are not offered up as a historical account of the field, as important as

that may be. Rather, it cannot be assumed that the move from "developing curriculum" to

"understanding curriculum" (Pinar et al., 2008) is a *fait accompli* or an *a priori* foundation for

any work heretofore. Rather, the divisions outlined above continue play a role in curriculum

studies and, as such, speak to larger divisions of theory versus the material and ontology versus

epistemology. It is with this in mind that I delve into the aforementioned divisions in curriculum

studies as a means to discuss larger philosophical divisions that have impact, both in education

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[5] The terms "curriculum studies" and "curriculum theory" might come across as interchangeable
in parts and this is somewhat by design. I see curriculum theory to represent a large field of
study within curriculum studies—large enough to shape the scope and direction of the field. So,
when used, "curriculum theory" is not only speaking to this faction of curriculum studies, but
also to its influence. This distinction is influenced primarily by Pinar (2004) and others (Pinar et
al., 2008; Schubert, 2009a; Slattery, 1995), but also, the critics of Pinar and the reconceptualist
movement (Hlebowitsh, 1999, 2010a; Molnar, 1992; Wraga, 1999).

policy and practice. In short, I seek to review the divisions so the place of this dissertation can

be understood among them.

Pinar (2009) offers a starting point in the divisions within curriculum studies by dividing

it into three groups: traditionalists, conceptual-empiricists, and reconceptualists. The first of

these "are former school people whose intellectual and subcultural ties tend to be with school

practitioners" (p. 168-169). Pinar goes on to say that these groups are more interested in

"design, change (behaviorally observable), and improvement" (p. 169). The second group is the

conceptual-empiricists. This group relies on the basis of social science and sees curriculum as

area to be studied from the outside not a discipline to be developed from within. In other words,

curriculum becomes something to be studied, relying heavily on the disciplines of social science

to do so. Lastly, the reconceptualists

> …tend to see research as an inescapably political as well as intellectual act. As such it
> works to suppress, or to liberate, not only those who conduct the research, and those upon
> whom it is conducted, but as well those outside the academic subculture (p. 172).

Pinar (2009) then goes on to make a call for a combination of these three groups in which

he says:

> We are not faced with an exclusive choice: either the traditional wisdom of the field, or
> conceptual-empiricism, or the reconceptualization. Each is reliant upon the other. For
> the field to become vital and significant to American education it must nurture each
> "moment," its "internal dialectic." And it must strive for synthesis, for a series of
> perspectives on curriculum that are at once empirical, interpretative, critical,
> emancipatory (p. 174).

The question is, has this call been heeded? Difficult to answer, but based on the criticism

of the reconceptualization as a movement (Hlebowitsh, 1999, 2010a, 2010b; Molnar, 1992;

Westbury, 1999; Wraga, 1999) and the response of others to such criticism (Malewski, 2010a;

Pinar, 1999a, 1999b) it seems that divisions amongst the aforementioned groups still exist.[6]

Such divisiveness may be result of a synthesis occurring as the particulars are worked out.

Indeed, Hlebowitsh (1999, 2010a, 2010b) has made calls to incorporate the work of the

reconceptualists with more traditional curriculum studies work. It should also be noted that

others (Apple, 1990; Westbury, 1999) dismiss these disagreements and distinctions as

unimportant and retreads of ground previously covered. Regardless of the other possible causes,

focus is placed on one possible cause of such division, the distinctions made between developing

and understanding curriculum, which, in turn, will give rise to even larger distinctions in the

field. The work of this research is an attempt at the combination of which Pinar mentions,

acknowledging that traditional means of developing curriculum may no longer be viable, but that

the new directions reconceptualized curriculum theory offer can affect change in the curriculum

of classrooms by better understanding it. Additionally, reconceptualized curriculum studies

offers a broader definition of curriculum itself, thereby broadening the focus of this research as

well.

Pinar's (2009) description of the first two groups sets definite boundaries as to the

characteristics of their work. The boundaries stake out the aims and goals of such work, as well

as the use of theory and view on research. Given that this was written at the beginning of the

movement, the description of the third group is loose by comparison. However, in attempting to

make claims about the field here, the unfixed nature seems to still hold true. The continued

development of what the reconceptualization movement meant, means, and will mean has been

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[6] The divisions between the authors cited here are not clear-cut and thereby, not easy to
categorize in one camp or other. However, while there is nuance in these disagreements, this
response contends that the divisions outlined here, theory/practice and epistemology/ontology,
account for the major disagreements these scholars have between them.

continued (Malewski, 2010a; Miller, 1988; Pinar, 1988a, 1988b, 2004, 2009; Pinar et al., 2008),

but fixed parameters are difficult to see, despite efforts otherwise (Pinar, 2007; Schubert, 2009a).

All this being said, Pinar's (2009) distinctions become clearer when juxtaposed with the move

from "developing curriculum" to "understanding curriculum" (Pinar et al., 2008). In this move,

the first two camps are concerned with the former and the third with the latter. As Pinar (2008)

writes,

> We found ourselves—in the aftermath of the 1960s national curriculum reform
> movement—invited to be, in a word, bureaucrats, to assist curriculum to be the means to
> those ends specified by politicians and corporatists and our well-meaning if narrowly and
> vocationally focused arts and sciences colleagues in the university. We were to help
> teachers forget their historical calling to practice academic freedom, to be authentic
> individuals, not automata. We were to help them become skillful implementers of others'
> objectives, something like an academic version of the postal service, delivering other
> people's mail. We were not to author what we delivered to the children, nor permitted to
> modify it (except for the sake of its more efficient transmission; our job was to see that
> mail—the curriculum—was delivered, opened, read, then learned. "Accountability"
> was—remains—the watchword of the day. (p. 365-366)

This lengthy passage is important because it speaks to a fine distinction in what the

reconceptualists mean in "developing" and "understanding" curriculum. Here, "developing"

does not mean changing; it only means improving the ways in which curriculum is delivered.

On the other side, "understanding" leaves the door wide open in terms curriculum as an unfixed,

or unfinished, entity.

However, conceptual-empiricists have expanded their notions of curriculum

development and study due to the questioning and redefining of the social science field itself as

evidenced in work by Rosaldo (1989). While such changes have resulted in curriculum

development that relies on aesthetics (Flinders, 2004; Greene, 1995), critical theory (Goodman,

1986), and feminism (Noddings, 1992, 2006)[7], such work remains within the parameters of developing, or at the very least, studying to improve curriculum.[8]

With this distinction as a line of demarcation, the addition and discussion of postreconceptualization as a theoretical concept has further complicated the matter. As evidenced by the collected works in Malewski (2010b), there is a great deal of scholarship that sees the reconceptualization as a foundation for continued explorative scholarship and research. Indeed, such a proliferation is seen as a net positive for the field in general (Malewski, 2010a). However, it is interesting to note that while there is a dialogue between the foundation and work built upon it (Malewski, 2010b), those of the foundation are seeking a clarification of the field (J. G. Henderson & Kesson, 2009a, 2009b; Pinar, 2007; Schubert, 2009a, 2009b) and issuing a challenge to reengage the work of curriculum theory in a practical way (Grumet, 2010) which seems somewhat at odds with the continued proliferation of the field. With divisions at either side, the reconceptualization of curriculum studies represents a point on a continuum on which all work in curriculum studies must be placed as the scholar or researcher considers her or his work. Such a continuum marked by divisions speaks to larger philosophical ones that exist not only in curriculum studies, but also in educational research writ large.

Faced with curriculum studies' divisions and factions, a larger distinction of theory versus the material emerges. It is not the intent to rehash what seems as an age-old ivory tower debate, especially in the realm of education research, but to merely dismiss it is dangerous.[9] Any

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[7] These examples are not offered as an exhaustive list by any means, but rather to illustrate the expanding understanding of this particular area of curriculum studies.

[8] To be clear, I am not seeking to make a qualitative judgment in the differences between different understandings within curriculum studies. The sole purpose is to make sense of these differences as it relates to the potential work of eventual research on the part of the researcher.

[9] In this sense, it might be beneficial to think of the theory/practice divide in terms of the

curriculum studies scholar must take seriously the false dichotomy of theory versus the material

by thinking critically about what claims he or she is making with his or her research. In other

words, as demonstrated by the aforementioned divisions, if the researcher fails to make such

claims, they will be made for her. Research could be dismissed on both sides as either "pie-in-

the-sky phliosophizin'" or "too practical to be considered really academic." This begs the

question, "What claims should one make? Theoretical or material?"   The response should not

be answered in terms of either/or, but rather *both*. As Dimitriadis and Kamberelis write (2006),

> We disagree with those who draw sharp distinctions between theory and practice in
> education. We see the distinction between theory and practice—between so-called pure
> and applied kinds of knowledge—as false and debilitating. Maintaining such a
> distinction hinders educators in many respects. It marginalizes the work of teachers and
> other practitioners, assuming that it is simply about implementing a set of disconnected
> strategies to teach a prescribed curriculum. It also marginalizes the work of theorists,
> assuming that their concerns are disconnected rom real-world pressures, constraints, and
> struggles. (p. vii)

The authors here frame theory versus the material in the older theory versus practice

debate. While the theory and material divide is a specific variation of this larger theme, this

passage illustrates that there is a third claim curriculum studies research can make, one that

refutes distinctions between theory and the material and instead makes a claims for both.

However, such a claim cannot be done agnostically, but rather must take seriously both theory

and the material. This approach can also be thought of in terms of Lather's (1986) "research as

praxis" argument. With these things in mind, this research moved forward in making such a

claim.

At this point, it must be said what such a path forward *is not*. While Pinar's (2009) initial

call for all three of the groups' working together is admirable, it ignores the deep division of

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theoretical moving towards the concrete (Helfenbein & Huddleston, 2013).

theory versus the material that the subsequent criticism belies.[10] Any path forward must have a

catalytic core that propels the work forward in way that effectively engages with theory but

keeps an eye towards concrete ramifications that can be felt and seen. However, this cannot be a

path that merely seeks to redefine the work of reconceptualists and postreconceptualists within

the confines of more traditional curriculum studies work as Hlebowitsh (1999, 2010a) offers

either.

It is here, within this false divide of theory/material, that a clarification of the field must

take place. As Pinar (1999a) notes, those who saw the reconceptualization as a retreat from

practice or the material were misreading it—one cannot help but be engaged in the practical and

concrete if one is seeking to understand curriculum. Indeed, as this dissertation will discuss

later, the material ramifications of Polk High moved this research away from its original intent.

However, as has been discussed so far, this misinterpretation and the divide remain. It might be

that such a perceived divide is the result of politics within the field itself, with those on either

side having a vested interest in the illusion. However, in order for such an illusion to be

exploded, a curriculum studies scholar must take seriously how his or her work addresses

theoretical and material concerns. It can no longer be assumed by curriculum theorists that their

work is, *by definition,* practical or addresses the material. Rather, the claims must be taken

seriously, and in some cases, explicitly. With this in mind, this dissertation has claimed/is

explicitly claiming to be firmly both.

Within the realm of the theoretical lies another large division that is echoed in the breaks

of curriculum studies—epistemology versus ontology. The reconceptualization marked a move

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[10] Indeed, Pinar (2007), in his later work, presents a more complex and nuanced approach to
curriculum studies that addresses this concern.

from a theory of curriculum that was completely epistemological in nature to one that included

the ontological. Pinar's (2004) notion of *currere* allows for the "temporal and cognitive modes

of relation between knower and known that might characterize the ontological structures of

educational experience" (p. 35). However, the danger is that such explorations could delve so far

into the ontological, or subjective, as to ignore the role that knowledge plays in curriculum. As

is argued later, with the increased standardization of curriculum as a result of neoliberal

education reforms, now is not the time to ignore how knowledge is defined. As discussed

earlier, with the theory and material divide, a researcher should stake a claim for both

epistemological and ontological theoretical arguments that challenge preconceived (especially as

typified by neoliberalism) notions of both. This is a fine balance to be struck for sure, but one

that can be done as demonstrated in the work by José Rosario (1991). Here, he writes about the

accumulation of jazz as knowledge, which, in turn, changes his thinking and his being. After

recounting the ways jazz, specifically John Coltrane, shaped his life in numerous ways, he

writes,

> It is much clearer to me now why the Jazz making of Coltrane could be so liberating to
> thought. For Coltrane, Jazz was not just a different, entertaining, and highly technical
> way of making, arranging, and toning sound. It was a *sacred* and *liberating* tool, a way
> of exploring the spiritual, of transcending the profane and connecting oneself and others
> to inaccessible being. With Coltrane, jazz as entertainment gave way to Jazz as sacred
> act. (p. 176)

Within this passage is the combination of knowledge ("highly technical way of making,

arranging and toning sound") with notions of being ("sacred… liberating…spiritual

…transcending the profane and connecting oneself and others to inaccessible being") in a way

that does not favor one over the other, but rather acknowledges a deep connection between the

two. Rosario goes on to equate such a combination with not only the studying of curriculum but

also in living life. It is reminiscent of Greene's (1995) revelation that the line between the books

she read(s) and the person she is becoming is nonexistent, or Gordon's (2008) notion of hauntings to capture the emotional presence of the past. To blur the line between the epistemological and the ontological is to open up the possibility to research that has material aims and consequence. Such a move is not only from the external to the internal and back as Rosario demonstrates (jazz to self to world), but it can also done from the internal to the external and back as demonstrated by Whitlock (2007, 2010) in her discussion of sexuality, place, and curriculum. Whitlock's work speaks to others' (e.g. Casemore, 2008; Helfenbein, 2006) who also present place as a point of inquiry in both the epistemological and ontological. While there is not the time and space in this study for a foray into place and curriculum, it should be noted that such an exploration holds possibilities to explore unification not only of this divide but the theory/material one as well. By positing place as a point of intellectual study, it can present theory that moves towards the concrete (Helfenbein & Huddleston, 2013).

It should be acknowledged at this point that whenever a "post" becomes attached to an intellectual movement, there is some debate as to when and where such a post begins and ends (Hall, 1996d). The discussions here are an attempt to make a claim for the purposes of this research. The research itself then becomes another posting in this process. However, this process is akin to putting signposts on an infinite road—one in which the target continues to move. In each case, the setting of a post and marking of directions are claims towards a postreconceptualization in curriculum studies that must consider the past divisions and seek to move beyond them. In other words, to ignore the historical development of the field is to ignore the pitfalls that have marked other efforts to consolidate the scholarly efforts within curriculum studies. Additionally, such sign posting work must now take into account the neoliberal context in which it operates. In other words, posting signs on an infinite path on ever shifting sand.

Theoretical core of Curriculum Studies: Cultural Studies

It is not the purpose here to present a singular theory that must be used as it relates to curriculum studies—theory is a limitless place for exploration and research so that one may find what is useful. What is proposed is that if meeting the tenets of a postreconceptualized curriculum studies are to be strived for in this dissertation, it is not enough to simply say it must be so and hope for the best. Instead, what is needed is a theoretical core that gravitationally holds this work in orbit, so it can counter or alter neoliberal education reforms. This does not preclude the possibility of other theoretical approaches that could have the same effect, but I do choose to examine a cultural studies approach and put the case forward for its usefulness as it pertains to this dissertation. Given the context of this study, the theoretical framework discussed here which relies on cultural studies as its core provided an ethical foundation as the research was conducted.

Cultural studies and education, vis-à-vis curriculum studies, is not necessarily new, and the debate over its place has been and will be debated (Gaztambide-Fernandez, Harding, & Sordé-Martí, 2004; Wright, 2003; Wright & Maton, 2004). However, similar to Helfenbein (2008), the ideas discussed here should not be placed within that context. Rather, they offer their own reasoning for cultural studies within education and, simultaneously, seeks a clarification of cultural studies itself for the purposes of this research. In many ways, the theoretical tenets of cultural studies reinforce the bond between theory/material and epistemology/ontology. Indeed, Wright (2003) makes the case for cultural studies as praxis that shares many similarities with Lather's (1986) conception. In both cases, theory is not removed from practice but is rather a part of a working combination that sees such work as always looking to both theory and the material in convergent ways.

Key concepts. To begin, Helfenbein (2003, 2006, 2008; Huddleston & Helfenbein, 2012) offers key characteristics of cultural studies (materialism, anti-essentialism, social constructivism, and radical contextuality) that lend themselves to educational research. These four characteristics also reinforce postreconceptualized curriculum studies as outlined in this section. Relying mostly on the scholarship of Stuart Hall (Hall, Morley, & Chen, 1996), these four characteristics served as a way to clarify cultural studies as an effective theoretical resource as this research progressed. It is with a sense of irony that I look to Stuart Hall for a clarification of cultural studies, as his work has led to a multitude of explorations in the field (Fiske, 1996).

These four characteristics reinforce the denial of the dichotomies noted earlier, theory/material and epistemology/ontology. Of the first, Helfenbein (2003) writes,

> A cultural studies approach works from a material reality that affects the social world in which people live, think, and work. Culture holds a portion of that lived reality, but also in play are structures of representation and a material totality or "whole way of life". (p. 10)

It is here that we see the possibility of a theoretical core that binds research to the theory/material unity. Within this passage are both a nod towards the material and one towards theory in acknowledgement of larger societal structures at play. Indeed, this notion of both the material and abstract is reinforced in Hall's discussion of articulation (Grossberg, 1996). Hall says,

> A theory of articulation is both a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects. (p. 141-142)

Using the metaphor of the articulated truck where the cab and trailer of a semi-truck can, but do not need to be, connected, articulation allows ideological elements to come together in academic examination dependent of the specifics of the subjects that they seem to effect. Furthermore, the interest in such ideological articulations is *because* of their material effects.

Ideological formations such as class, gender, race, religion, etc., when loose and untethered, hold

no specific material weight, resulting in a theoretical work with no practical ramifications.

However, when they are articulated with subjects, the material ramifications must be explored.

Indeed, as Hall (Grossberg, 1996) notes, when articulation between the ideological and the

subject takes place, the elements that both contain comes together as well. In other words, the

theory behind the examination of the ideological comes together with the practical context of the

subject, i.e. the world in which they live, think, and work.

The second key characteristic reinforces the epistemological/ontological unity. Anti-

essentialism (and anti-anti-essentialism) rejects both notions of essentialized identity and the

impossibility of ethnicity as a powerful centrality of culture and community. In other words,

identity is a complexity that can be fragmented and unitary all in the same. As Helfenbein

(2003) writes,

> Relations of power and culture vary within the interactions of the moment—they are not
> guaranteed. In this way, the cultural studies approach rejects any notion of essentialism
> that closes the boundaries of subjects. This is not to say that relationships do not exist,
> but rather the intention comes to expose and embrace the complexity of evolving
> relationships within the context of lived experience. (p. 11)

Obviously, anti-essentialism (and anti anti-essentialism) speaks to ontological questions

and discoveries, but what may be less apparent are the epistemological ramifications as well. It

would help to think of these intersections and interactions of culture, race, class, gender, etc. as

points of knowledge. In other words, to combat racism and sexism, knowledge of the "other" is

often the key to breaking down ignorance that leads to discrimination (hooks, 2000; Tatum,

1997). Therefore, questions of identity no longer become simply ontological, but as knowledge

is gained about how these complexities interact we gain a greater understanding of ourselves and

of others. Hall (1996c), speaking of the diversity of the black experience, writes,

This is not simply to appreciate the historical and experiential differences within and between communities, regions, country and city, across national cultures, between diasporas, but also to recognize the other kinds of difference that place, position, and locate black people. The point is not simply that, since our racial differences do not constitute all of us, we are always different, negotiating different kids of differences—of gender, of sexuality, of class. It is also that these antagonisms refuse to be neatly aligned; they are simply not reducible to one another; they refuse to coalesce around a single axis of differentiation (p. 473).

Hall sets up these ontological questions as points of knowledge for greater understanding—a complex web that demands a complex study. He echoes that such differences are contrasting to the essentialized notions of identity, but even these differences cannot be coalesced "around a single axis of differentiation." In other words, one cannot essentialize how difference is organized. To acknowledge heterogeneity is only the first step; the next is that the complexity of the structure of such heterogeneity is not a simplified map of difference often portrayed by tokenism.

The next characteristic Helfenbein (2003) points out, constructionism (or social constructionism), continues along a line of thinking that combines epistemology and ontology. Social constructionism acknowledges that knowing is being and vice versa, while at the same time acknowledging such process is happening at a much larger and grander societal, structural scale constructing the world around us. Indeed, it is a much more complicated process with various interpretations including American pragmatism (De Waal, 2005) and post-structuralism (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1992; Sturrock, 1979). I am more concerned with the cultural studies interpretation of constructionism as it relates to education that Helfenbein (2003) outlines,

Culture plays a role in the construction of human reality, but only a role. Any static notion fails to recognize the complexity of social interactions and reifies misconceptions, stereotypes, and prejudice as truth. A common mistake, seen clearly in the revitalization of the standards movement in education, suggests that knowledge can be communicated directly from transmitter to receiver. This model, often described in the loaded terms of bullets, syringes, or bank deposits, assumes that the cultural identities of both parties are closed systems and that no mediation of the message occurs in the process of

communication. (p. 11)

Here, the link between knowledge and subject is explicit. Education is acknowledged as a complicated process of transmitting knowledge as well as an acknowledgement of the complexity of the subjects on either end of such a transmission. This fluid process demands an epistemological/ontological approach to unpack the complexities therein. However, such a process and approach are not only on the curricular level. In the context of neoliberal times, this process is happening on a larger scale. The forces of neoliberal education reform are often using media and cultural messages to further their cause and, as such, this process too needs to be unpacked (Huddleston & Helfenbein, 2012). Hall's (1996b) notion of encoding/decoding in media, which echoes the constructionism mentioned here, allows for hermeneutic that unpacks how these messages are produced and received culturally (Huddleston & Helfenbein, 2012). Hall (1996b) acknowledges the complex process that goes into the media production of a cultural artifact, such as a newscast, but then writes,

> At a certain point, however, the broadcasting structures must yield encoded messages in the form of a meaningful discourse. The institution-societal relations of production must pass under the discursive rules of language for its product to be 'realized'. This initiates a further differentiated moment, in which the formal rules of discourse and language are in dominance. (p. 109)

As the discourse surrounding neoliberal education reform continues to play out both in the media and popular culture (i.e. "Waiting for Superman" (2010b), a media and popular culture event) curriculum studies with a theoretical core of cultural studies would need to acknowledge a social constructionism that takes into account epistemological and ontological complexities.

Lastly, the cultural studies notion of radical contextuality brings together theory/material with the epistemological/ontological in way that is crucial given the times we now face. Helfenbein (2003) writes,

Unapologetically calling for a rhetoric of complexity, a cultural studies approach refuses the reduction of theories of power to a unitary force, theories of culture to a homogenous receptor, or theories of theories without an intentional look at the consequences of such intellectual choices. The context of each must continually be considered and reconsidered; one cannot assume how culture or power works. As in the Gramscian notion of a "field of struggle," the goal becomes the pursuit of better truths. (p. 12)

To follow this passage is to see the bindings that tie theory to practice and the epistemological to the ontological tightening. Here, theory is not taken for granted because the cultural studies scholar refuses to use it as a simplistic understanding. At the same time, theory must be constantly weighed against the material effects. This echoes the points elucidated by constructionism by noting the transmittal of such theory to the material is not a given, but a complex process involving the subjectivity of scholar and other members of society. To clarify this concept, it helps to visit Hall's (1996a) discussion of the Gramscian notion of the "organic intellectual" as it relates to the development of cultural studies. He (1996a) writes,

On the one hand, we [scholars of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham] had to be at the very forefront of intellectual theoretical work because, as Gramsci says, it is the job of the organic intellectual to know more than the traditional intellectuals do: really know, not just pretend to know, not just have the facility of knowledge, but to know deeply and profoundly…If you are the in the game of hegemony you have to be smarter than 'them'…But the second aspect is just as crucial: that the organics intellectual cannot absolve himself or herself from the responsibility of transmitting those ideas, that knowledge, through the intellectual function to those who do not belong, professionally, in the intellectual class. And unless those two fronts are operating at the same time, or at least unless those two ambitions are part of the project of cultural studies, you can get enormous theoretical advance without any engagement at the level of the political project. (p. 268)

This passage speaks to the historical beginnings of cultural studies as it was very much shaped by the cultural, political, and societal climate of the times, i.e. the rise of Thatcherism (Morley & Chen, 1996).[11] Hall acknowledges that the organic intellectual cannot ignore the

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[11] It should be acknowledged that the heritage of cultural studies should not be confined to its supposed British origins and the possibility of other cultural heritages exist (Wright & Maton,

possible materiality of the work, far from it; he or she must strive for the work to have material effect and consequence. It is the argument here that my research felt this responsibility, as outlined by Hall, weigh heavily on my shoulders as I addressed neoliberal education reforms, accounting for the changes made to the research as it moved forward.

As mentioned before, Hall's work within cultural studies has left many doors through which scholarly work can walk (Fiske, 1996). Those avenues should be encouraged and continually explored. However, given the intersection of the following contexts: postreconceptualized Curriculum Studies, neoliberal education reforms, and cultural studies of education—Helfenbein's and Hall's work served as a theoretical core pulling this research towards an ethical center. In doing so, this gravitational pull kept this work centered, ethical, and organic.

Implications

This section should not be interpreted as an endpoint for both curriculum studies and/or cultural studies of education as it relates to this research. Indeed, as has been discussed earlier, postcolonial studies and critical geography have a place in this work as well. Postcolonial studies offers insights into educational research, given the context of neoliberalism discussed later and the intersection of the hegemonic similarities between neoliberalism, globalization and neocolonialism (Andreotti, 2011; Asher, 2005, 2010). In addition to postcolonial theory, critical geography, as outlined by Soja (2010) and discussed in its application by Helfenbein (2006, 2010, 2011), offers a nexus of the theory/practice and epistemology/ontology combinations as well. Regardless of the additional theoretical explorations, there still needs to be a magnetic core that allows for expansion but kept this research in orbit aligned with certain theoretical

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2004).

implications.

I hope I have made and continue to make clear that the times should shape the research, and in this case, the times are neoliberal ones. As an example of the theory/material combination mentioned earlier, a picture of how such times are playing out in schools was a goal for which this research strove. In other words, the hope was to gain a better understanding of the interactions between neoliberal education reforms and schools themselves paying close attention to the theory/material and epistemology/ontology combinations outlined here. The starting point of such work was what these interactions *are not*. Informed by the complexities alluded to previously, the interactions between school reforms and schools (and teachers, and students, and etc.) are never as simple as a dichotomous notion of the global versus the local, oppression and resistance, policy makers versus practitioners, or conservatives versus progressives. The interactions in these cases are much more complex, requiring a deep theoretical understanding of how such complexities play out in the material, as others (Muñoz, 1999; Puar, 2007; Tsing, 2005) in postcolonial theory have pointed out. Indeed, as is revealed in the proceeding chapters, this complexity was evident in the case of Polk Community High School.

The implication of work that aims to portray complexity as opposed to explain it, is to understand the stakes as they are, not as we imagine them to be. In other words, I paint a bleak picture of the effect neoliberal reform has on schools, one in which I firmly believe, but at the same time I concede that such a picture is incomplete. To assume that the causal chain from reforms to teachers and students is x to y to z, speaks to a level of arrogance and ignorance that is the direct result of not bridging the theory/material divide but only reinforcing it. If the framework of postreconeptualized curriculum studies with the cultural studies core outlined here is to be followed, such arrogance and ignorance cannot be tolerated. In other words, the organic

curriculum worker must seek a better "truth" than the evil, corporate reform monster versus the powerless teacher. We already know that story and how it ends. In both cases—the complexity of education reforms and the complexity of schools themselves—this research set out to find counterhegemony by defining it on its own terms, fully acknowledging that it might not exist at all. As others (Apple & Beane, 2007; Blackburn, Clark, Kenney, & Smith, 2009; Noguera, Ginwright, & Cammarota, 2006) have done in pointing out what is effectively liberating for students in schools and communities, this research hoped to do the same with teachers resistant to neoliberalism in the form of education reforms—it is for those who continue the fight against neoliberal reform so that they can work in concert with the resistance that might already be taking place, not against it. All this being said, in the end, it proved that even finding the counterhegemonic, let alone defining it, was difficult.

To portray the complexity of neoliberal reform and the schools they affect, this eventual research focused on teachers. As others (Apple, 2013; Grumet, 1988)[12] have pointed out, teachers and their roles in society represent a crucial element in curriculum. As such, this research focused on the lives of teachers in the face of education reform. In a sense, this notion honors the postreconceptualized curriculum studies epistemology/ontology unity as teachers not only embody the perceived transmission of knowledge within the public school discourse, but this research set out to shed light on the ontological questions of what it means to be a teacher today given the context. The role of the teacher in education reform discourse gives insight into the power structures therein as illustrated by Popkewitz (1998). More importantly, the research attempted to understand how teachers react to reform efforts on their own terms, bridging the

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[12] It is acknowledged that Apple (2013) and Grumet (1988) represent two, at times, opposed positions in their view of teachers. However, in the spirit of bridging divides, their views, taken together, represent a more complete understanding of teachers and curriculum.

theory/material divide as well.

The divide between theory and the material, in terms of educational research, can be expressed in terms of scholar and teacher as well. This is another line that needs to be blurred, as not only a means for more effective research, but also to reinforce the curriculum and cultural studies concerns as to theory and the material. Indeed, just the space within the lives of teachers leaves much to be unpacked and troubled. However, it is not just because of the apparent limitations of taking on the larger complexity that this research chooses to focus solely on teachers, but also speak to the scale of complexity—as one moves from large to small and vice versa the complexities exist at all levels, not just one (Helfenbein, 2010). Additionally, teachers have become the source of much derision during the current education reform debate. This research sought to include the voices to teachers who have been rendered voiceless in the implementation of neoliberal reform.

It should be noted that this work aimed to have some eventual policy level effect. Indeed, if it is to live up to the expectations as outlined in this chapter it must do so. However, the path forward for such an impact is not clear—especially given the subsequent findings and analysis. As Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong (1994) have noted, the ways in which research is presented and received are complicated at best, offering little in the way of assurances or guarantees. All this being said, the role of researcher does not end once the work is done. If the goal of this research is to present a clearer picture of the ways neoliberal education reforms affects teachers, it must be held up to those who impose the reforms in the first place, especially if they contend to be helping schools and teachers. It could be argued that by doing so, I run the risk of giving these reformers a blueprint for ways to truly implement the change they seek. However, it could also be argued that there are well-meaning people who like the sound of these education reforms, but

when the picture is held up to them they will react in horror and astonishment. The use of this research could sway public opinion against neoliberal education reforms thereby making for a difficult implementation indeed. At the same time, the findings and analysis presented later offer a difficulty in how best to present this research to the participants and other interested parties of Polk Community High School. Some of these individuals have a vested stake in the FSCS model and the findings here might run counter to their perceived notions as to the model's effectiveness. In either case, whether used to challenge neoliberal reform or improve the FSCS model, the fate of this research is a negotiated process.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This section seeks to lay out, side by side, the theoretical frameworks of both full service community schools (FSCS) and neoliberal education reforms in order to briefly contrast the two, followed by a brief look at other ethnographic studies. Indeed, the main purpose of this review was to provide a solid foundation upon which this research rested. It should be noted that, while this review will sometimes rely on more concrete examples of both FSCS and neoliberalism, it mostly remains in the theoretical by examining the major ideas of both. Baseline theoretical knowledge is important if one is to research any seeming interactions between the two areas discussed here. It is a checkpoint against which the researcher can consistently return to both reaffirm and to challenge what is uncovered. At the same time, the theory discussed here should not be seen as infallible. Indeed, it is the hope that this research can challenge the theories discussed here so that a fuller picture might be achieved.

I begin with a look at the pedagogical, curricular, and organizational tenets of FSCSs. These tenets consist of both theories of learning and discussions of how such concepts should be applied to schools. FSCSs offer a version of students beyond academic concerns that include mental, physical, and societal factors such as health, family, culture and class—offering the chance to assess students' successes differently than traditional methods. Additionally, FSCSs are seen as the centerpieces of communities. To strive towards a holistic education approach and, at the same time, become the centerpiece of a community, FSCSs partner with social services, often housing these services within the schools itself. Additionally, FSCSs look to provide support for all community members, not just the students themselves.

The second half of this review tackles how neoliberalism manifests itself in the current slate of educational reform efforts. More specifically, how accountability and choice serve to

further neoliberalism and its role in the redefinition of both the public and private sphere within the United States through a strengthening of individual liberty and ownership. A concurrent move of neoliberalism is to remove barriers to the free flow of capital in the form of private investment, which often results in further reducing the role of public institutions. Public schools represent a large portion of the public sector, so it is no wonder that neoliberalism is a guiding principle in a current slate of reforms in education.

Full Service Community Schools

A full service community school (FSCS) offers a study in a specific theoretical approach towards pedagogy and curriculum combined with a material application of these theories in both the everyday goings-on and the overall organization of the school[13]. It is certainly possible that there are additional tenets of FSCSs not mentioned in this literature review as FSCSs are diverse not only in the applications of a FSCS framework, but also in how they view the framework itself. Additionally, it is certainly possible that within this complex web of philosophical prioritizing and application that FSCS could be seen as an outgrowth of neoliberal education reform. However, this research takes up a large amount of literature that harkens back to traditional progressive ideas as they relate to public education. As such, not only does this review focus on literature specific to FSCS, but also on several scholars not normally associated with FSCS, John Dewey (2008, 2012; Hickman & Alexander, 1998) and Nel Noddings (1992, 2006, 2007).

The literature on FSCSs typically focuses on three theoretical pieces and the ways in which these pieces should manifest themselves in the school. To begin, FSCSs propose that the

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[13] As this chapter focuses primarily on the model of FSCS and not its effectiveness, this literature review will deal mainly on theoretical concepts and practical applications.

education of a student extends beyond a concern for the mind to include a mind-body connection contending that the well being of a student's health, both mentally and physically, directly relate to the ability to learn (Beuhring, Blum, & Rinehart, 2000; M. Blank & Berg, 2006; Epstein, 2005; Lewis & Schaps, 1995; Weiner, 1993). This is often referred to as a holistic approach to education. An outgrowth of this connection is that student achievement can be measured beyond the academic and, most often, take into account the students' lives outside of school as a means to measure the success and scope of the school's responsibilities (Harkayy & Blank, 2001). Lastly, FSCSs see schools as the centerpiece of the community where the boundaries between the two are nonexistent as to offer the school as a resource for all community members, not just students (Belenardo, 2001; M. J. Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003; Epstein, 1995; Hatch, 1998; A. T. Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Lareau, 1987).

While the majority of FSCS advocates generally hold as important, and advocate for, these theoretical concepts, they are by no means universal, which allows them to be diffused and mitigated in practice. However, there are some areas of similarities in these practices that can be discerned even though they tend to break down in the specifics. Indeed, this is first similar characteristic of FSCSs, as they are intended to address the needs and concerns of the specific community in which the school is located (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Dryfoos et al., 2005). Regardless of these concerns, FSCSs share the common trait of partnering with, and in some cases housing, a variety of services (Dryfoos, 2000a; Epstein, 2005; Lave et al., 1998; McCord, Klein, Foy, & Fothergill, 1993; Meyers, Sampson, Weitzman, Rogers, & Kayne, 1989; Remedios & Allan, 2006; Warren, 2005; Weist, Paskewitz, Warner, & Flaherty, 1996). These services vary, but generally fall in the categories of social, health, and recreational. Secondly, these services are very often not limited to the student, but to the student's family and other

community members as well. Beyond these two general areas, how FSCSs function in practice and what services are provided are influenced by various contextual factors.

Partnerships not only serve to provide services for students and the community, but also serve as links between the school and the community itself. This speaks to how the FSCS' tenet of the school as centerpiece of the community plays out in practice. By partnering with various community groups, organizations, and businesses, FSCS seek to create a borderless and boundless school/community in which the lines between the two are difficult to discern (Dryfoos, 2000b; Dryfoos et al., 2005). Indeed, it is the goal that the school itself lower any unneeded barriers thereby allowing community members to utilize the services, but also make for an inviting place where various groups feel welcomed to support students and families. It is this school without borders that means to serve as the center of a community but one that is in equal partnership with various community groups. Reciprocity and cooperation are key qualities, as is communication between all groups. Very often, schools will house open meetings with community members to foster such qualities in these relationships (Dryfoos, 2000b; Dryfoos et al., 2005).

In the end, FSCSs offer a model that addresses concerns as they relate to a holistic approach to education—such an approach is in service to the general wellbeing of the child inasmuch as it relates to academic achievement. Additionally, the community/school partnerships are forged so that all community and school members have an equal stake in the development and success of the students as they move through the school. While these tenets are generally held among FSCS, how they are practiced results in a myriad of examples with some generalizable qualities.

Holistic Education

The beginnings of holistic education can be traced back to the developmentalists and, to a

certain extent, John Dewey in the early 20th century (Kliebard, 2004). Indeed, Dewey was

heavily influenced by and worked with Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House, a beacon of

early 20th century social charity and outreach (Menand, 2001). In both cases, neither the

developmentalists nor Dewey advocated for holistic education in the way that will be outlined

here, but they did both point towards developing curriculum based on child's background,

temperament, personality, intelligence, interests, etc., (Dewey, 2008, 2012).[14] However, while

the roots of holistic education begin with the aforementioned, it takes its current shape as

influenced by the growing research on the home and school inequalities faced by students of a

low socioeconomic status (SES) (Anyon, 1997, 2005; Kozol, 1991, 2005; Lopez, 2003) and the

advocating of ethics of care in schools (Noddings, 1992, 2006).

The inequalities faced by students of color living in poverty have been well documented

(Gamoran, 2001). These inequalities include, but are not limited to: mental and physical health

issues, drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse, domestic violence, poverty, inadequate school

facilities, gang violence, lack of economic resources, etc.[15] Furthermore, these inequalities have

been for the most part ignored (Kozol, 1991, 2005) and solidified by the United States

governments' (both federal and local) policies (Anyon, 1997, 2005; Kozol, 2005). Indeed, recent

education policies have exacerbated the problems by labeling such inequalities as "excuses" or

"non-factors" in the education of students (Ravitch, 2010; Taubman, 2009). Advocates for these

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[14] Dewey, never one for dichotomous thought, looked for a balance between the child and the curriculum, tending not to focus on one over the other (Kliebard, 2004).

[15] It should be noted these inequalities do not exist in a vacuum and are not to be taken lightly as merely items on a list. Very often, students face any many of these in numerous combinations and at different times in their lives. The point here is to note that such inequalities exist as barriers to student learning.

students argue that to truly educate them, these inequalities must be addressed (Anyon, 2005; Beuhring et al., 2000; Kozol, 2005; Lewis & Schaps, 1995; Lopez, 2003; Noguera et al., 2006; Ravitch, 2010) as they affect a student's ability to achieve (Basch, 2011; Coleman, 1990; Lee & Burkam, 2002; Rusk, 1999). The means to address those inequalities vary from changing the U.S. government's policy towards poverty (Anyon, 2005; Ravitch, 2010) to empowering schools (Kozol, 1991) to student activism (Noguera et al., 2006). The uniqueness of FSCSs is that they seek a combination of some of these approaches to empower schools and community partners to tackle the aforementioned inequalities (Dryfoos, 2000b; Milliken, 2007).

In addition to the focus on inequalities, a holistic approach to education has roots in an ethics of care[16], as outlined by Noddings (1992, 2006), that questions the traditional ethics upon which education is based and suggests they be replaced. This new ethical foundation will lead to an education that is more well-rounded, taking into account many aspects of the student's life and how best to raise and educate her. Rather than seeing knowledge as something to be obtained, it is seen as an important piece of a balanced upbringing that pays attention to those areas traditional ethics ignores or minimalizes. In terms of child rearing, an ethics of care is neither permissive nor authoritarian, but authoritative. Education becomes more malleable to the needs of the student in a school with an ethics of care core. Indeed, an ethics of care stresses an interest in the student's life beyond the classroom so that any decision made is based on the student's background, upbringing, and home life. It is this marriage of the public and private that perhaps most reflect FSCS mission in holistic education. For Noddings (1992, 2006), the distinction between the home and school or the public and private is problematic. It is her desire to see education as taking elements from both of these worlds in order to best serve the needs of

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[16] Also referred to as "Caring ethics".

the student. Very often, decisions are made in the home that conflict with the school and vice versa. Instead, families and teachers working together can come up with solutions and avoid such conflicts.

The holistic approach outlined here is by no means an exhaustive list in terms of inequalities in education or an ethics of care. Rather, it seeks to find the theoretical beginnings of what FSCSs hope to address in their school model. FSCSs recognize the inequalities in education and base their curriculum and pedagogy on an ethical responsibility beyond just the academic to address those inequalities (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Milliken, 2007). Where FSCS stop short in regards to these theoretical beginnings is: 1) For the most part, they do not necessarily aim to fix or solve the inequalities, but rather offer a support system to address them and 2) Addressing these inequalities are still in the service of academic achievement. Both of these shortcomings disallow FSCS to be completely aligned with the ideas outlined in this section, but they do share some important similarities.

Measurements of Success

While the holistic approach to a student's education is a solid foundation for FSCSs, there is some question as to why such an approach is deemed as important. Most of the literature surrounding FSCS highlights the tenets of FSCS-type schooling as a means to increase academic achievement (M. J. Blank, Melaville, et al., 2003; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Hatch, 1998; A. T. Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Milliken, 2007; Remedios & Allan, 2006). However, there is an element of FSCSs that looks beyond academic achievement for other means to measure the students' and school's level of success (Harkayy & Blank, 2001).

Very often, these different measurements of success arise from the belief that the school should foster a relationship with the community by involving students in community service and

action (M. Blank & Berg, 2006; M. J. Blank, Johnson, & Shah, 2003; de Kanter, Adair, Chung, & Stonehill, 2003; Epstein, 1995; Longo, 2007; Robbins & Alvy, 1995). In this sense, the measurement of the success of a FSCS is the number of community partners and the student-involvement with those partners, either within the school or out in the community. To measure such success involves even more diversity in defining such participation and partnerships.

Indeed, the reasons for wanting such community involvement on the part of the students vary as well. Some argue that by advocating for community service, the bond between school and family is strengthened beyond the link of a student (M. Blank & Berg, 2006; Epstein, 1995; A. T. Henderson, 2007). In other words, students who participate in community service work with families outside of their own—this forms multiple links between families, students, and schools creating a much larger web of support. Others contend that by encouraging student community involvement, the roles of administrators and teachers become easier (Robbins & Alvy, 1995). Finally, while in the previous section it was mentioned that for the most part FSCS do not seek to remedy social inequalities, there are those who believe student community participation can do just that (M. J. Blank, Johnson, et al., 2003; Harkayy & Blank, 2001; Keith, 1996; Longo, 2007). This belief can also be seen in the literature that cites FSCSs as potential places of participatory action research (PAR) that can lead to transformational results for the community (Bueschel & Poetter, 2007; Murtadha-Watts, Belcher, Iverson, & Medina, 1999; Winitzky, Sheridan, & Crow, 1995). However, the literature in regards to success outside of the academic is small in relation to the vast majority that advocates academic achievement above all (For a clear outline of how FSCS can address the academic see Milliken, 2007).

School as an Open Centerpiece of the Community

The previous two sections have alluded to the changing role of the school within a FSCS

framework. As we move from the theoretical to the application, the first steps are the ways in which the school is situated as related to the community. In other words, if FSCSs are to holistically educate the student and strengthen community partnerships, special attention must be paid to how best to position them. There are several ways to go about this as much depends on the specifics of the school and the community, but several steps could help position a FSCS as a vital part of the community.

The first of these steps is the concept of an "open" school. This concept seeks to break down traditional barriers that have existed between schools and communities through several means that include: allowing community access to school resources, encouraging student involvement in communities, extending the hours that the school is open beyond the traditionally held ones, and holding community/school partnership meetings (Altshuler, 2003; Belenardo, 2001; Benson & Harkavy, 2001; Epstein, 1995; Murtadha-Watts et al., 1999; O'Donnell, Kirkner, & Meyer-Adams, 2008; Pounder, 1998). This open concept is meant to foster the community/school relationships by removing any stigmas that might make the school seem off-limits to parents and community members. The goal is that the school should be seen as an easily accessible resource for all, not just somewhere where students go to learn. The open concept is the beginning for many of the other characteristics mentioned in this section. The characteristics cannot exist without the school being an open one and, in some cases, help maintain and strengthen the school's openness.

To further this open concept, a restructuring of the school in terms of leadership is often needed to address the FSCS framework (M. J. Blank, Melaville, et al., 2003; Dryfoos, 2000b; A. T. Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Pounder, 1998). This involves a focus that does not center on individuals taking the majority of the responsibility, but a collaborative process in which school

and community leaders look to share and delegate responsibilities (Pounder, 1998). To account

for the increased demand of responsibilities of both the traditional school and fostering

community partnerships, FSCSs often assign a Community Coordinator whose main

responsibility is to serve as a liaison between the school and the community (Dryfoos, 2000b;

Dryfoos et al., 2005). In partnering with the community, FSCSs often adopt a "come one, come

all" approach where all who want to help students, the school, and the community are welcomed

partners (Dryfoos, 2000b; Dryfoos et al., 2005).

Additionally, universities are preparing "professionals with necessary skills, knowledge,

and dispositions to work collaboratively in urban neighborhoods" (Murtadha-Watts et al., 1999,

p. 64). These programs seek to provide teachers and other professionals that are trained to work

in a collaborative environment, much like the one that FSCSs strive to create (Murtadha-Watts et

al., 1999; Winitzky et al., 1995). These same universities not only provide training, but also can

serve as an important resource to encourage continuing collaboration between the public school

and community (Benson & Harkavy, 2001; Keith, 1996).

The concept of sharing goes hand in hand with the open school concept. To begin, the

community, as demonstrated through its various organizations, and the school must not only

share in the data in regards to student achievement, but also student involvement and information

about their general well being—including their social, mental, and physical health (Altshuler,

2003; Epstein, 1995). This concept of sharing extends beyond the data collected, but also

focuses on sharing goals and expectations amongst community members and school officials

(Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Dryfoos et al., 2005; A. T. Henderson, 2007). Such a sharing

requires an understanding on the part of the school leaders of the community that surrounds them

(M. Blank & Berg, 2006; Dryfoos et al., 2005; Glen, 1999; A. T. Henderson, 2007; Murtadha-

Watts et al., 1999; O'Donnell et al., 2008; Pounder, 1998). Very often this understanding begins

with an outreach to parents and an understanding beyond generalities as to avoid "standardized

views of the proper role of parents in schooling" (Lareau, 1987, p. 73). As Henderson, et al.

(2007) notes,

> It is vital for educators to understand that the families who send their children to them
> each day want their children to succeed in school and in life. Yes, families may say or do
> things that lead us to wonder if they respect the importance of education. But these
> actions and behaviors often are triggered by other stressful factors in parents' lives.
> (Kindle Locations, 321-323)[17]

By beginning with parents, the relationship between the school and community can

deepen (Dryfoos et al., 2005) to the point where a level of trust allows not only for the sharing of

goals but successes as well (Dryfoos et al., 2005; A. T. Henderson, 2007; A. T. Henderson &

Mapp, 2002). FSCSs often hold meetings, both within the school and in the community, for

school and community leaders to come together and share these goals and successes (Dryfoos et

al., 2005). In addition, schools that are the centerpieces of communities could serve as a

counterbalance to the limitations and negative results of neoliberal education reform efforts

(Ravitch, 2010). In the end, the school must look for ways beyond traditional means in terms of

outreach and parent/community involvement in the school itself (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002;

Dryfoos et al., 2005; A. T. Henderson, 2007).

Services Housed/Partnered with the School

The last piece in the puzzle of FSCSs' practice is the ability to either partner with, and in

some cases, house services for the students, parents, and community members. Relating this

concept to the open school should be apparent, in order access services within the school, the

school must be accessible beyond the normal school day (Cummings, Todd, & Dyson, 2007;

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[17] Kindle Location Numbers refer to the e-book edition of this text.

Dryfoos, 2000b; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002). The question remains, which services should be provided and where will they be located?

As mentioned earlier, FSCSs often will take any help they can receive from the community—this makes for a random assortment of services depending on the context. However, there are some core services that FSCS seek to fulfill. These include, but are not limed to: "parent involvement, after-school and summer programs, early childhood programs, primary health services, mental health services, and community development" (Dryfoos et al., 2005, p. 39). The previous section covered the importance of parent involvement, and this is furthered by the inclusion of programs specifically targeting parent outreach and support. Perhaps the most famous of these is the Harlem Children Zone's (HCZ) "Baby College" (Tough, 2008). Here, first time parents are given classes on what to expect with their newborn and how crucial the first few years of development are in a child's life. Tough (2008) quotes Geoffrey Canada, HCZ's founder and director, about Baby College's mission to provide the neighborhood's families with essential information about their newborn,

> "It was so clear that there was this body of information out there," Canada recalled. "Everybody agreed on the best practices. If you have a child who is three months old, we know exactly what you ought to be doing with that child. When your kid is nine months old, we know that too, no debate, we don't need any more research, we don't need any more studies. But in our community, no one was talking to our parents about this body of knowledge". (p. 58)

Other parent programs, similar to Baby College, include a family resource center, parent advisory councils, and parent advocacy efforts (Dryfoos et al., 2005)

The inclusion of programs like Baby College acknowledge that the scope of FSCS extend beyond the time the student spends at the school itself. This is also why there is an emphasis placed on early childhood education programs as well (Dryfoos, 1994; Franklin & Streeter, 1995; O'Donnell et al., 2008; Tough, 2008). These programs extend the role of the school

beyond the grade levels it may or may not already have, but rather seeks to start a potential

student's education as soon as possible. Perhaps the best way to provide such programs is

partnering with Head Start and other similar organizations (Dryfoos et al., 2005).

After-school and summer enrichment programs further open the school by extending the

hours in which services for students are provided. Indeed, these programs acknowledge that to

protect students from the problems they face in their homes or neighborhoods, the school can

often provide a safe refuge (Beuhring et al., 2000; Dryfoos et al., 2005). Additionally, as Jonas

(2005) writes, "Research has demonstrated that nonschool hours provide a powerful opportunity

for community-based organizations to help children and schools reach their academic goals"

(Page 57). All in all, these programs extend the education of the student beyond the school day.

The specific services range from after school activities such as the arts and sports to extra

academic supports like tutoring and study sessions (Dryfoos et al., 2005).

Greater access to mental and physical health services lead to a greater ability to learn

(Lave et al., 1998; Meyers et al., 1989). With this in mind, FSCS seek to provide as many of

these services as possible within the school itself (Dryfoos et al., 2005). If the services

themselves cannot be housed within the school, the partnerships formed with the community

seek to link the student to such services through shared accessibility by the families (Adelman &

Taylor, 1998; M. Blank & Berg, 2006; Franklin & Streeter, 1995). Very often, the physical

health services for students begins with the school clinic, but in an expanded sense that provides

beyond the traditional role of the school clinic by administrating check-ups, primary care, health

counseling, emergency care, laboratory screenings, and family planning services for students,

their families, and other members of the community (Dryfoos, 1994; McCord et al., 1993;

Tough, 2008). Likewise, mental health services begin with the in-school social work but tend to

expand beyond those traditional roles as well by providing a myriad of intervention strategies in the form of group counseling, town meetings, and one-on-one counseling for the same groups that are provided the aforementioned physical health services (Adelman & Taylor, 1998; Beuhring et al., 2000; Dryfoos, 1994; Weist et al., 1996).

The final category is somewhat different from the previous ones. Green (2005) characterizes this difference as moving "beyond individual child and family well-being to influence the health and welfare of the entire community" (p. 114). The programs provide services that students may never access or use, but that community members will find of vital importance. The result is threefold in that it provides for the community, can lead to the community's economic development, and it strengthens the bonds between the school and community as well (M. J. Blank, Melaville, et al., 2003; Cummings et al., 2007; Green, 2005; O'Donnell et al., 2008). These programs and tenets include: hiring community residents, adult education, entrepreneurial education, college courses, partnerships with financial institutions, supporting community businesses, hosting community events, and encouraging adult political and civic activism (Green, 2005).

While the aforementioned services mainly provide and include adults in the community, the last tenet of political and civic activism can work in tandem with student activism and community involvement (Green, 2005). Student activism could not only lead to success for a student, but also can result in positive results for the community as well (Noguera et al., 2006). In the end, through the encouragement of activism for both community members and students, they become advocates in a larger context for the school and the community (Dryfoos et al., 2005; Green, 2005).

Neoliberal Education Reform

As mentioned in the introduction, I outline literature here with specific goals as they pertain to the overall research. To begin, I try to locate the role that neoliberalism has played in the shaping of the current educational reform discourse. To that end, this section of the literature reviews tracks the school reform discourse, making links between it and larger ones in which neoliberalism plays a role (e.g., globalization, urban reform, the United States class system, racism, etc.). In other words, I see neoliberalism as a link between school reform and a larger hegemonic structuration thereby invoking larger societal implications beyond the United States public education system. As such, the literature reviewed here speaks to such a link and tends to stay away from a discussion based on the merits of neoliberal education reforms. That being said, it relies on the efforts to disprove the effectiveness of said reform as a means to fully understand the debate, both politically and philosophically. As Noddings (2007) notes, we should challenge the language that is used by advocates of any school reform as it often dissembles and results in policies that garner support because they *sound* good, but are not all that they promise. Furthermore, as others (Apple, 2001; Baker, 2009; Pinar, 2004; Popkewitz, 1998; Taubman, 2009) have demonstrated, language plays a large role in the ways we think about schools, teachers, and students by making certain ideas seem as common sense. In other words, to fully understand neoliberal education reforms one must not only see how it positions certain reform words, but also how it subjugates those within the U.S. public school system.

In order to focus on the interplay between teachers and neoliberal education reforms, it should be noted as to how such reforms are developed, politicized, and, implemented. As Ravitch (2010) and others (Gerson, 2012; Noddings, 2007; Taubman, 2009) have pointed out, such reforms have a historical legacy that have been shaped by the 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk,* and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation of President George W. Bush's administration.

In both cases, education reform was born out of a "crisis" in public education. The merits of

such a crisis is never really debated; it is just assumed that one exists (Apple, 2001; Noddings,

2007; Ravitch, 2010; Taubman, 2009). Indeed, the crisis is framed in such a way as to ignore the

larger societal factors within the growing inequalities of public education (Anyon, 2005; Ravitch,

2010) This is usually done by throwing nuance and context out the window in favor a blanket

indictment of the entire public education system (Noddings, 2007; Ravitch, 2010; Taubman,

2009). As a result, the major ideology behind such reforms continue on past their "death",

resulting in zombie ideas (Quiggin, 2010). Such policy born out of crisis is common in the

application of capitalist reform efforts in other areas, i.e. neoliberalism as demonstrated through

the work of Klein (2008). As Taubman (2009) writes,

> In *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism,* Naomi Klein argues that corporate interests open up new markets and try to privatize the public sphere by taking advantage of or quite literally causing a state of shock. According to Klein, a state of shock, created by nature, as in the case of hurricane Katrina, or by human planning, as occurred in Chile in 1974, is followed by "reforms," which often involve the rapid privatization of the public sector. (p. 9)

The history of neoliberal education reforms, of which Ravitch (2010) provides a clear

outline and others discuss (Taubman, 2009; Watkins, 2012b) is important. However, as the

discussion of "crisis capitalism" confirms, these reforms have become solidly entrenched in the

discourse of school reforms and in dialogues within schools and communities themselves

through a permanent placement of crisis in public education. The focus here is not so much the

history as it is identifying how these reforms typify neoliberalism and, more specifically, how

they achieve the goals of neoliberalism. To begin, Harvey (2005) offers us a working definition

of neoliberalism:

> Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by

strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defence, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit. (p. 2)

This lengthy quote illustrates neoliberalism not only as an ideological belief structure, but also a process by which these beliefs are implemented. In the scope of education reform efforts, this is an important point. To identify these reforms calls for not only an examination of the beliefs that underscore them, but also to see a larger process of neoliberalism at work. Harvey (2005) points out that the individual must be liberated so that he or she might utilize "entrepreneurial freedoms and skills" within a "institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (p. 2). The role of the state is to guarantee such a framework exists, especially in those public areas where such a free market has heretofore been nonexistent. The key is the individual, in the neoliberal sense, cannot fully be "free" unless he or she is operating in a free market system. Additionally, capital must also be free to operate in terms of private investment. The belief is that such a free market will counter all barriers and biases against any one type of person and allow free movement. In other words, the free market is a level playing field. The irony here is that such a "level" playing field can only be achieved, initially, through state intervention. Once the board is set up, the state must remove itself from the equation and let the pieces fall where they may. If we return briefly to Klein (2008), the rationale for such initial state intervention is often a crisis. Whatever the cited reasons, state intervention into a public sphere marks the beginning of a process—when specific to education

reform, this process is marked by accountability and choice.

It is acknowledged, and extremely important to note, that this literature review is mainly a theoretical one that examines neoliberalism as an ideology. As such, the focus is not on how neoliberalism is "lived out" in the actions of the proponents of education reform. However, the hope is that subsequent research will look more specifically at how neoliberalism influences the actions of not only teachers, but of those implementing education reforms. Before such an examination can take place, I believe teachers, with whom I worked, should be given the opportunity to point to the reforms that affect their practice and then trace these reforms back towards any possible influence of the discourse I outlined here. At the same time, as a critical scholar, I also fully acknowledge that an aim of this work is to point out the ways in which neoliberalism negatively affects the United States public school system and oppresses the stakeholders therein. The danger that I strove to avoid, in the latter stages of my research, was the reification of neoliberalism as a monolithic force—complexity cannot be saved solely for counter-hegemonic actions. In spite of my aim to avoid such a reification, it must be acknowledged that any subsequent analysis runs the risk due not only to a slippage of language, but my own reliance on specific theoretical metaphors.

Accountability

The paradox of neoliberalism is that while it operates under rhetoric of increased autonomy for the individual, it is often paired with an increased centralization of power as demonstrated by the New York Public School System (Ravitch, 2010). Outside of education, this can be seen in the increasing attacks on unions in states such as Wisconsin and Indiana through the stripping of collective bargaining rights. As mentioned before, autonomy for the individual is only achieved within a free market framework, which in the case of the public

sector, must be achieved through a centralized state intervention. In the case of education reforms, this is done through accountability, also referred to as an audit culture (Apple, 2001; Taubman, 2009). As Apple (2001) notes, neoliberalism "requires the constant production of evidence that you are doing things 'efficiently' and in the 'correct' way" (p. 99). If the individual is to choose the "best" product, it must have measurable means to do so. In the case of schools, these products are mainly test scores (Ravitch, 2010). However, it is not simply any test scores, but mandated standards and measurements as dictated by the state, not by the school itself. Here the paradox of neoliberalism becomes even more apparent—individuals are allowed to operate and choose freely, but only according to the guidelines as outlined by the state.

Accountability is not limited to only test scores. As Gam and Cobb (2008) note, there are several different types of accountability: bureaucratic accountability (procedural compliance), performance accountability (how students and schools perform, i.e. test scores), market accountability (choosing "good" schools over "bad," thereby pressuring the bad schools to perform or close), and professional accountability (teachers must meet certain standards of practice). These different types of accountability work together as a matrix, resulting in an auditing culture where schools' main concern becomes collecting data and meeting standards of measurement which does not always mean they are meeting the needs of students (Apple, 2001; Taubman, 2009). While the different types of accountability exist, the centerpiece is the use of standardized test scores, as they are seen as most objective. Hinchey (2010) points out that too much emphasis is placed on test scores, ignoring the research that supports a multifaceted approach to performance accountability that embraces complexity. As Welner and Molnar (2008) write, "Policymakers will have to decide whether false clarity is more valuable than messy truths" (p. 28).

The result of this accountability matrix is an auditing culture where meeting standards, both procedurally and performance-based, becomes the most important things a school does. The democratic function of schools as place of critical thinking and creativity becomes replaced with production of workers. As Apple (2001) writes,

> The ultimate result of an auditing culture of this kind is not the promised decentralization that plays such a significant role rhetorically in most neoliberal self-understandings, but what seems to be a massive recentralization and what is best seen as a process of de-democratization. . .The increasing standardization and technicization of content within teacher education programs so that social reflexivity and critical understanding are nearly evacuated from courses, the constant pressure to "perform" according to imposed and often reductive standards in our institutions of education, and similar kinds of things are the footprints that these constantly escalating pressures have left on the terrain of education. (p. 99-100)

Apple goes on to say that what develops in the discourse surrounding education reform is that, simply stated here, public is equated to bad and private to good. Such a simplified contrast ignores the important different ways in which both the public and private view liberty, pluralism, justice, equity, and democracy (Wilson, 2008). By ignoring these differences, neoliberal education reforms redefine public and private in ways that discourage debate. Regardless of these differences, the numerous failures of public schools (mostly those with high amounts of poverty and oppressed minorities) to live up to the increasingly difficult expectations placed upon them result in a public perception that they are bad for students and need to be replaced. Indeed, when NCLB was first implemented, the demand was for 100% of all students to pass standardized testing (Ravitch, 2010), a goal that ignores the basic premise of standardized testing in the first place, that standardized tests place students on a spectrum—the odds were stacked against schools with high populations of students of low socioeconomic status. It is easy to see why the word *accountability* is often used in reform rhetoric over *auditing*. Who doesn't want schools to be held accountable for teaching their students? Auditing seems to imply the worst

fears of bureaucratic oversight. However, while accountability is presented as a means to fix

schools, it mostly results in those "failing" schools' being taken over by private entities or, in

some cases, closing them (Kohn, 2012). Some might look to accountability measure as a chance

to show improvement in public schools, but this poses inherent dangers and ignores the tenets of

neoliberalism. As Kohn (2012) writes of latching on to the accountability train,

> This is a fool's errand. It overlooks the fact that the whole movement is rooted in a top-down, ideologically driven contempt for public institutions, not in a grassroots loss of faith in neighborhood schools. The demand for accountability didn't start in the living rooms; it started in places like the Heritage Foundation. After a time, it's true, even parents who think their own children's school is just fine may swallow the generalization they've been fed about the inadequacy of public education in general. But do we really think that the people who have cultivated this distrust, who holler about the need for more testing, who brush off structural barriers like poverty and racism as mere "excuses for failure", will be satisfied once we agree to let them turn our schools into test prep factories? (p. 89-90)

Indeed, the role of think tanks and private companies in the continued propagation of

these reforms has been documented (Chi, 2008; Molnar, Miron, & Urschel, 2010; Ravitch, 2010;

Saltman, 2012; Welner, 2008). Additionally, the government has gone along with these plans,

through two different presidential administrations representing both political parties, and general

bipartisan support in Congress (Gerson, 2012; Giroux, 2010). Ignoring that the concept of a

"public" school is a relatively new democratic institution in terms of U.S. history (Wilson, 2008),

neoliberal education reforms have little patience for schools dealing with poverty. At this point,

the question might be asked, "But if all of the schools are closed, or at the very least labeled as

failing, how will the freed individual choose a school?" Indeed, choice is a key part in the

neoliberal agenda, so the centralized power of the state must guarantee the free flow of private

investment into the damaged public sphere to create "better" options—choice as the concurrent

step of this process is thus assured (Buras, 2012; Watkins, 2012a).

Choice

It would be a fair assumption that "choice" in the lexicon of neoliberal reform efforts would mean a choice amongst public schools. However, to make such an assumption ignores the massive influx of private investment, and therefore, private choices. It also ignores that the majority of the money in the political debate surrounding school choice is in favor of school choice and it comes from a small contingent of think tanks and political organizations tied to private businesses (Chi, 2008). As Apple (2001) and Kohn (2012) point out, the result of an audit culture is that public institutions become labeled as bad, and privately funded options must be provided to give the consumer, in this case students and parents, options that are good. In the case of schools, these private options are mainly provided in the form of vouchers and charter schools with other choices in the form of online/virtual schools, home schooling, and different public school options, such as magnets (Gam & Cobb, 2008). In the cases of the first two, a dollar amount is attached to a student: in principle, it is the amount of tax dollars set aside for that student's education. When a child attends school, it can use that money as a resource. In the case of vouchers, this money can be used to pay for private school tuition. In the case of charter schools, the money follows the student to the school, so it can use that money as a resource. In a sense, charter schools are public schools in that they receive public money; however, they are very often started through private investment, which is looking to turn a profit (Buras, 2012; Ravitch, 2010). In both cases, vouchers and charters have had mixed results (Cobb, 2012; Raymond, 2009). Additionally, by presenting private options as inherently better, it obscures important differences between public, private, and charter schools, such as the fact that a higher percentage of teachers in public schools are certified and have Master's degrees than in charter schools (Cannata, 2008). Regardless, vouchers and charters are often presented as solutions to the public schools that have failed the accountability standards set forth.

The assumptions of school-choice are first, people will exercise their right to choose, and secondly, if they do make a choice, it will be a well-informed one. These assumptions are built upon an audit culture meant to result in a free market where choices are clear and equal. However, this foundation is nothing but shifting sands, ignoring problems inherent within a free market system and the purpose of public institutions within a democratic society. As Apple (2001) writes,

> Public institutions are the defining features of a caring and democratic society. The market relations that are sponsored by capitalism should exist to pay for these institutions, not the other way around. Thus, markets are to be subordinate to the aim of producing a fuller and thicker participatory democratic polity and daily life. It should be clear by now that a cynical conception of democracy that is "on sale" to voters and manipulated and marketed by political and economic elites does not adequately provide for goods such as general and higher education, objective information, media and new forms of communication that are universally accessible, well-maintained public libraries for all, public health, and universal health care. At best, markets provide these things in radically unequal ways, with class, gender, and especially race being extremely powerful markers of these inequalities. (p. 103-104)

And therein lies the rub. If the U.S. school system relies on free market principles, such as competition, to "fix" education, the likely result is a reification of the gross inequalities education is supposed to help overcome. Research has not shown a clear-cut positive effect on public schools as a result of more competition (Arsen & Ni, 2008). Indeed, such a reliance on free market ideals ignores the corruptibility of the marketplace that is often seen in other sectors (Giroux, 2010). There has already been evidence of general misconduct in the manipulation of test scores (Ravitch, 2010). Moreover, if parents and students do not exercise their right to "choose," what happens to the schools in which they stay? The entire choice model assumes there are better choices than the school they are currently in, to say nothing of the likelihood of them returning to the public schools they leave. Indeed, the actual percentage of parents who choose to enroll their child in another school is small (Ravitch, 2010). Additionally, the

parameters of school choice is shaped by legislation and litigation, making for a volatile

landscape wherein making an informed decision becomes difficult depending on the changing

laws in regards to choice (Mead, 2008). In short, "choice" is a false and empty promise built on

an idea that the individual must make his or her way in the world with little or no help from

public resources. Such a "survival of the fittest" strategy harkens back to the legacy of eugenics

and its influence on ideas of education and social mobility—by focusing on the failure of an

individual to exercise his or her liberty thereby improving their situation, we, as a society, can

ignore the systemic change needed to combat poverty and oppression (Winfield, 2007, 2012).

If the freedom of the individual to choose is illusory at best, "choice" does provide for the

free flow of money, in the form of private investment into the public sphere of education. By

allowing public funding to follow students to other school options, be it vouchers or charter

schools, private investment has an opportunity to make money by increasing student enrollment

and lowering costs in the form of teachers' salaries. Indeed, while the number of charter schools

has leveled off, the enrollment in these schools has increased (Molnar et al., 2010) and the

salaries of teachers in charter schools, on average, are lower than those in public schools

(Cannata, 2008). The achievement of students is not the number one concern, profitability is

(Buras, 2012). All the while, this new sphere of a public/private hybrid becomes more

segregated and full of inequality than ever before, with an increased role of business in public

education. Such an increase is detrimental to the overall growth of students (Molnar, Boninger,

& Fogarty, 2011). Indeed, this is just the beginning. As a majority of the affected public schools

are urban schools, the foray of private investment can expand into a variety of urban public areas

resulting in gentrification. As Helfenbein (2011) writes,

> The processes at work in this reorganization include a renewed interest in privatizing
> schools through the stepping stone of charter schools, a continued assault on the public

schools as "broken" and not worth the money, and impassioned efforts at "tax reform" aimed at gutting the funding for public education, all as the rhetoric of making urban areas as attractive to the global marketplace continually echoes in media outlets and statements from the statehouse. The urban core, or ghetto as some might call it, has become attractive again, resulting in escalating property taxes and economic incentives to move the people that reside there out. But instead of extending out into the next urban layer to the suburbs as previously noted by more modernist urban geographies, small pockets scattered about the city becomes the only option. (p. 322)

Helfenbein goes on to link such reform efforts to the globalization, or more simply, the influx of capital as a means of connection between markets across multiple platforms. The larger implications here cannot be ignored as attacks on the public schools in the U.S. echo other attacks on the public sector across the world (Giroux, 2010).

Potential Interactions of FSCSs and Neoliberalism

If the tenets of both FSCS and neoliberal education reforms are laid side by side, a stark contrast starts to form. Dichotomies abound, specifically: centralized control/local community involvement, accountability through testing/holistic education, and a free market of choices/school as a centerpiece of a community—all of which can be contained within the larger dichotomy found within a democracy: liberalism vs. communitarianism. While I recognize the differences between these two areas of study and perspectives on schooling, what follows is a detailed examination to see how they truly interact. However, it is important to gain a macro level understanding of the theoretical tenets of both FSCS and neoliberal education reforms in order to understand how both view schools, teachers, and students. In this spirit of such an understanding, I offer a brief examination of these contrasts to give context to the findings later in this research.

First, as outlined here, neoliberal reform requires a great deal of centralized power, usually by the government, in order to set up an audit system thereby allowing a large amount of private investment into a public sphere. On the other hand, FSCSs want to encourage

community involvement on the local level by including neighborhood social services in the curriculum of the school and reaching out to various community leaders and members for their input and support. The question is how does this ,FSCS empowered locally, react against reforms enforced by a centralized power fueled by globalization? How do FSCS teachers or students or administrators perceive accountability, choice, public/private, etc? Do the effects of globalization and neoliberalism have such an effect on the resources and services of a community that to incorporate them within schools becomes difficult? In the neoliberal framework, the centralization of power is done to generate an auditing culture, built on accountability—mostly through standardized test scores. While FSCSs are often beholden to this culture, their theoretical frameworks at least acknowledge the existence of needs beyond the students' minds. However, as mentioned before, holistic education is still only seen in service to more academic needs and, therefore, accountability measures. The central question here is one of the classic chicken versus the egg variety; does neoliberal reform force FSCS to focus ons the meet needs of students only in the service of the academic or was this case before such reforms took hold? More importantly, would a FSCS promote holistic education just for its own sake, not for the benefit of academic success?

Lastly, the sphere of public education looks vastly different under neoliberal reform efforts than in a community with a FSCS, at least theoretically. Neoliberal reform, through mostly accountability and choice, aim to create a market of schools—where students and parents can move freely, exercising choices as to what they believe, or are led to believe, to be the best ones. FSCSs look to be the centerpiece of a community where the improvement of the school means the improvement of the community and vice versa. There is fixity to the FSCS model that the movement of the brave new world of choice between public and private does not possess. In

a neoliberal context, if a school is failing, the simple solution is to close it—leaving a hole in the community. FSCSs do not see this as an option, for to leave a community is to undermine it. Conversely, the community must have faith to stay with a FSCS, especially when reform efforts make it seem that it is their duty to choose and move, shopping for schools in the same ways we buy a car or a toaster.

More differences and details come to light as this research moves forward—examining both FSCSs and neoliberalism. However, the beginnings of such an examination are here. The contrast is easy to see when the theories, principles, and frameworks of both are laid out next to each other. The challenge will be to rely on these differences, but not to accept them as hard truths or reality. They can begin to tell the story of interactions, but can never fully account for it. The starting place is here, but much more work lies ahead. As is discussed in Chapters Four and Five, the interaction between these theoretical discussions in this chapter and the material are much messier and complicated.

Ethnographic Studies

What follows in this section is a brief overview of other ethnographic studies, most involving schools. These studies employ a wide range of ethnographic methods, including interviews, surveys, written narratives, observations, etc. While the methodological is important to note, they are included here as a foundation for the specific focus of this research. In other words, these studies shaped this research by providing a map in terms of where to seek out information about Polk and its teachers. In Chapter Four, a couple of these studies are noted as methodological markers, but here the focus is on their subject matters.

While the participants in this study are teachers, several studies that focus on students are worth noting here. In the first, *Playing for Keeps* (Meier, Engel, & Taylor, 2010), the authors

focus on elementary students' interaction on the playground to discuss the ways in which play is used in a child's development. Here, the authors attempt to glimpse into the world of the students as a means to understand the world from their perspectives. Not only do the authors present compelling presentations of the children at play in the playground, they intersperse their own analysis in a way that allows for greater understanding by bringing their expertise to bear. While Meier et al. (2010) focus on the school environment, Lareau (2003) expands beyond, looking at both the family and the school to account for how the upbringing of a child is both shaped by and shapes larger societal structures. Finally, Davidson (1996) brings a poststructuralist framework to examine the complex interactions between culture, power, and identity in the lives of several students in schools over three years. Davidson posits identity as neither fixed nor forged simply, but rather a complex process in which students' racial and ethnic identities are deployed in various school settings thereby calling into question the very ability to fix such racial and ethnic definitions at all.

Studies that center on teachers provided more specific guidance for this research. While Michie's (2005) *See You When We Get There: Teaching for Change in Urban Schools* focuses more on teacher practice than this study, its inclusion of how teachers see themselves in relation to their practice is insightful. Additionally, as with this research, Michie seeks to bring the voices of teachers to the forefront in an attempt to correct their marginalization in conversations about schooling. Both McLaren (2003) and Schultz (2008) examine their own teaching practices as it relates to larger societal and schooling issues. McLaren's (2003) work positions his own teaching between schooling's hegemonic qualities of oppression and its opportunities of liberation by discussing how critical pedagogy can expand the latter, while Schultz (2008) examines how he and his students' resistance to standardized testing and high stakes

accountability is demonstrated through active political activism.

Other studies expand beyond teachers, students, and parents to examine schools and school districts from a holistic point of view. Often, these studies look for solutions to larger educational problems by focusing on a school or school model that has demonstrated some measurable success. These studies provided guidance in studying Polk as it not only was a school, but also represents a reform framework for schools. In the case of Grant's (2009) *Hope and Despair in the American City: Why There are No Bad Schools in Raleigh*, two school districts are compared vis-à-vis class and racial segregation in American public schools. In *The World We Created at Hamilton High* (Grant, 1988), the sociological history of the school was used to frame a larger conversation about schools in general. Finally, *Creating and Sustaining Arts-Based School Reform: The A+ Schools Program* (Noblit, Corbett, Wilson, & McKinney, 2009), examines how a reform model, using the Arts across the entirety of a school's curriculum, can be strengthened when it becomes infused into the school's identity.

While these studies provided a resourceful foundation, the two studies that shaped this research more than any other are *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connections* (Tsing, 2005) and *Pedagogy, Policy, and the Privatized City: Stories of Dispossession and Defiance from New Orleans* (Buras et al., 2010). As will be detailed in Chapter Three, these studies provided a target for this research in terms of its ethics, aims, and eventual goals. In the case of the former, Tsing's positiong of the global and local not as a dynamic confrontation, but rather uses the metaphor of friction to better capture how such interactions take place. In the latter, the research squarely positions itself in the neoliberal education reform discourse by placing the lives of students and teachers at the forefront to demonstrate the material effects of such reforms.

Summary of Research Questions

Given the inclusion of the literature above, it would be helpful to list here the research

questions from Chapter One as a reminder before proceeding to the Methods in Chapter Three.

- In what ways does a FSCS model support or counter neoliberal education reforms?
- What effects does neoliberal reform have on the community and vice versa?
- What are the curriculum effects of the FSCS model, neoliberal reform, and the interaction of the two?
- Do teachers demonstrate a certain level of resistance to the neoliberal reform efforts?
- How do both of these reform models and their interactions demonstrate themselves in the teachers' practice? In their interaction with their students?

Chapter Three: Methods

Heretofore, these chapters have worked to outline a theoretical framework that serves as a starting point for this research. As others (Carspecken, 1996; Creswell, 2007; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007; Madison, 2012) have pointed out, such bricklaying aids in the selection of a research method by outlining a worldview of the researcher and the theoretical lens she or he wishes to use in answering research questions. This theoretical work is more important here, as it serves to not only identify and discuss the larger societal and cultural implications of neoliberalism within schools and their surrounding communities, but also to direct the study towards the methods best suited to compliment this examination and conduct the analysis. The following sections indicate that qualitative research would go a long way to answer how neoliberal reform and teachers interact within a FSCS as it allows for:

> …inquiry into the meanings people make of their experiences; studying a person in the context of her or his social/interpersonal environment; and research where not enough is known about a phenomenon for standardized instruments to have been developed (or even to be ready to be developed). (Patton, 2002, p. 33)

Indeed, such a move towards qualitative inquiry becomes even more necessary in investigating the "lived experience of schools" (Pinar, 2004). As Creswell (2007) points out, to begin with qualitative inquiry is to only scratch the surface of the possibilities therein, and a researcher should carefully choose a specific qualitative approach. As I am interested in defining reform efforts in the terms of teachers within a given school who, at the very least, share a common work environment, an ethnographer's ability to understand that group's beliefs, values, behaviors, etc. (Creswell, 2007), is a good fit—especially given ethnography's flexibility to capture the changing specifics of any particular context. While this study itself is not an ethnography , it shares the framework of one in that it was best suited for this work and its

focus and analysis. This suitability relates back to points outlined in Chapter One: 1) To examine neoliberal education reform as hegemonic. 2) How such hegemony, as it relates to teachers, comes to represent a power dynamic which could result in oppression. 3) Highlight and honor the voices and stories of the participants of this research as a means to challenge such power dynamics and 4) Engage in a self-examination/reflection on the part of the researcher in regards to the data as it is collected.

The narrowing of a methodological framework does not end there, however. Given the theories discussed so far, this research drew on a distinction between ethnography and *critical* ethnography insofar as it sought to identify the aims and practices it sought to employ. As Creswell (2007) writes, critical ethnography "is in response to current society, in which the systems of power, prestige, privilege, and authority serve to marginalize individuals who are from different classes, races and genders" (p. 70). He goes on to say that critical ethnographers seek to speak out against these injustices to empower the oppressed, and therefore they see their work as not only scientific, but political as well. Much of the work presented here has been an attempt to identify a theoretical framework that outlines, clearly, the aims of this research as a means to fight the oppressive nature of neoliberal education reforms, much like the work within the two studies mentioned at the end of the last chapter: Tsing (2005) and Buras, et. al. (2010).

At the risk of splitting hairs, the distinction does not end at merely critical ethnography. Indeed, this work takes its cues from others (Helfenbein, 2006; Lather, 1991; Madison, 2012; Noblit, 2004; Rosaldo, 1989; Tsing, 2005) who, while they may not classify their own work as such, are taken to be postcritical ethnographers. Noblit (2004) notes, "The issues that need to be considered in conducting postcritical ethnographies include positionality, reflexivity, objectivity, and representation" (p.198). Positionality involves making explicit the aims the researcher

wishes to serve, as well as a critical look at his or her biography, hence the autobiographical

piece in Chapter One. Reflexivity recognizes the dialogical relationships between observed and

observer that recognizes the dynamic condition of both identities and contexts. Objectivity is not

a desired outcome or goal of postcritical ethnography, but rather a constant worry of the

postcritical ethnographer in recognizing her or his work as partial and positional. Finally,

representation involves recognizing the inherent pitfalls in presenting or inscribing the research

itself. All of these factors provided ethical guidance from which to operate this study, one which

was supported by the theoretical concerns of both Curriculum Theory and Cultural Studies.

As discussed earlier, the setting of a "post" can be tricky business, but in terms of this

research, such a "planting of the flag" stems from a belief that critical ethnography cannot give

voice to the voiceless effectively unless it involves a self reflexivity, akin to the notions of

Spivak as discussed by Andreotti (2011), that may include abandoning theoretical frameworks

when they prove to be problematic and identifying the researcher's positionality. In other words,

theory is a tool in the research, but not a crutch or hammer. As Carspecken (1996) writes,

> Research value orientations should not determine research findings. Orientations provide
> the reasons why people conduct their studies. They therefore have a lot to do with
> choices one must make when beginning a research project: what to study and to what
> end. They also determine how findings will be used—what to publish and what to leave
> out, who to share the knowledge with and in what way. (p. 6)

I take Carspecken's "research value orientations" to be the equivalent of the theoretical

framework presented in the preceding sections, and, as such, its inclusion in this work is

important for the reasons he outlines, but it also shares the same limitations and caveats. It is a

tenuous relationship to hold theory as extremely valuable while keeping it on a short leash as to

prevent theorizing about the findings before the data is even collected—especially in this work,

as the research questions changed quickly given the findings as they began to present

themselves.   This relationship is further elucidated by Lather's (1991) conception of research as praxis and theory's place in a postpostivist research paradigm. She writes,

> Theory adequate to the task of changing the world must be open-ended, nondogmatic, speaking to and grounded in the circumstances of everyday life. It must, moreover, be premised on a deep respect for the intellectual and political capacities of the disposed. This position has profound substantive and methodological implications for postpositivist, change-enhancing inquiry in the human sciences. (p. 55)

But why make the distinction of "critical" at all? Indeed, it could be argued that the move to a more critical framework has become embedded within the larger field of ethnography (see Rosaldo, 1989; Tsing, 2005), and so to classify a work as "critical" might be redundant. However, as previous sections have discussed, the field of curriculum studies, especially in the reconceptualized/postreconceptualized vein, tries to invoke the world, culture, society, outside of the classroom, school, public education. This work looked to tie itself to such an invocation by claiming the critical as a means to look beyond the typical conversations that usually surround education and curriculum research. In other words, the choice of "critical" is not taken lightly because it not only makes claims to this work as an ethnography, but also as a reconceptualized curriculum studies and cultural studies work as well.

All of the aforementioned conversation as it relates to critical and postcritical might seem esoteric until one takes into account its relationship to the study presented here in these pages. While the initial intent of the research set out to specifically highlight power, oppression, and resistance—therefore adhering to the principle of "critical"—the reliance on the idea of postcritical self-reflection on the part of the researcher vis-à-vis the findings as they emerged required that the focus shift from not simply power, oppression, and resistance to an attempt at a more complicated understanding using the theoretical metaphors in Chapter Five that fall under the concept of embodiment. In other words, the findings themselves forced a questioning of the

concepts that a "critical" stance assumes, and therefore the research had to adapt.

Indeed, as Pinar (2004) notes, the field of curriculum studies is a "complicated conversation" where critical theory holds an important place in the study of curriculum. As this dissertation noted earlier, this research seeks to combine this complicated conversation with cultural studies by expanding the object of research beyond curriculum to include culture itself. As others (Giroux, 2010; Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1996a, 1996c; Helfenbein, 2003, 2006) have noted, to place culture as the object of analysis within research is to invoke not only the use of theory, but also the use of theory as it has been outlined above. As discussed earlier, Hall's (1996a) conception of Gramci's "organic intellectual" as the careful wielder and interpreter of theory further insists that to use the word "critical" is to take it seriously and carefully.

It is helpful to return to the two studies mentioned at the end of the previous chapters as they relate to the thoughts here about critical ethnographies. Tsing (2005) posits that too often, ethnographies reinforce the dichotomy of the homogenous global versus the heterogeneous local when examining issues of power and oppression. Below is a lengthy quote from Tsing (2005), and I include it here as it shaped the majority of this research:

> Analytic tools from which to think about the global picture are still rudimentary. Many ethnographers find ourselves with data about how a few people somewhere react, resist, translate, consume, and from here it is an easy step to invoke distinctions between local reactions and global forces, local consumption and global circulation, local resistance and global structures of capitalism, local translations and the global imagination. I find myself doing it. Yet we know that these dichotomies are unhelpful. They draw us into an imagery in which the global is homogeneous precisely because we oppose it the heterogeneity we identify as locality. By letting the global appear homogeneous, we open the door to its predictability and evolutionary status as the latest stage in macronarratives. We know the dichotomy between the global blob and local detail isn't helping us. We long to find cultural specify and contingency within the blob but we can't figure out how to find it without, once again, picking out locality. (p. 58)

Tsing goes on to say that if we think in terms of scale as opposed to dichotomously, we might be able to better understand how the global and local interact within specific contexts.

Furthermore, she invokes Hall's concept of articulation to better understand how global structures play out in the everyday lives of individuals. This is no accident, as Tsing (1994) sees a direct link between cultural studies and ethnography. When a researcher begins to think in terms of scale and uses articulation, the focus becomes less about the ways in which the global and local oppose each other and more about the friction contained within such interactions. In other words, instead of reinforcing dichotomies of global versus local, one is free to examine how universals operate on ever more complex heterogeneous levels of scale.

So for the purposes of this study, the criteria chosen were teachers within a specific high school, and the subsequent research looked to examine friction as neoliberal education reforms impacted their lives. In the spirit of Buras (2010) this research offered up the stories of teachers as countering the claims of neoliberal education reforms, but as Buras points out, great caution must be used in how best to present those stories. The cautions and guidance of both Tsing and Buras resulted in a balance that provided a place for teachers' counterstories and, at the same time, providing such stories with a heuristic that allows from critical examination while not automatically assuming these stories as inherently heterogeneous or resistant.

Participants

James K. Polk Community High School[18]

James K. Polk Community High School (JPCHS), sometimes referred to as Polk High in this dissertation, is a public high school on the near eastside of the state capitol and part of the public school system therein. It was opened as James K. Polk High School in 1927. Due to budget cuts and shrinking enrollments the school was closed in 1995. In 1998, a grassroots community movement made up of several community organizations—including the alumni of

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[18] Pseudonyms will be used to protect privacy of individuals in the study

the school, the local university, and various religious and social groups—came together with several goals in mind in revitalizing the neighborhood surrounding the closed school. Among those goals was a plan to reopen the school. In 2000, the school was reopened as a middle school, and in 2001 it added a high school to become JPCHS.[19]

During the year of this study, the total enrollment of the school was 1037 students, with 538 in the high school and 499 in the middle school. In the high school the demographic data was 36.5% African-American, 32.2% Latino/a, 26.6% White, 4.2% multiracial, and 0.3% Native American. 73.2% of the high school students were on the free and reduced lunch program. The middle school's demographic broke down as follows: 50.7% African American, 25.5% Latino/a, 18.2% White, 5.4% Multiracial, and 0.2% Native American. 77.6% of the students in the middle school were on the free and reduced lunch program.

Teachers

Six teachers agreed to participate in this study. Teachers were chosen in three ways. The first was reaching out to teachers who had been participants in previous evaluative studies I conducted at the school in years earlier—of the four teachers contacted, three agreed to take part in this research. Two of the participants were referred to me by a professor, Susan Smith, who has a close connection to the school serving as a liaison between Polk and the local university. An email was sent to the entire staff of Polk informing them of the research and asking if anyone would like to participate—one teacher responded to this email and chose to participate.

Demographic information about the participants in this study is presented generally, rather than specific to individual teachers. This is done to protect the privacy of the individuals.

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[19] The information in this paragraph was taken from the school's website, but has been left out of the reference section to maintain privacy of the participants.

Specifics of each individual will only be discussed in Chapter Four as they relate to their own views on teaching and life. The age of the participants ranged from 25 to 57; all participants self-identified as white or Caucasian. Four of the participants were male and two were female. The participants' teaching experience ranged from two years to fifteen with their years at Polk ranging from one to eleven. All teachers possessed at least a bachelor's degree, with one having a Master's degree. Four of the teachers received their teaching license at the time of their degree, with two others returning to school and earning their license in a transition to teaching program. Teachers had licenses and taught in the following areas: English, Social Studies, Math, and Special Education. Four of the teachers had job experience outside of teaching. At the end of the 2012-2013 school year, three teachers would still be teaching at Polk in the following year, one got a job at a different school, one left to pursue a higher degree in education, and one left the teaching profession completely.

Data Collection and Analysis

Once the dissertation committee approved the research proposal in October of 2012, the formal Institutional Review Board (IRB) process began. The IRB asked for a letter of support from the administration at Polk. While the principal of Polk expressed her support, she explained that such a letter could only be obtained once permission was granted from the district. On November 9, 2013 the district Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment informed me that the district would not approve the research. At this point, working with the aforementioned professor, Susan Smith, my advisor, and the Dean of the School of Education where I worked, we made several entreaties to the district's superintendent to reconsider my request. On January 28th, 2013, the district reversed its decision and allowed Polk's principal to approve my request. This severely impacted the timeline for this research and limited the

amount of observations and interview originally planned.

Once the letter of support was obtained, I was granted IRB approval. However, in the IRB's approval statement were strict instructions to limit my research to the teachers at Polk—more specifically, to contain my observations of the classrooms to the teachers themselves. This restriction undercut the ability to conduct complete observations that captured the entirety of the classroom environment.

Data collection and analysis was based mainly on the framework as outlined by Carspecken (1996) in terms of observation and interview design. It also borrowed heavily from other sources (Creswell, 2007; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2005; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007; Madison, 2012; Patton, 2002) to aid in the observations and interviews.

Instruments

Observations

Observations were conducted for one to three hours for each teacher depending on their availability. During these observations, which were limited to only the teachers themselves, several periods were observed. Additionally, teachers were followed from one class to the next if they changed classrooms, and during breaks between classes during their hall duty. During the classes, I positioned myself towards the back of the classroom, but always sat at a desk amongst the students. Careful consideration was paid to the classroom itself, noting the desk arrangements, location of teaching materials, and student work and/or other things on the classroom walls. Observations were written on a four columned table (Appendix A) that noted the time, the current activity, observations, and reflections. The observations column was a detailed description of the teachers' activities while the reflection column was used to note any questions and reflections I had.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Due to the strict limitations dictated by the IRB, and because the first few interviews shifted the focus of this research away from classroom practice, interviews became the primary source of data for this study. A general open-ended interview protocol (Appendix B) was used that allowed for flexibility in asking specific questions as they related to the teacher interview at the time. The flexibility also allowed the interview to adapt to the context of the interview itself. Each teacher was interviewed at least once from forty-five to sixty-four minutes depending on her or his schedule. One teacher was interviewed twice. Additionally, a focus group of five of the teachers was conducted for seventy-six minutes using the protocol in Appendix C. Again, this protocol was designed to allow for flexibility in terms of the natural evolution of the focus group. Participants were recorded using a personal recording device. Recordings were then transcribed with key personal information omitted during the transcription process. Interviews were conducted from March to August of 2013.

Participant Generated Data Point

It was the intent of this research to have data from a third point, hopefully one that would be generated by the participants themselves. In my first individual meetings with participants, I expressed my desire to for them to contribute to this study with their own data, perhaps a journal or some other writing as they deemed appropriate. This was done specifically to remain within the critical framework for this research as a means to recognize the meaning making of participants and reaffirm a commitment to the their voices. While participants were initially interested in such a possibility, there was very little desire expressed beyond these initial discussions. Participants were asked to contact me if they had thoughts about this third data point. The goal was to remain vague in design and hold back from concrete formalities in this

realm as I hoped it would be an organic process, relying upon the enthusiasm and interest of the participants themselves. Additionally, as a former teacher, I was mindful that my interviews and observations would already take up their valuable time and did not want to intrude further. Ultimately, by remaining vague in my own desires and instructions, I might have influenced the participants' willingness to generate this type of data and a more formal request and process might have yielded better results. Furthermore, after an initial analysis of the data from interviews, it was determined to be sufficient to continue on with the research.

Analysis

While conducting initial interviews, preliminary analysis of the data narrowed the focus of the study from broadly looking at teacher practice as it related to neoliberal education reform at a full service community school to specifically looking at the changes that occurred during the school year—more precisely, the influx of new students into the school. With the new focus, less time was spent observing classrooms and more time conducting interviews. Using the qualitative analysis program, Dedoose ©, the data was then coded using both emic and etic codes. As detailed by Creswell (2007), emic codes come from the data itself while etic codes are developed outside of the data by the researcher to capture specific themes. The etic codes were partly designed with both Madison's (2012) and Carspecken's (1996) discussion of higher level codes that tried to address larger abstract/theoretical issues and concerns.

Coding Results

While the primary concern of the coding data is not occurrence rates and/or co-occurrence rates, it is helpful to use such numbers as a means to sort through the data initially. With this in mind, Table 1 shows the number of times each code was used across all data points (observations, interviews, and focus groups) and all participants. Codes in blue are etic codes,

those chosen by the researcher before coding began and the ones in black are emic codes, one

added as the coding process went on. A coding tree was used to organize the codes (Appendix

D) with master and sub-codes. Sub-codes are noted by their parent code in parentheses.

Table 1

Code Descriptions and Occurrences

Code	(N)
Gender and Social Orientation (Implicit Theories Sub-Code)	5
Public Schools/Education	10
Middle School vs. High School	13
Parents	13
Teacher Turnover	21
Transiency	22
Race	24
Structures	27
Class Size	28
School Administration	28
Life and Time (Implicit Theories Sub-Code)	29
Metaphors	31
JPCHS kids vs. New Kids	32
Agency	35
Personness (Implicit Theories Sub-Code)	36
Poverty	36
District Central Office	37
Positive (Instruction Sub-Code)	47
Behavior/Discipline Problems	50
FSCS Model	54
Social Theory (Implicit Theories Sub-Code)	57
Negative (Instruction Sub-code)	65
Instruction	77
District Context	81
Change	90
New Students	106

Ed Reforms	126
Classroom Context	127
Teacher Traits	170
Education, Learning, Curriculum, Etc. (Implicit Theories Sub-Code)	186
School Context	214

Table 2 below shows the top six (with the bottom two tied at 59) co-occurrences or when two codes were found in the same excerpt. First is listed the name of both codes, followed by the number of times the two codes were used in the same excerpt. Etic codes are in blue text and emic codes are in black.

Table 2	
Code Co-Occurrences	
Code Names	(N)
School Context x Education, Learning, Curriculum, Etc. (Implicit Theories Sub-Code)	89
School Context x New Students	82
Ed Reforms x Education, Learning, Curriculum, Etc. (Implicit Theories Sub-Code)	79
School Context x Change	72
School Context x District Context	59
School Context x Ed Reforms	59

Ethical Considerations and Timeline

As Madison (2012) notes, ethics should be a vital consideration in any research, especially critical ethnography. More specifically, the combination of Curriculum Theory and Cultural Studies provides the ethical foundation from which this study is conducted. With these things in mind, several steps, along with the guidelines of IRB, were used to guard against any ethical concerns. Any identifying characteristics of the school and participants were changed to protect their privacy and anonymity. Additionally, all documents, recordings, and

transcriptions were saved on a secure hard drive. Names were changed at the time of

transcribing the recordings. The timeline of this study was severely impacted by the long

approval process with the school district. As such, observations were conducted and interviews

were conducted concurrently from March to August 2013.

Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter contains data collected from March to August of 2013 at Polk Community High School. The goal of this chapter is to not only present the data, but also explain how it led to the more specific focus of research. The chapter will start with character studies of the participants and then move to excerpts from major codes.

Character Studies

When the focus on this study became very specific to one year at Polk Community High School, it was paramount that the identities of the teachers were protected, especially given that the information they shared might be seen as damning of the administration, the district, and the community. Within the climate previously referenced, in which the study faced stiff opposition and was almost not approved (see Chapter Three), it seemed prudent to keep demographic data very general (as presented in Chapter Three). Conversely, treating the participants as an unrecognizable, homogenous collective would effectively silence their individual voices in the process. What follows is an attempt to give characteristics to individuals that define them from each other. Given the difficulty that specificity plays in protecting privacy, such an attempt should not be seen as totalizing these teachers. Additionally, my presence in the classroom surely affected how they taught on those days and the interviews conducted can only scratch the surface of the complexity an individual possesses. In other words, for the purposes here, these characteristics should be taken as a small amount of individualization, but not a complete characterization. What follows are character studies for each participant—humble attempts at capturing their idiosyncrasies for the benefit of their perspectives, feelings, and theories.

Ms. Smith

Ms. Smith teaches three different classes in her subject area during six periods per day.

Her day usually starts around 6:00 am. When asked if she started her day looking forward

positively or negatively, she replied:

> *Um, I say neutral. (Laughs) Neither, for the most part, when I have classes that I have a lot of behavior problems in, then I'm kind of dreading the day, but now? that we're in April, [I] kind of got that under control, so, I'm neutral and just…pretty much thinking about what I need to be doing.*

In the observation of Smith's class, it gave all the appearances of a well-run classroom,

with students working collaboratively and productively—everyone humming along as if in

perfect harmony. Smith would move back and forth between leading the class in exercises and

moving around working one on one with students. Smith seemed to be exerting a lot of energy

in the classroom. The pace of her classroom was consistently fast-moving, with her students

keeping up with her and vice-versa. The pattern of her teaching was repetitive, but effective—

she would lead the class in an activity, let them work together in groups as she moved around,

helping, then she would review the activity with the entire process starting again. This is not to

say that the students were always quiet and completely focused on their tasks; however, while

socializing was present, it was subordinate to the classroom work. And while Smith did not have

the same level of familiarity with her students that the other teachers do, they were extremely

comfortable with her. When asked about this achieved balance, Smith did not have any hard

answers, but contributed it to learning over time:

> *I think I'm more relaxed this year than I have been, ever, about behavior and I don't know if that's just because I'm so tired. It probably took me, to achieve like where I felt really kind of good about behavior management, maybe about a year and a half. But I have noticed, especially recently, I've been willing to ignore more, like, I almost think I'm doing it [letting student behavior slide] too much. Like, when you walked in?—they finished their test 10 minutes early. Me, this time last year, would have been in a straight panic, like, "Oh my god." And now I'm just like, it will be okay.*

This is a maturation process that, perhaps, all teachers go through.   However, what is interesting

to note in Smith's case is that such a process determined which student behaviors were actually

disruptive or problematic and which weren't, contributing to her overall sanity as a teacher.

Letting students talk in class didn't hurt their performance or her teaching. She continued:

> *I mean I just have frank conversations with them, homework matters almost nothing, classwork matters very little, as far as your grade goes. You know, you copy someone's homework and I don't catch it, okay good for you, but you fail the test, that's what really matters.*

Smith had achieved a fine balance between letting the students work in a way they enjoyed, while at the same time encouraging them to stay on task not by disciplining or regulating their conversations, but by emphasizing what work was important in class. A level of trust was built up in this way of both relaxing the control over the students and emphasizing the expectations. When asked about her workload at school, she replied:

> *The workload is so heavy, so…it's…People didn't understand how drained I was at the end of the day. I need like a month to stop twitching.*

The "twitching" reference alludes to not only stress, but also an unnatural level of stress that affects her immensely. Additionally, Smith fails to see or feel any sympathy from those outside of the teaching profession. She often talked about the grind of the day to day wearing on her. This, combined with the pressures she places on herself make, for a taxing environment, one that she was not sure how long she could endure. She continues:

> *I mean when I taught Freshman English I cried on the day of ECA [End of Course Evaluations] exams, not cause I was sad—they did awesome, just, the stress was over.*

The cathartic effect the ECA had on Smith emphasizes her care for her students, but perhaps more so, the level of importance she put on her job. Such importance carries an emotional weight, unique in that it was not about accomplishing a task, but to know that the stress associated with it was over. When asked why she stayed as long as she has, she spoke of her seniors. Smith had pushed them through classes, making them the first group of students in the most advanced class she had ever had.

Well, I watched them grow up. So, I had them in Freshman English, so for the most part, most of them were like my worst behavioral kids, so they…(I) cried many tears over multiple kids in that class, which they will randomly bring up, which is nice. Um, and I don't know, they were all, I fast-tracked them. So, to be part of that is…is something I'm proud of. So I wanted to see that through.

Perhaps here is why these individual character studies are important—teachers care about their students, but in Smith's case, the relationship she cultivated with her students was singular enough for her to want to see their education through to the end. And while Smith spoke of these rewarding moments, in the end she said, "I'm tired. I mean, that's…that's something to be proud of, but then it's just like, it's starting all over again and it gets old." Smith saw no end game to her teaching experience; it is never going to "get better" or easier. The only way it might is if Smith exerted less effort in her teaching, but this is a compromise that she was unwilling to make. The level of expectations placed upon Smith, not only by others, but by herself as well, seem so weighty that it is a wonder she has lasted as long as she has. While some might say that Smith should continue on with her teaching in spite of the almost impossible odds stacked against her, it is not reasonable for her to expect some level of improvement or support from somewhere else? While Smith sees progress in her own students from year to year, she doesn't see it in other quarters of the school and this is a reasonable expectation when she is working as hard as she does.

Mr. Garvey

Mr. Garvey grew up in a neighborhood not far removed, both geographically and economically, from the one in which Polk Community High School sits. Because of his upbringing, Garvey felt a certain connection to the students at the school and often spoke with a certain level of frankness not seen in other teachers. When discussing helping students at Polk, he said:

I will do anything I can in the world to help you, but at some point I have almost done too much for them. And I think we started noticing that a little bit when our fist batch of kids started going to college. They were waiting for somebody to give them stuff. That is not the way the world works, guys. I am a very big believer in tough love. It is like, guys, you know "You can't get back up if you don't fall down" kind of idea. And you know you look at what we have done, we fill out your application for you, we did your FASFA (The Free Application for Federal Student Aid) for you, we give you all these school supplies. Ok, so what vested interest does the parent(s) and the kid have in this? If it is just you and I doing everything for them, where is their buy-in? Where is their, "Hey, wait a minute I have something to lose if this fails"? And I don't want that to sound mean or cold hearted or anything but like I said being a kid that grew up, you know, neighborhood stuff, I didn't have somebody, I mean, that safety net is like, "Whoa."

Several questions come to mind here: What students does Garvey base these ideas upon? Why is there so much resentment in terms of helping his students? How do his definitions of race and class come into play? In an attempt to get answers to these questions, Garvey was pushed on his conservative idea of tough love, more specifically, that my own experience as an upper class white student afforded me the same type of help he is mentioning. Garvey responded by mentioning a time when a student was suspended, but her or his parent sent her or him to school anyway:

And I am not saying don't help. Don't misunderstand me. I just look at some of it…like for example with discipline last year. Your kid gets suspended, so parent conference, ok? They were letting them get away with the parent would put the kid on the bus [and send him to school in spite of the suspension] and then call and say, "Well, I can't get there," and they would let them back in school. Like no, no, no. Make them come to school, inconvenience them so that the next time something happens that parent is like, "Wait a minute. No, I have to give up my time, my job."

Garvey's point about the discipline problems seems valid, and he is clearly frustrated by this type of allowance in terms of behavior problems and lack of follow through for discipline. The frustration is great enough to lead him to believe that the school's (and society's) willingness to, in him mind, coddle students is directly linked to his example.

From classroom observations, it does not seem as though Garvey has stopped caring or helping his students. In my observation of Garvey's class, he was constantly working with

students, taking them aside to address outbursts in class, and generally working hard to control

one of the more chaotic classrooms I observed. Garvey strived to walk a fine line— keeping

students engaged while not pushing so hard that it shut them down completely. Social and

teaching interactions were often mixed, with Garvey asking students about their days and other

aspects of their lives while, at the same time, helping them with their work. It often seemed that

Garvey was playing several roles to his student—not just teacher, but also confidant, parent, and

friend. This seemed to be echoed when he described what was he was thinking about when his

day started:

> *I guess I have never really thought about what I am thinking. It is just kind of, you know my first initial is I always look at my calendar and go "Ok. Do I have conferences today?' This year I have got another kid that I am working with right now, he has been here now 5 years. His mom just passed away in December. So you know every morning a lot of it is "Ok, how is he doing today you know?" Did he remember to take a shower last night? You know did he actually eat or did he just have ketchup and barbeque sauce for dinner again last night? So you know just, honestly I would say the majority of what clouds on my mind when I first walk in the building is more nonacademic stuff and how it is going to affect the day.*

For someone who believes in "tough love," Garvey's caring obsession with his students'

lives outside of the classroom seems out of place. And while Garvey may have believed that the

school does too much for its students, Garvey seemed dedicated to helping his students not only

with the academic, but with the non-academic as well. This dual role is taxing, as similar to Ms.

Smith, Garvey speaks of the grind of teaching. This is not hard to believe from the observation

of his classes, exhausting to just watch, let alone teach. During my observations, Garvey's

students were constantly trying to push him to react through yelling and general disruptions and,

yet, I saw him lose patience only once when he said, in reference to block scheduling in which

classes were longer than the more common sixty-minute timeframe, "90 minute classes are

horrible, put that in your research." When asked how he feels at the end of the day, he replied:

Tired. (laughter) What worked, what didn't, what do we need to change. What are things I need to make sure to say, "Hey, nice job" with kids. Again, academic but I would say just based on, just the nature of education now—I would say a good half, at least a quarter or half of it is more that social work side of the piece. I think that any teacher who has really has been doing this a while will admit about one third to one fourth of our job is social work.

Even with a workload that seems to consume most of his time, especially given the social concerns of his students, and frustration with what he sees as a society who "gives" too much to students, Garvey seems to be in for the long haul. He spoke several times about his belief in the school and the FSCS model,

I am so stubborn, I am a true believer. I believe in the neighborhood. If I didn't believe in this, I had job offers in [another city], other places. I could have left [urban city]. And said "Ok, bye" and never come back. I chose to come back. I always love it when you get people outside the district, "Oh, so you are stuck in [Polk's school district]?" No, I chose to come here. This was a very conscious choice. [This neighborhood] specifically was a very conscious choice for me.

In the end, this stubbornness and "true believer" self-identity might be truer to who Garvey than his talk of a "safety-net" society. The frustrations Garvey feels in regards to his job and his students might be misdirected because he is confronted on a daily basis with aspects of the job that are beyond his control. In the end, Garvey believes that while the difficulties of his job wear on him, he is in a place where he thinks he can make the most difference in students lives and sees those who doubt his choice in where he works as a reaffirming challenge that what he is doing is important work.

Ms. Borkowski

Much like Mr. Garvey's, Ms. Borkowski classes were at times unruly and chaotic, but her method of dealing with them was slightly different than his. Ms. Borkowski would often times refer to herself as crazy, and while this was, perhaps, hyperbole on her part, her teaching style can be described as high-energy—even frenetic at times. This style not only seemed to endear

her to students, but also made for some effective teaching. Her class was at a fever pitch when she came in the room from hall duty and she immediately matched its intensity and volume. It's a tenuous balance between the students' seemingly accepting her feverish pace, but never completely giving total control over to her. This might be by design on Borkowski's part as she often eschews traditional methods of classroom and behavior management due to her fear it will shut students down from learning. And while the level of intensity is not the same during interviews, the hyperactivity of her personality remains—whether this is a product of her teaching environment or an inherent personality trait is unclear, but she does speak to some level of craziness in describing her typical day:

> *Each day, I mean, we have no clue how each day is going to go. We have it planned out okay, but we'll have the kids doing this back and forth, but this, the energy between the kids, what happened to them since they were last in class plays a huge part on what's going on with us. These guys have a lot outside issues that come with them to school and that affect every minute of their school day, which sometimes is a huge battle. Um, just to get them to put that to the side and get them to focus on what we're doing.*

Similar to other teachers, such an unpredictable environment can be wearing on an individual and Borkowski is no exception:

> *Some days do go better than others. Like today was sort of a hit and miss. With what we were doing and it's to the point of sort of exhaustion and frustration, like, do we want to keep fighting and trying or do I just want to start and go, okay, were just doing nothing but worksheets, sit there and be quiet, shut up.*

Borkowski goes on to say that by the end of the day she is thinking about the local bar just around the corner. So, why keep doing it? As with the previous teacher, despite the demanding nature of the work, Borkowski sees benefit and reward as captured by the exchange below:

> *I: Why are you coming back?*

> *Borkowski: I love the abuse. I have that ingrained S&M part of me, like every good teacher does.*

> *I: I mean you could get a job somewhere. I mean you could go to a township school.*

Borkowski: I've been told when…Polk was the 13th school I interviewed with. The other schools that I had interviewed with, they were, they noticed that I had spent—I got this comment a few times—that I've had too much social interaction with the kids. Like, I'm more socially geared than I am educational geared for them. I was told to maybe go find a different profession. Because of everything I was involved with the students. And I'm realizing how afterhours and making those connections, especially these guys, was a huge impact.

I: Right. But that…they didn't want that.

Borkowski: Nope, they wanted someone who's going to sit there, tell the kids to do this, you know, the, the high and tight sort of teacher instead of what we have to be here which is everything.

Borkowski presents an interesting juxtaposition between urban schools like Polk and non-urban or suburban schools. The latter wasn't looking for a teacher to be anything more than a teacher, sticking straight with the academic. Borkowski sees her role as a teacher as more than just the academic because she sees it as beneficial to her students. Polk allows, or perhaps requires, teachers to take a role outside of the academic, one that with which Borkowski seems comfortable. The conversation continues:

I: And do you like being everything?

Borkowski: It's definitely a little less boring. I got in trouble quite a few times during student teaching for not doing the "Okay, if you know the answer raise your hand" [or] "Alright, everyone I need you to line up against the wall and be extremely quiet; if I don't think you have your stuff together we're not going to lunch." You know, getting these guys to quiet down out of, when someone else is talking is basic respect sort of deal.

I: Is what?

Borkowski: Basic respect, you know, when you are in a group someone else talks or you know do you talk when your preacher's talking. No. Well why are doing it here? You know, it's sort of that, oh, yeah, mmmm, mmm. Keeping those connections going is the big part of it.

Indeed, Borkowski's interactions with the students are similar to Garvey's in that they are a mix of both social and teaching. However, in the case of Borkowski, such interactions are done to keep the material relevant to the lives of her students. Borkowski sees the ways in which

she is asked to manage her classroom as ultimately ineffective, because it does nothing to foster the relationships between herself and her students. Alternatively, Borkowski sees cultivating respect from her students, as opposed to demanding it, as the more effective means to garner some level of control in her classroom. This may account for the fact that the hectic level her classroom contained as such a process is a much more negotiated than other forms of classroom management styles. Additionally, Borkowski seems to believe that in her role of teacher, which encompasses more than just academics, this give and take in terms of allowing students to participate in a more informal manner allows for more effective teaching. In other words, Borkowski will take her students interacting with her in a unruly, chaotic manner as opposed to no interaction at all.

Mr. Perry

From observations of his class, it would be easy to say that Mr. Perry is comfortable in his role as teacher. Perry looked the part of a teacher, wearing a tie on most days and displaying a level of authority that calls for respect, but does not demand it. The following excerpts from observation notes demonstrate a level of calmness, not only in his classrooms, but also in his own teaching style and personality:

> *Observation Notes: Perry gently prods his students to work and as such their work effort ebbs and flows. Perry's demeanor is pretty mellow. Never gets too hot, but doesn't really have to. He is casual and relaxed. I know Perry is one of the longer serving teachers here. His conversation about the signing of field trip forms reminds me of this. There is a battle worn feeling to his talk and when he talks to students there is a warlike camaraderie to their conversations. Perry is quick to use humor and sarcasm to deflate situations and keep it light. Perry remains calm and collected for most of class. Perry moving around class is pretty consistent: moves around class, returns to desk, repeat. Perry does something I used to do in my own teaching. He will tell students to be quiet but talk to some of the more socially active students to guide their conversations eventually back to the relevant classroom discussions. This is a somewhat effective technique as it allows him to keep them in check as much as he can. Overall, a pretty relaxed day. Perry's calm and causal demeanor carries over into all of his classes. Students seem to like him and he seems to like them. He is effective in terms of classroom*

management and keeping students somewhat engaged.

Perry's experience is evident, as he seems to have a certain level of ease with the day to day of his classroom and the school. In interviews, he often talked as if he has seen it all and looks back on his time here with a certain level of nostalgia, "Most of those years were me closing my door and doing what I knew was right in my room. And trying to do what needed to happen…sometimes failing." When taking the long view of his time at Polk, Perry would spend some time discussing a period of two years in which, he felt, the school was doing fairly well in educating students. However, as he notes, such times seemed fleeting and are generally outnumbered by periods of instability. At one point in an interview, Perry was wistful, almost sad as he described this brief period:

> *But once it [the new school-wide reforms] got going, it did become more teacher-driven and more teacher-owned. And that's where we were going to and then it (whistles) stopped; because at first a staff doesn't know what they need. We don't know, we don't, you know, we're not sure. It's so big and unwieldy, we don't know which way to go and those two years really taught us how to do things. You know, this year we were kind of halted and were told to take 18 steps back and you know, just…(trails off).*

Perhaps solidified over years of teaching, he seems to have developed a teaching method that works for him and his students:

> *Once the day is over I spend my time recollecting all the stuff and updating my data. I open a day with opening questions and those questions are always review questions for stuff that we've learned. And I collect that data everyday. Just kind of take it, it's like a barometer of where the kids need help. And the questions they need help on become the questions for the quizzes on Monday. Then the questions that they don't do so well on become the opener question for that week. So they kind of feed themselves and then those Monday morning, I call them mastery quizzes, will eventually become longer and longer, all year long, until they become the final examine. So the idea is a kid might have seen a topic question, in, you know, 18 different ways by the time we get to the end, for the final exam, so they've really, they've thoroughly answered that topic as many ways as they possibly can up to the end. And, that has made a huge impact on how well my kids do on standardized tests for Chemistry.*

Perry's teaching is marked by this sort of routine, with little touches of approval for his students

to keep them engaged. It would be fair to say that he did not push his students, but gently

prodded them forward. As mentioned before, Perry was familiar with his students and they with

him. He seems to understand the type of kid that attends Polk. Because Perry has been here

long and teacher turnover has been high, he is a close to a stalwart mainstay that Polk has. In the

excerpt below, when Perry was asked about giving out stamps on papers in class, these

characteristics come through, including an example of one of Perry's firm beliefs in what works

in education and what doesn't:

> *So, if they've done three out of the five questions, I give them a stamp. That just tells me when I go back and grade it, if they, it's kind of a compliance thing. This kid was on task and bam, you get a stamp. And they want that stamp. They want that stamp because they know it makes a difference between four points and five points. Kids love stamps. I don't know why. They just do. That's my checking to see if you're being a good little human. My good little human stamp.*

This is not to say that Perry's classes were smooth sailing throughout. Even though it is

not within the parameters of his subject area, he decided to include lessons on how to cite

properly in MLA format. He often refers to his students in a lovingly, but mocking way perhaps

a product his informal and affable interactions he has with students, often discussing pop culture

and sports. In the excerpt below, the frustration in teaching MLA comes through, but also his

beliefs in terms of what his students need and his incredulity at their shortcomings:

> *You know, I'm beating my head against the wall for teaching them how to do MLA citations. Because I feel like that is huge, if you are college bound and you don't know how to write the basics of a research paper and how to cite your sources on a most basic program, your freshman year, you are going to struggle in that W131 [College Freshman English] class, you're not going to make it. MLA might not be the format that you're going to use in college, in fact it most likely won't be. It will probably be APA or Chicago. But you will start with MLA and it's so much easier to go from there and move on, because it's the same idea, it's just the format that changes. It's so hard, they, I had them read an article about plagiarism and they were like, "Wait, I've been guilty of this all my life?" Yes, yes you have, Internet junkie.*

This last excerpt is telling because while Perry can come across as relaxed in his

teaching, it is not due to a lack of effort or the level of thought he puts into it. In other words, the ease to which Perry teaches and manages his classes comes from experience and his natural abilities as a teacher, but as this last excerpt shows, it is counterbalanced by a desire to try new things and add something new. This does not mean that his teaching is frustration-free. As Perry noted, due to his relative longevity at Polk, he has been around long enough to see his share of troubles both in his practice and due to changes at the school. He has seen successes turn to failures. Furthermore, he adds lessons into his work that make it more challenging because he believes it does right by his students. Perry's even keel temperament can only help deal with such challenges, but one wonders how long he can last.

Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones is a veteran teacher who seems to have experienced all the facets of public school teaching. At one point, Jones left the teaching profession only to return several years later. He has taught in a variety of settings and seen various education reforms come and go. His level of exhaustion and work is on par with the other teachers in this study—perhaps more so given that he works with the students who are on the lower end of the achievement spectrum. The classes of Jones I observed would certainly exhaust most teachers, full of interruptions with Jones and his co-teacher in a constant struggle to keep students engaged and on-task. Their work was admirable, as both rarely would show signs of frustration with the students, constantly remaining on an even keel regardless of the distractions. Jones said,

> *Oh, I'm usually, by the end of the week, I'm exhausted. I get in here, pretty much every morning, by 6 o'clock. And it's a rare night, that I get out of here by 5:30. So, I'm here usually 11, 11 ½ hours and I still take stuff home to do on the weekends. Sometimes, sometimes it's grading, sometimes it's tutoring.*

Jones' teaching style is similar to Garvey, a lot of movement around the classroom, keeping students on task. Jones' sense of humor is often used as a means to interact with the

students, so while he informally interacts with them, he is often doing so to eventually get them to engage with lesson at hand. Jones works closely with his co-teacher Ms. Trater and seems to have an understanding with her in terms of the way the class is taught. Trater stayed in front of the class most of the time, leading them all on the specifics of a Math problem or exercise, while Jones stays in the periphery of the class, moving among the students to make sure they are working and assisting when the have questions. Jones tends to focus on the same 7-10 students, which seem to be the least engaged of the class. His touch is gentle in terms of motivating his students to work on problems or follow along with the rest of the class, but it is relatively constant. He cajoles and asks, rather than demands and commands. When asked about this in an interview later, Jones rattles off specifics of each of the students and seems to have valid reasons for his extra attention. Jones spoke of his work relationship with Trater:

> *Now, I'm fortunate with Sally (Trater) in that Sally is a person who said "Okay, what do you want to do, how can we work together?" So, we started before school started collaborating and co-planning and then we just, fell into a groove were we split the assignments. She likes to be the person in front and I'm okay with that, I'm more comfortable working with small groups and one on one anyway. I could do "sage on the stage" with the best of them. But I don't, you know, I'm okay with what we're doing here. She does about half of the grading, I do about half the grading. She plans, she does the major part of the lesson planning; I do the tweaks. And then we split part of the assignment creation is split between the two of us. She does one thing; I do another thing.*

Jones emphasis on one-on-one and small group teaching is not just a product of the agreement he has with Trater. Jones believes that teaching is a relational art, as evidenced by the quote below:

> *Because, realistically, teaching is a relational art, it is not a science. If it were a science, it would be easy. We would already have it done, we'd never have any problems. Because, science fixes things pretty quick. This is an art. You are dealing with people and if I don't have the time to get to know the kids, if I don't get time to spend with them, individually, we're not going anywhere. Cause they really don't care about the academics, the academics that we teach students does not relate to them.*

This should not be construed as Jones' lack of faith in the academic side of school. Jones has taught several different subjects in his career and spoke about several instances where he was able to help his students learn effectively, whether it was taking more than the allotted time a pacing guide would have dictated to make sure everyone understood a concept or choosing materials that were more relevant to his students, Jones stresses that the "relational art" for which he strives is the means to an end, not the end itself. At the same time, Jones sees the ability level of students specific to their own ability. In other words, contrary to the concept of standardized testing, Jones sees achievement as specific to each student:

> *I mean, think it about from the point of view of a gym class. Every kid in that gym class plays basketball, every kid in that gym class goes out on the track, I do not expect all the kids to make the basketball team, and I do not expect all of them to be on the track team. I just expect all of them to get out and do something.*

The level of commitment Jones feels towards his job was evident in the interviews even as it is tinged with a certain level of frustration. Jones hints that he is looking towards the end of his career as he often laments what he sees as too much emphasis on testing which tends to hurt teachers' ability to help students, especially those with learning disabilities. In an interview, Jones was weighing how important the job is to him versus how much longer he can keep doing it:

> *There a lot of folks who I've worked with you are basically burned out and you know when you get to that point—I've told my administrator this year, if I feel like I can't do this job, you won't have to fire me. This job is too important to be, you know, trusted to somebody that doesn't have it. That's one of the reasons that I've liked what I did and went into counseling, I needed a break because I didn't feel like I was doing my job.*

One can get the sense that the day when Jones walks away from teaching might be fast approaching. As will be demonstrated in later sections, Jones often lamented the lost elements of what he used to know as education and teaching. In addition to this lamenting, he does not see a bright future for public education and has no interest in what he it will eventually become. The

only part that keeps Jones from leaving is a point echoed by other participants—the ability to make and cultivate relationships with his students. In interviews with Jones, he can often tell you everything you wanted (and, perhaps, more than you wanted) to know about each student. It seems as though he cares for his students, but he wonders about his continued ability to help them given the state of public education as he sees it.

Mr. Blackburn

Mr. Blackburn's teaching style can be described as upbeat, quirky, and fast moving. When observing his class, one's head spins to keep up with the dizzying pace. Students had to be on their toes at all times as Blackburn calls on everyone, asking questions, pushing hard to get answers, and asking how students came up with their answers. He also walked students through even the minutest details: where to put your notes, putting resources away in specific locations, and how long to work and on what. Similar to a carnival barker, Blackburn kept things lively and students seem to click with the high-speed action of his teaching. He didn't take himself too seriously, and his lessons were often peppered with self-deprecating humor and random jokes. As Blackburn says,

> *Oh, absolutely, I cannot tell you how many conversations I've had with people like, well how do you develop [your teaching]? It's all about delivery, but you go to a movie they could say the same lines, but if they aren't acting it out? Or doing whatever, you really have to sell it.*

Blackburn has been teaching for less than five years, but he feels as though he has hit a good point with his teaching in terms of figuring out the most effective ways to teach for both him and his students:

> *I think just being in, my presence in the classroom, I think my first year was, once again, trying to navigate the students, what's my role here, how I interact with them. By [now] it's, I know who I can joke around with, I know who I need to be a little bit more stern with, um, and kind of juggle that, yes, I'm your teacher, but we're also going to have some fun here. I'm a human being too, which is hilarious to deal with middle school*

students because they're such a fun age. They're thing to figure out who they are, who I am, it's fun.

Blackburn has not only put a lot of thought into his teaching career, but also his planning. As with some of the other teachers, Blackburn is often thinking about his lessons before he walks in the door. At the end of the day, he reflects back, thinking about what went right, what went wrong, equating himself to a sports team. "If I were a sports team, Mr. Blackburn teaching sports team, I would kind of consider each day it's own game. So at the end of the day, it's a win or a loss." In his interview he noted that it is sometimes difficult to *not* think about his classes, lessons, and students:

> *It's pretty constant I would say, it's just, the only time I can really—I mean I never really shut it off completely. I was actually just, a friend of mine was teasing me the other day about we were just out for drinks and you created a math lesson in the middle of our conversation, like, so it never really goes away, I mean during the longer breaks its kind of shut off a little bit more, so I guess no. It's a constant reflection.*

The quirky nature of Blackburn's teaching is not happenstance. As evidenced in the excerpts above, he spends a fair amount of time planning lessons out. He mentions that he enjoys this process and even plans for the humor as a means to engage the students further:

> *I guess for me personally I really enjoy creating lessons and especially with the middle schoolers, trying to get their reaction. So, I think that part of it for me, you know I really enjoy dealing with the actual students, but the creation of the lesson itself is something I really enjoy doing. So it's kind of, it's cool to see their reaction and its cool to say like, "I just made this, we're not going to learn by doing something I just had on paper, I'm going to tell you a crazy story and then we're going to listen to the Beach Boys and surf" or you know, "Were you really a professional surfer in Hawaii?" "Uh, yeah, if there are no follow-up questions, yes."*

And while it might seem that it is all fun and games for his students, the level of expectation that Blackburn places on them would contradict this. I noticed that in his teaching, Blackburn often referred to his students as scholars. When asked why he does this, he replied:

> *Anyone can be just a student, but you guys are special, I'm expecting big things of you, you are capable of doing wonderful things, and I'm going to hold you to that. I'm not*

going to let you come in here and do nothing. I know you can do more that, so I'm going to hold you to that. So you may get frustrated with me sometimes, but I know what you are capable of and, like, there's no question that's what I'm going to hold you to. And I think the first time I rolled it out I had in my [class], I actually had them sign like a scholar pledge and kind of went through the whole thing. They had to recite it. I felt like they bought into it but not enough to make a scholar pledge and do all that stuff, so kind of ditched that and broke it down into scholar agreements instead of classroom rules or whatever, we just have scholar agreements or student agreements posted on the board. So each one starts with, "A Scholar Will Be on Time, a Scholar Will Be", you know, all the things that I would like from them boiled down into 3 specific things. So, it kind of gives them a focus and makes it easy, it's just, hey you weren't doing this—check the scholar agreements. Are you in line with what we are trying to do in here are you working with us or against us? I always teach the example to them of the basketball team if you pass the ball to the other team is your team going to be happy with, well the same idea here, we are all on the same team.

Blackburn's passion for teaching is extremely evident and might stem from his own inspiration to be a teacher. Blackburn did an internship in college, which led to his career choice. He talked about how the experience got him thinking about teaching:

But when I left there, I realized the educators at that school, just like, the passion they saw for trying to educate these students and just kind of all the inner workings that go on in a school in terms of helping the students. And I thought that was kind of cool and I thought it was interesting to be in, I guess more of a teacher role. Thinking back, when I was a student in middle school and high school, I never really realized what all my teachers really did for me. And so that was kind of, I guess, a weird experience to kind of go back and reflect on all that.

The level of importance Blackburn places on the education of his students is not for show. This last excerpt detailing how the passion of other teachers influenced his own work points to a level of commitment Blackburn feels as almost necessary to his job. In other words, Blackburn teaches as he does because he cannot imagine another way of doing so. From observations and conversations, it seems as though his enthusiasm is infused into the very act of teaching itself. As such, it makes sense that Blackburn refers to his students as scholars— placing high expectations on them—because in doing so, he ups the level of their learning to his level of teaching. At the beginning of this section Blackburn refers to each day as an athletic

contest and this seems an apt description given how important an athlete sees those meets and games.

Code Excerpts

As mentioned in Chapter Three, this section will present excerpts from important codes, not only for their number of occurrences, but also their relevancy to the evolving context of the research as it progressed. While some of these codes connect directly to the research questions as they were first presented, the majority evolved out of the research itself. Please refer to Chapter Three's discussion of the coding for more information and a breakdown of the code occurances.

School Context

The School Context code was created to be broad enough to note any references to the school climate, culture, curriculum, students, teachers, and the building itself. Large and general by design, it is no wonder that this code has the most occurrences in the various data points. Too large to examine by itself, this code becomes more legible when cross-referenced with several other codes.

School context with education, learning, and curriculum. The Implicit Theories parent code is meant to capture the beliefs and ideas that participants elucidate during interviews. These theories are divided into five sub-codes: Education, Learning, and Curriculum (ELC); Gender and Social Orientation; Life and Time; Person-ness; and Social Theory. While the other sub-codes are discussed elsewhere, ELC is discussed here in its relation to the School Context code. The ELC was designed to capture participants' ideas about all aspects of education from pedagogy to curriculum. Much as the School Context was designed to be general, the ELC code's goal was to shed light on the teachers' ideas in regards to not only their own teaching, but

also teaching in a broader sense. What is interesting in the juxtaposition with the School Context codes is how these beliefs relate to Polk. For example, do the beliefs of teachers in regards to education correspond to their perceptions of the inner workings of the school and his or her classroom? In those differences, what explains them? Additionally, how do the teachers view the school's curriculum, students, teachers, and pedagogical practices? What follows are several excerpts that speak to these concerns and raise others.

While the code of ELC was meant to be broad enough to capture many different aspects of education and schooling, when combined with the School Context code the general theme of stability comes to the forefront. In other words, while there might be more the participants say about the specifics of education in terms of what is important, the basic need of stability must be met first before other ones are addressed. The explanations, examples, or causes of the instability within Polk varied, but usually revolved around one or more of the following: school-wide reforms, students, class size, discipline issues, and the school's administration. Additionally, while there have been periods of instability in the years the participants have been teaching at Polk, the past year in particular was even more unstable than usual. Specifics surrounding this year in particular will be discussed later in this chapter, but it is helpful to begin the discussion here as it relates to the codes in this section. In that vein, respondents mention the ability of the FSCS model to deal with the instability and this, too, will be discussed in more specifics later. To begin, Perry mentions that in his time at Polk, there have been few moments of relative stability. Often, there are things that undercut whatever type of progress the school makes with school-wide reforms losing momentum:

> *Perry: And then last year we got the word that we were losing our principal and we were getting a new principal. And this year has not been going in the same direction. It's back to every man himself with trappings of professional development and professional communication and things like that*

I: So is it fair to say than like in those five years it's been mostly an instable kind of environment.

Perry: Very. Most of those of three years I call it island survival tactics for education [referencing the Reality TV show Survivor]

I: That begs the question and you kind of answered it there, so you're like always on the cusp, what's preventing you [from succeeding]? Is it a matter of funds?

Perry: It's not necessarily a matter of funds. Sometimes its funding, sometimes its burnout, sometimes its politics. This person does a really good job at what they do, so they are taken away to go do it somewhere else. They weren't done here yet. You know, that like, we weren't done. There have been some effective things, there, you know, a lot of our initiatives have great merit behind them. Um, it's the implementation that goes awry. They mandate this thing downtown and there's no buy-in or there's no follow through or you know they overdo it. They're meeting us out of existence. [In reference to too many meetings.] You know, and it just loses all purpose when you've talked about something for so long.

Another participant echoed the above by noting that the hierarchical structure of the district's leadership seems to hinder the school's ability to really engage in meaningful instruction. Below is the participant's reply when asked if urban public schools can be successful in teaching students:

Jones: You cannot have a hierarchy and be successful. And that's one of the things that's been a problem with schools for years. And we've developed a hierarchy and there's too many people making decisions that don't have any real buy-ins to the outcomes. So…it depends. It can be done, it's possible, but it's going to take a lot of change. We don't change, if we don't make the changes, if we don't become more agile, more disciplined and more…involved with other things besides worrying about the freaking test scores, we're going to fall apart. We're going to fail. Because we can't compete on that level.

An example of this type of this instability and hierarchical structure can be seen in an example given by one participant in which a specific department had developed a curriculum, in terms of the order in which students take certain classes, was proving successful. Unfortunately, they were forced to abandon it when the district imposed the use of an online geometry course on the school.

Smith: It's a terrible program. So if you take the test enough times you can see all the questions and you have all the answers and so you can essentially pass the class with learning nothing. So already, so in this [specific] class, which is the period you were in, about half of them are coming out of [subject] online, so they're already like way, they're weaker, way weaker than last year's [specific] class. And we changed this [class] that we had, we went from [this one to the next to the next]. Now they changed it and the district won't let us change it back? and this is a quote, "They don't trust the guidance counselors to individualize schedules." So we said, it works much better and, in our opinion and in my opinion to go [in this order] and they, the district changed that because people aren't passing the End of Course Evaluations (ECAs) if they fail [one class] we want to give them another chance in [the next class]. So, okay, that makes sense, but most of our kids are passing. So, we're like if they pass ECAs why can't they go [in the previous order]? And, because they don't trust the guidance counselors to individualize that. So, we have these kids who went [in the new order with an online class] and then they're going to go to [the advanced class], it will not go well.

Such instability becomes even more frustrating and tangible given that Polk has a relatively recent history dating back to its reopening as a FSCS. And while other school-wide reforms had stops and starts, the concept of FSCS has been constant but not without its ups and downs as well. Another respondent attempted to bring some perspective by using the metaphor of a child growing up:

Garvey: And with all the changes, and I probably look at Polk as a child. When I first got here, we were an infant. First year we had 6th, 7th, 8th, and freshman in our building. So we were this, the brand new baby. It is exciting, it is new. There is you know what does the future hold? There are all these great directions we can go with things. And then you know we kid our terrible twos there for a while and it was like ok we need to kind of refocus here a little, come on. So you know we kind of went through these phases. Then you are a kid. Ok your guys test scores aren't as good as they need to be. We need to get the test scores up. Then we became teenagers where we kind of got our hand slapped. Ok, we are going to reconstitute the building, we are going to change.

Garvey speaks with a certain level of pride being a part of Polk's maturation process. And while such a process is a source of pride, it does not mean that there have not been challenges along the way. Garvey speaks of these challenges not as a setback, but rather as expected parts of the growing up process he assigns to Polk as a school. He continues:

Garvey: And I think that— there were things that needed to be changed and reformed, you will never hear me say that that was a totally bad thing. Because I don't think it was.

It kind of tripped off some things that needed to be done. But I think we went through so heavy community and that our shift focused was so heavy[ly] academic I think we lost our identity for a while. Kind of those teenage years where a parent comes in and you get kind of slapped down. To where now we are kind of those college years, where you are kind of roaming a little bit going ok what is our identity? You know what was our identity?

The growth has continued, but it is different than it once was. In the beginning, the growth is equated to the physical growth of a child, less to do with personality and more guidance from without as opposed to within. However, by equating this latest round of growth with soul-searching and identity formation, Garvey seems to be noting a shift in Polk's growth as a school. He goes on:

Garvey: Where was the, when Polk was reopened where did we envision this thing going? And I think we kind of lost that a little bit. I think we are kind of in that phase right now of what exactly does Polk need to look like? And I think in the process you know we have lost the community a little bit. You know there is, community support is still there but you know with our former principal she was so "Oh well we will call you when we need you." I think she really alienated a lot of that. And I have gotten earfuls from alumni and the community. They are like what is up with your principal not wanting us around? And they felt very offended by that.

Perhaps a reason for the identity searching mentioned above has been the changes in Polk's administration, specifically the Principal. In twelve years, Polk has had six different principals, with 3 in the past year alone. One participant spoke of these changes with a sense of wonderment and irony:

Garvey: Not counting the interim (principal). So six. But I don't really count her so five actual principals in twelve years. And that is with James being here for 5. Franklin was here two and half. He was here five and half and she was here two and half and then let me think. So yeah it is, it has been interesting. I have, I have always said I am going to have to sit back and write a book about what I have seen around here. People would probably think it is fiction; "Oh you are making it up." Truth is stranger than fiction sometimes, especially when you get into education. (Laughs)

An influx of new students also added to the past year's instability. As will be mentioned later in more detail, the past year was worth noting in terms of the participants' answers to

questions. A participant noted that while teachers and staff were willing to try to deal with the

influx of new students, the turnover of staff made it difficult to do so:

> *Blackburn: We shouldn't be fighting ourselves in order to improve achievement. So things like that have hurt. I think communication in regards to this year specifically as a school-wide effort has really fallen by the wayside. It's created a lot of confusion, a lot of people are willing to help, willing to kind of jump on board, but they don't know what directive to jump on board with. So, I think that has been a huge issue, we had three new administrators this year, a lot of new teachers and staff members and I'm not sure a lot them were really guided toward the right resources that are already available at this school, so it's not that they don't want to do things, or not trying, they don't know where to look. So, just trying to connect to those people with the right things at this school, I think this could have gone a lot better. And so, yeah, that's another thing kind of a revolving door this year. Who's principal this week?*

And while teachers seemed to accept a certain level of instability, in terms of the usual

goings on at Polk, this year in particular was a different animal altogether. One participant noted

the difference in terms of a medical metaphor:

> *Borkowski: This year is unlike anything that has happened to Polk in the past three years. Um, so, with what I knew about Polk to what turned into a true triage. I mean, we went from, to put in, like, metaphor terms it went from a hospital setup where we knew the routine, we know what's going on. This year was nothing but a MASH unit. Taking care of an accident, I don't know, we're now in the Korean conflict, we have Radar upstairs, we have Klinger, we're literally a MASH unit, the bombs are going off, we're trying, we're figuring out, patching people together and running off, it's literally that big of a difference.*

Another participant noted that another period of instability, when a large amount of teachers

were replaced, was similar, but this past year was more intense.

> *Garvey: We survived. And I say that kind of half-jokingly but with all the, it was scary. I will be honest. It was really kind of scary there for a while because we all knew. Those of us who had been around had been through the original turnover. We all knew what we were up against. And I am not sure some of the newer teachers necessarily maybe realized the severity. And it was scary last year because when they started talking about "Oh yeah, there might be more takeovers". And then all the factors you know, though not faults necessarily of our own. I mean I still would put our staff, as a whole, against anybody in the state of Indiana. It is funny I was at my daughter's softball game Saturday in Lexington (a suburb of Polk's home city) and the girl, one of the girl's mom is a teacher and she said "Oh." She said, "I don't think I could teach inner-city stuff." I said "That is why there are just a few of us crazy enough to keep doing it, you know?" And*

she was like "God bless you." You know? Hats off. I said "You know, we earn our pay."
(laughs) We do that.

Such instability concentrated in one year had impact on the participants' perceptions of

their ability to teach. As presented later in this chapter, the influx of new students resulted in an

increase in class size and discipline problems, that, given the instability mentioned here, were not

dealt with effectively. Indeed, a school with a relative amount of stability might have had

trouble dealing with class sizes over forty students and discipline problems on a daily basis.

School context and new students. As the previous excerpts alluded to, a key component

in the instability felt by respondents in the school was due to the influx of new students to Polk.

This influx of new students was due to the closing of four other district schools that were

reopened under the control of the State Department of Education. The Department of Education

then placed three respective for-profit Educational Management Organizations (EMOs) in

control of these schools. Rather than the students staying in those schools, the district filed a

lawsuit that would allow students to have a choice, either stay in the district or enroll in the new

for-profit run schools. A large percentage of those students chose to stay in the district, but

without the now-closed schools, the district had very little choice as to where those students

would go. As one respondent detailed, the results were not positive:

> *Perry: This year we are, we are struggling. The district made a decision to fight for the*
> *kids that were in the buildings that were taken over by the state.*
>
> *I: So back up for just a second, so the district, so there's the three takeovers.*
> *Perry: Four*
>
> *I: Four, right. And Polk wasn't one of them; they were one of the partnered. (Some of*
> *the schools in Polk's school district were completely taken over, while others were*
> *partnered with a EMO).*
>
> *Perry: No, we were partial, us and Spring Meadow.*
>
> *I: So, the district fights that in order to keep control…*

Perry: Keep control of the kids. We wanted the kids.

I: Okay. And then the kids could decide to go back to the takeover school.

Perry: Go back under the charter or come here. Um, and they came here…and it has…

I: Here, Polk specific or any…

Perry: Very much so, we got a lot of them. Because our test scores were high last year. You're a parent you're going, "Hey, they've got something going on there." And we did! Our math has been improving, amazingly so, not this year. I mean, we are still doing alright, don't get me wrong, but it's, it's…math is still improving, they've got a system. But, um, we're hurting.

I: So you get an influx all these new kids.

Perry: Yeah, and our old kids are either drowning in the chaos or joining in. As, teenagers do. That's what happens. You can't beat them you join them. Um, and so, you know, it's, it's awful, uh, we went from a building that rarely has fights to just about a fight everyday. And, that's just, it's never what Polk was, we were always the "different" school and now we are not. Um, so, the district kind of messed up on that, the district on the whole is struggling. We lose…You know, I don't know if you know this but we are not the biggest district anymore, we used to be, we should be, um, population wise, but we're losing that fight too. Um, and I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that we continue to operate as if there is not a NCLB (No Child Left Behind) system. We have magnets. Where they take our best and brightest out of the school and put them in another school.

From a practical standpoint, the influx of new students resulted in Polk's being

understaffed and class sizes that were, from the perspective of the respondents, way too large.

Several excerpts below detail this boom in population and the instability it caused:

Perry: And for better or worse, we won that fight. And we got those kids, and they are here, um, last year we were sitting at about 800 kids, this year we are closer to about, I think we are at 1200, but we are way over. The school wasn't designed for that. We shouldn't gone over a thousand, like that's what they always told us. That's what they told us, you're capped at 1000, it's not going to go over 1000. So at the beginning of the year, we weren't even close to staffed right. Not even close. And it's going to happen again next year. Um, because again, these same kids that are going to be 7th graders are signed up, geographically, to go to [other schools]. They're not going to go there, they're going to go here.

Borkowski: We had kids coming in dumps, you know, push, crammed, um, the first few weeks we had over 40 students in class. And I remember the first discussion I had with

my self-contained, my co-teacher, she pulled out the list. Here is what we have on our list as of now. And it was like 40-45 kids on the list. And I am looking at this going 'oh my gosh!' We are going to be, we have 40-45 kids in one room for 90 minutes. Wow!
And let's look at why cut teachers? Why did so many of us especially have all these issues in dealing with at the middle school level is because they again were having, I mean discipline and class size were literally you know shooting us in the foot. We would try something and oh look here is another 20 kids for you. And you are going "Ok, you guys sit along the wall." It was that way at the beginning of both semesters.

It was not just the influx of new students in terms of numbers, but that the new students lived outside of the neighborhood. In other words, while the increase in students caused problems, as other respondents will detail later, there was a qualitative difference between existing Polk students and the new ones.

Borkowski: Um, do you see, that, so again, so kind of this instability that's going on, not only at the school, but district wide, um, you've basically become a different school just because of population.

I: Just because of an increase in population and a different type of kid?
Borkowski: Oh yeah. A different type of population. They're not local anymore. I can't see their mom and dad at the game. Because mom and dad live…you know…on the other side of [the city]. You know, so that's a problem. You know, that's not, you can't call yourself a community school and not have the community in your school. You know, there's still those group of kids, they'll look at the kids and they'll, just roll their eyes. Because they [Polk students who lived in surrounding neighborhoods] knew who they are, they knew who these kids [those that did not live close by] are.

The distinction Borkowski makes here is not that some kids are "bad" and some kids are "good," but rather, that some kids were from the community and some were not. That distinction is crucial because it means that the community connection between the school and the student is lost. And while the demographics between the two groups of student may have been similar, as Borkowski notes in the end of the excerpt, the students who lived close to Polk knew the distinction and could spot out those that did not live in the same neighborhoods. While the above quote does not make a qualitative (in terms of behavior) distinction between the two groups of students, other excerpts from participants (including Borkwoski did).

Borkowski: But yeah, most of our high schoolers are all Polk kids and we can still pull together our Tigers. They're [saying], "We're not playing this game." (Not behaving badly). And they move on. I've had past students when I've student taught here that are like juniors now, that are like, "These kids are bad." And they were our over/under kids (students that are looking at these eight graders and going (makes a laugh noise). "We weren't that bad, we had issues, but we were not that bad"

The students who lived closer to Polk not only recognized the differences between themselves

and other students, they sometimes went out of their way to distinguish themselves further by not

engaging in certain activities and noting the disruptive behaviors the other students

demonstrated. Garvey, recalling his own childhood, tried to pinpoint the differences even

further:

Garvey: You know I was kind of, and then having grown up and been a west side kid myself, also that anxiety, kind of a little bit of anxiety of "Crap, now we are also, not only are going to have these big classrooms but we are melding these east side kids with these west side kids and that is not always a good fit". There is enough culturally and socially different that west side kids you know typically tend to be that little bit more laid back kind of go with the flow, you can kind of get under control pretty easily. I kept thinking in my mind that first two weeks of school last year of I see why those schools were taken over. It became very clear real quick. The kids came and thought they were going to run the building. They came in, I saw more kids cussing out teachers and just flat disrespect and I don't want to stereotype but nine times out of ten when you said "What school did you go to last year?" "Oh, I went to [other schools]." And I am like holy crap. It really felt like we got torpedoed. All the hard work that we had done. Everything that we had built up and it felt like we absolutely had the legs cut from under us with what they threw in here on us.

The lines continued to be drawn and the distinctions between the two groups of students started

to crystalize in the minds of the participants, to the point that generalizations were made. That is

not to say that such generalizations did not have some evidence to back them up:

Blackburn: I guess not only in number, but what some of the kids were doing. I think generally speaking a lot of the students that came into our school were also pretty low academically. That was kind of interesting to see where they kind of stacked up against the kids that were already there. I literally had, I think, two students say to me, "You guys actually do work here? At the school I was at, we didn't do anything." Whoa, whoa, yeah, get used to this, this is the norm. Um, so, that was kind of an eye-opener for me.

Smith: Yeah, so the middle school is, from what I've heard, I mean our high schoolers are afraid, they don't like going down to the first floor. So I can only, I respect the middle school teachers, because good god. And just the kids, I mean I got in [class] from these schools, like, these are kids with severe deficits, behaviorally and educationally, like, and they got hundreds and they've got kids coming out of Rosa Parks self-contained classes and they were thrown in here, and for a while, like weeks and weeks, those middle school classes were 45-50 each. So, how could you expect anyone to function, let alone someone coming out of a self-contained class? So there's big problems, but I think that hit, which will ripple up to high school next year, because the fail rate, from what I heard, is going to be like through the roof, which is of course they won't actually do, so they're going to get massive influx of kids...

Blackburn notes that the expectations these students had about school and learning were vastly different from his other students. Smith alluded to the struggle to compensate for such different expectations and that it took up a lot of the teachers' energy and time. And while the problems were mostly contained within the middle school and indirectly impacted the high school, it was only a matter of time before such a cause and effect would become extremely problematic in a direct way. It would be one thing if this was a small number of new students, but the numbers game only increased the difficulties. The teachers' frustrations were matched by the students' as well:

Perry: My juniors were very, very angry, very quickly saying this isn't our school anymore. I don't like it here. You know saying they wanted to quit and all that kind of stuff.

Jones noted that the Polk students who lived in surrounding neighborhoods that because students took so much pride in attending Polk, the changes were extremely difficult to handle:

Jones: Sure, because they have no investment. A lot of the kids, like, one of my Tier 4 kids, Sally, her grandma went to Polk, her dad went to Polk, she goes to Polk And when there was a little bit of drama with the non-Polk kids, well they're like, I can't go anywhere else, my family goes to this school.

The new students at Polk came with a whole package of challenges, but, to make matters worse, had to transition from different contexts that dealt with these challenges in different manners:

Garvey: I have never at any other time been in this building and felt like we were

running a state mental hospital with the amount of legitimate psych issues that we had. And mostly it was [other district school] because [it] had these full service partnership rooms where five kids in a room with a teacher and two assistants and a counselor. And if they got upset they could walk out of the room. And then they got dumped here. No transition, the support service…and not unexpectedly [and] unfortunately most every one of those kids that came from that program ended up on off-campus instruction, out of the building by Christmas, by December.

Garvey's excerpt is notable because the students who needed the most assistance were often the ones who, in the end, were removed from Polk. However, these new students were not presenting teachers with issues of which they had never dealt. Students at Polk had always dealt with issues of poverty long before the students outside of the surround community enrolled there. So, why was the distinction so pronounced? Why was it now more difficult to deal with these issues? As participants mentioned, it was partly a numbers game in which the school was understaffed, but there was more:

I: So go back then a little bit, it is not as if the kids from this community and their parents are immune from those same problems?

Garvey: Oh no. Oh no, not at all.

I: But does it make it easier the fact that they are close to the school?

Garvey: Yeah. Yeah. Because I still have, I could pick up my phone right now and I could look at, I put all my kids' numbers, that way I have an easy contact "Ok, let's get your mom on the phone." Of the kids I have like say right now this year 90% of them live within one mile of the building. So worst case scenario, their parent would walk up here for something. Flip that to last year I still had 4 of 25 kids on my caseload last year, I had 5 that I still to this day have never met their parent. And they never came up for a conference. I couldn't get them on the phone. I couldn't get them here. Anything. You are never going to get a kid, or a parent, to care about a school if they can't get there easily or if they are not a member of that neighborhood. I have had a horrible time this year with IEPs trying to get parents to come. "Well, I don't have a car." Well it used to be they lived close enough they could just walk. "Well I live at 30th and Keystone. I don't have a car." Ok. You know, I have done more phone conferences this year than I have ever done.

The very thing that made Polk effective in dealing with the problems their students and families faced was now rendered ineffective merely by the proximity of where those families lived.

While this might seem trivial, as a FSCS, a foundation of its very creation was the ability to

involve families and parents because of how close they lived and to exploit that closeness for the

benefit of the students and the school.

The result of these new students, in the mind of the respondents was anything but ideal.

It resulted in more discipline problems and the school struggled to deal with them. One

respondent noted that in years past, while new students came in to the school before, they were

either from the neighborhood or the number was small enough that existing students helped with

the transition, but now the number of new students was too much for such a process to take

place:

> *Blackburn: Because it was, they would try to do something, that maybe they could get*
> *away with at their own school and the students themselves would be like, "Nah, no we*
> *don't do that here". So that was really cool whereas here, even as—its' not as bad now,*
> *but you walk through the halls and its kind of a different—you get a different feel. I mean*
> *I'd say on any random day there's probably 50 to 70 f-bombs that I hear just walking*
> *through the school, [And I would say] "Academic language, come on," the little things.*

Those little things started to add up. Respondents were not only frustrated with the

instability the new students caused, but were also despondent in terms of why and how the new

students came to Polk. The frustrations continued to mount to the point of where solving the

problems that came with the new students seemed impossible:

> *Perry: That's where our problem is. If you look at the middle school suspension list*
> *every day, there are 15 to 20 names on there every day, two of them will be from high*
> *school. And, it's, it's just horrendous, the discipline is, just, off the wall.*

The frustration was even more acute when participants knew that the problem was the distance

these new students lived from the school. They knew the problem, but were frustrated by the

district office's refusal to accept it as an explanation:

> *Garvey: Yeah. I mean we still have kids, it seems absolutely ridiculous to me that if I*
> *have a kid who lives on Blue Jay Way, which is like a one block street by the school that*
> *they are bussing that kid an hour every day to come over here. What interest do they*

have? Parents have no interest in this neighborhood or this school. The kids don't have any vested interest in it. So, how exactly, and they we are getting, and it became very frustrating when you would get people from downtown and the state, "Oh, well you need to improve your parent involvement." Give me a magic pill that will do that because when we are sitting on the phone for two hours every day making phone calls and the same themes keep getting repeated, "I don't have a way there. Oh, they are at school, they are your problem." Wait a minute, you know?

The changes brought on by the new students changed the very perception of the school. Once a point of pride for students and teachers alike due mainly to the close relationship between the school and the community, it was now viewed as a madhouse and, in some cases, much worse:

Jones: Well, the thing I would say is that we are a dumping ground school, we are getting kids all the time who are not connected to the school, who've been kicked out of other schools and that makes it problematic. We have serious, really serious, discipline issues here. It's gotten better, because some of the worst of the worse were removed and put on different programs; they're just no longer in school here. But I have never in my life seen the influx of dysfunctional individuals into a building like this. This is just amazing to me.

In Jones's mind, students were being dumped by the school district, not because Polk was seen as a place for them to get help, but because there was nowhere else to put them. Participants did not see an end to the continuing influx of new students, and they did not see a way to prevent it. At the same time, some saw the conundrum in shutting the doors, so to speak, to this different population of student. When asked to clarify the issues Polk was facing during the school year, Borkowski replied:

Borkowski: New population, yeah, the charter schools, the magnet school basically—to be completely rude about it—we turned into a dumping ground. I mean we have a middle school and high school here that the influx of new students has affected the middle school more than the high school. Oh, it's a huge effect, what happens when they get kicked out of charter schools? What happens when they get kicked out of the magnet? They have to find a school that isn't within their boundaries that will accept them.

I: Which is here and…

Borkowski: For now, we are supposed to go magnet next year, so what happens? That's just it, charter schools, uh, private schools can decide whether or not they want to accept who they want to accept. We don't get that option; we have to say, "Okay, time to fill out

the paperwork." Even if we know, we know that these kids are bad news. We still have to bring them in. And that's where the problem becomes, we are going to have all these specialized schools going well you have to…this schools deals with this or this school will only accept these kids. What happens to the kids that don't fit those charter schools? No, so what happens to the kids that get kicked out of charter schools when there is no more district dumping schools? What are those kids going to do then? End up locked up? And, they have got that far. That's in the next couple of years what we'll see.

I: So you basically have to figure out a way to wall yourself off from these kids getting moved around and put into your school. Otherwise you risk being closed, take over, whatever.

Borkowski: And that's sad because, it's not so much the kids' fault.

All in all, the influx of new students was not only disruptive, but left a lasting impression on the school and the respondents. From a practical standpoint of just dealing with more students then the school is normally accustomed to, the difficulty in addressing the needs of the new students to the frustrating inability to stop the new students from coming in—these were an increasing number of problems that were diverse and hard to get on top of. During the focus group interview, one telling excerpt encapsulated how the participants felt about the new students and their effect on the school. This exchange ties several other things that have been brought up in other excerpts together—more specifically the chaos and instability in the school as it specifically relates to the new students. Another dynamic is mentioned here that has not been before—the influx of new students was primarily in the middle school grades, which caused most of the administration's focus there as opposed to the high school. This exchange came about when participants where asked, "How would you tell the story of this past year at Polk?" Answers sometimes relied on metaphors, while others thought key moments or specifics of the year were important to tell the story. Blackburn noted a conversation he had with the former principal the year before:

Blackburn: And I remember talking to Smith (previous Principal), back the previous year at the end when she was transitioning out and how she was sitting in meetings I

think with Jones (current Principal) as well saying how like the numbers that they are projecting for us are way off. Like way under what we are actually going to get. The numbers that—

Perry: Everyone knew the numbers were wrong.

Blackburn: Yeah they were projected at lower than what we already had. So yeah.

Perry: They were projecting us losing like 100 kids or more.

I: And how did they account for losing 100 kids or more? Did they have an explanation for that?
Blackburn: The turnaround schools.

I: They thought they were going to go there?

Perry: They thought the turnaround schools were going to win.

Blackburn: And so day one when I am walking in, I look at my roster and I have 67 students on multiple classes it is just like what? I hope this gets taken care of.

Perry: Yeah. I mean there were a lot of factors going in there and I think what happened in most of the cases, I don't think the parents understood that a different group was taking over the school so much as they just heard the school was closing. And they just assumed they shouldn't send their kid to a school that closed. The gate was lifted and the rattle was let in.

According to the participants, the trouble really began with a crucial error the year before, when the administration projected that Polk was going to lose students, not gain them. The reality was that Polk not only did not lose any students, but rather gained many more than they could have ever imagined and, therefore, were woefully underprepared for the influx:

Perry: In the high school there wasn't as big of an influx. They kind of looked at it as the entire middle school had suddenly become mutants. And they hated them all.

Blackburn: You expect me to work? I mean I thought I came here to hang out with my friends

Perry: That was it. Yeah. And I guess as far as like the takeovers and how that affected teachers and kind of the mood at Polk there was another [district] school that was kind of on the border this year. So I think the district was trying to protect them in a certain sense so they pushed a lot of the students our way. And I mean if you talk to some of the administrators and they would be like the downtown offices are literally like not even

giving the students an option to go to [other district school] they are just pushing them toward us.

The district manipulating the population, so that more students ended up inside Polk's walls than the only other available option, only amplified this problematic influx of students. A distinction is also made between the high school and middle school levels of the school. Teachers saw the main problem as being in the middle school, but still affecting the whole school like a virus. While not falling into full-scale analysis here, it is interesting to note a few things from this passage. First, participants had a working theory as to why the influx of new students was happening, not only from a district standpoint, but why the new student influx was so large at Polk. Additionally, this theory places the influx outside of their control. In other words, there was little the teachers did to start the influx and little they could do to stop it—a reality with which they had to deal.

It should also be noted that while the participants saw the new students as a root cause for the chaos within the school, they still had sympathy for the students—lamenting the long bus trips they had to endure and the effect it would have on their behavior and attitudes as they entered the school. These new students faced challenges that the students who lived closer to Polk did not:

Jones: If you look at it from a kid's perspective, when I did the home visits one of the things that struck me is that those kids are on a bus, first thing they are going to have to get on a bus god awful early. Because they are doing at least 30-45 minutes on the bus to get from where they were coming from

Blackburn: At least. Some kids it is over an hour

Jones: And you know that is going to switch things too.

Perry: And another hour home.

Here is a reoccurring theme. While participants saw these new students as causing major issues

within the school, they did sympathize with them—understanding what might be one of the

many causes for their attitudes as they came into school every day. The conversation then turned

to how the administration handled the difficulties the school was facing:

I: And it doesn't sound like there was ever a recognition of like we are in a, an official "we are in a crisis".

Perry: Nobody declared it a crisis

Borkowski: No

I: Everybody knew we were in a crisis.

Perry: We were waiting for FEMA and FEMA never showed up.

I: Right. Everybody knew we were in a crisis, everybody there, but nobody officially or had the power to do anything about it came out and said…

Borkowski: It was almost like a minor zombie apocalypse movie. The middle schoolers were the zombies.

I: And you are trying to convince people like "No, really there are zombies". And they are like "You are crazy. You don't know what you are talking about."

Borkowski: Attack each other and blood going everywhere. Yeah. No, it was seriously like it felt that way sometimes. In the back of my head I would feel like you know this is pretty much…

I: So would you tell the story of a zombie movie?

Borkowski: Oh, [now] we are talking…

I: I could get on board with that.

Borkowski: Theater background yeah, I know. It makes more sense. You are coming into like this disaster movie with all these, it is sort of like Lord of the Flies *with* Mad Max.

Blackburn: I can get on board with that

Borkowski: With Mad Max you know two may enter one may leave. It was more like…

Perry: Thunderdome!

Borkowski: Yeah two may enter and two may leave. It was more like 42 may enter, 42

may leave

The metaphors used here are telling. The dystopian vision associated with each one underscores a level of chaos, destruction, and uncertainty that had a lasting impact on the teachers as they dealt with the rash of new problems they were seeing on a daily basis. At the same time, while they were looking for help, help never came. The metaphors of disaster movies are key because it notes the swiftness and extent to which the new students' presence was having on the school. This was not a slow moving problem, but rather an epidemic that never slowed down enough for those affected to come to terms with causes, let alone effects. When pushed as to whether the administration knew the school was in crisis mode, participants were reluctant to say. They made it clear that everyone knew the school was in trouble, but few knew what to do about it:

> *I: But there also seemed like there was a conspiracy element to it as well like no one is listening to me that this is happening and like people like Chicken Little like the sky is falling—*
>
> *Borkowski: I would say more Hotel Rwanda was more of the way, as gruesome as that sounds it was, if we look at the battlefield the stuff that you know from day one. It was like ok here you go. This is a new game of Survivor Siberia. And it seriously felt like ok if any of them start getting up and doing weird stuff this is over.*
>
> *Smith: I guess it became incredibly reactive and priorities were backwards; at least at the high school level where we didn't have the severe behavior problems.*
>
> *Perry: Yeah, we got the back burner.*

And so, while the new students were creating a list of challenges for the school that attracted much of the administration's focus, participants were quick to point out that there will still other items of instability that were ignored. Smith raised a point she made in a previous interview about a specific class offered solely online:

> *Smith: Yeah like, it is ok that we had major classes that feed into other classes all year on a computer.*

Perry: Yeah I was at the meeting where that was decided. I was a fly on the wall in that meeting when that was decided.

I: Right you were telling me about that. There were certain classes.

Perry: Yeah all [that subject's classes] was online.

Smith: Yeah and then they started just, they finished in weeks because they were all cheating. And then taking all these classes, it was no longer we are here to learn. We are here to excel in our future classes.

Jones: We are here to pass.

Perry: We are here to Google our way through high school.

Smith: Yeah. And that was ok because there was so, I mean middle school needed…

I: There was no oversight of that?

Perry: Not at all

Jones: They weren't, the wheels were not really squeaking very loud in the beginning.

Blackburn: Even if they were squeaking very loud.

Perry: They had to be on fire (laughter).

Perry: And they…you did put oil on the fire.

Borkowski: The wheels couldn't be heard over the zombie screams

Blackburn: The wheel didn't squeak anymore (laughter).

Perry: No more squeaking.

A key moment is when the problems with the online class are mentioned and specifically linked to the new students. Here, the respondents believed that all of the school administrators' attention (and in the participants' minds, this was justified to a certain extent) was being directed toward the new students, so it was hard to get someone to pay attention to any problems outside of that immediate scope. If this is the case, one could see how other problems within the school

would continue to mount up. Indeed, the participants note that the pleas of the teachers were no longer heard and they became frustrated enough not to share them.

Education Reforms and ELC

Both of these codes on their own were in the top half of occurrences, so to narrow down the results this section looks as the co-occurrences of both. Education Reforms were meant as a broad code to capture any references to school choice, charter schools, high-stakes testing and accountability. However, this code was not limited to neoliberal education reforms but was also used to code references to any reform efforts, even those that fall outside of the neoliberal context. As mentioned before, the ELC code was meant to capture participants' thought, feelings, and beliefs as they relate to all aspects of education and school. Excerpts have been divided up into six categories: Origins/Effects, Teacher Training, Budget, Choice/Charters, Testing/Standards, and Accountability.

Origins/effects. Here will be discussed all excerpts that allude to the perceived origins of major educational reform and any generalized effects that participants feel or see within their own practice and the school. The first excerpt here paints a sad state of affairs for public education, at least in the mind of the participant:

> *Jones: It's a dying proposition, public schools. The thing that I've been talking with some friends about this, that I've said it before, what I see happening is the same thing that is going on pretty much everywhere with government services. There's money to be made at it and there's going to be private entrepreneurs who are going to come in and come in to make money. They'll start off by skimming the cream. Which is what they're doing now. But eventually public schools, unless something changes, they're going to become a thing of the past.*

This is a bleak portrayal of the landscape of public schools, but it also speaks to the literature as it pertains to neoliberal education reforms. Jones clearly sees that the end of the public sector is driven by the desire to make money or, more specifically, extend the reach of

capitalism into, heretofore, largely walled off public sectors. This is not simply a statement of

fact for Jones, but certainly a mourning of something lost. While such sadness is evident in all

the conversations with participants, there is certainly a level of anger and frustration as well—

demonstrated in this excerpt:

> *Garvey: And I think one thing, and even among teachers, one thing that really upsets me on this is when we start throwing political parties, well the Republicans did this, well the Democrats did—whoa time out! If you look at the history of education both sides are equally as dirty; No Child Left Behind was put in by a Republican president with a Democratic Congress. It was renewed with a Democratic president, Republican congress. Charter schools in Indianapolis were initiated by a Democratic mayor, they have been strengthened by a Republican. So, don't tell me the Republicans are to blame for charters. Oh no, guys! Get your head out of your butt, stop listening to what the unions are pumping…the garbage the unions are pumping your head with and look at this objectively. There is big business and dollars. The reason we have ISTEP testing, how many millions of dollars are people making off this? It is not going anywhere. I mean you get into the whole politics of this, I just, a young student teacher came up to me and said "What are you talking about? There are no politics in education." I looked at her and I am like sweetheart get your head out of the sand. I am going to help you out here so you don't burn out. Education is nothing but politics.*

> *I: Everything is political on some level. (laughter)*

> *Garvey: And education ties into an area's economy. It ties in, there is so much that gets tied to this. And rightfully so, I mean if I am trying to draw in big businesses, I want a school that is successful. Say, "Hey, your kids are good to come here." You know I want crime to be down so that people move into my city. It is all…I just think, there is just a lot that we have gotten away from.*

Within this passage there is both a relatively accurate portrayal of the origins of the major

reforms over the last fifteen years, and also a denial of any real allies in the political realm on the

side of teachers. In other words, Garvey seems to be saying that both major political parties are

responsible for the reforms being put in place, or, more specifically, the problems in public

education. At the same time, Garvey acknowledges that the political nature of public education

it is a necessity due to the perceived impact it can have on the overall quality of a neighborhood,

and to a larger extent, society. And so, Garvey seems to imply, as demonstrated by his

conversation with another teacher, that teachers need to realize how their work is affected by and

apart of the political. And while the mere mortals that are teachers are subject to the whims of

the gods of education reform, they cannot reconcile what they see in their communities and

schools with what such reformers are asking them to do. In a conversation about poverty as an

excuse versus a factor in a student's education, Garvey said the following:

> *Garvey: To a point yes. I think it is. [That poverty is a factor in a student's ability to achieve] I think it is definitely a factor because we are still, honestly, we have kids that will be the first person in their family to graduate from high school. And it is really, and I have sat with Arne Duncan at tables, with Arne Duncan at conferences, and I have asked him point blank questions, rule number one for success is that you have to care. How do you make a culture or a community or a family who has never, who has real no experience with educational success—how do you make their kid—*

> *I: Not necessarily value it, they don't have any experience?*

> *Garvey: They just don't have experience with it. I mean you look at this neighborhood 3-4 generations went to school, you got a job at Lilly, or one of the factories. College was for a few people who became management/leadership positions, so that is what has been ingrained. That is why my grandpa never went to college. My grandpa never finished high school—he did fine. My mom and dad maybe barely did. So, why do I need college to be successful? And I would challenge that thought in education as well. One of the most damaging statements we have ever made in education in my opinion is that 100% of kids will go to college. Not every kid needs to go to college. It is suicidal to try to say that every kid is going to go to college. You know? I could take a kid to a welding class right now and they will make $35 per hour as a welder. They will make a very good living—never stepped foot on a college campus.*

Here Garvey notes that academic success, while a source of pride, is not without

difficulties in terms of how that family and the community-at-large deal with such success. It is

a relatively new concept, generationally, to value a college education or see it as the end goal of

public education. While Garvey notes that families have difficulty "caring" it is not because they

don't want to care, but they are coming to terms with caring for things, that during their

lifetimes, they found no need or use. This is a nuanced difference from the sentiment that

"parents just don't care," which implies a caregiver does not care about education or her or his

children. Garvey is saying such lack of caring is not because of neglect, but because of

ignorance. Not only does Garvey see the reformers' inability to understand this nuance as

detrimental, but also the same reformers' insistence that all students should go to college. And

while this is Garvey's perception of the reformers' ideas and their effects within the community,

it is still interesting to note how teachers are located in between the two with insight into what

reformers want public education to be and the actual concerns, needs, and abilities within the

communities public education serves. This places teachers in the crosshairs of the public debate

around what is wrong with public education. As the following excerpts detail, they feel the

effects of the negative image of teachers and public education:

> *I: Um, so would you say, what's more grinding, the kids or is it the situation the school finds itself in? Does it just depend or is it both?*
>
> *Smith: Yeah, it's both I think. I don't know, I could deal with the behavior if I also wasn't working like thirteen hours day or vice versa. I could work thirteen hour days if my kids were super easy while I was here. Or if I wasn't, I didn't open the paper everyday and read how terrible I am. It's a combination.*

Smith says that the everyday wear of the job is difficult, but would perhaps be bearable if

the public's perception of teachers were not so negative. Garvey, in talking about the reform

partner with which Polk was paired, speaks to the negative light the reformers hold teachers

within as well:

> *Garvey: I went right at them I am like wait a minute. I am sick and tired of sitting here listening to you blast us and treat us like we are…there is nothing positive going on here. Because you do get a lot of self-fulfilling prophecy with that.*

It is admirable, and was probably somewhat rewarding for Garvey, to confront those who are

making it difficult to do the job, but at the same time Garvey seems to express that he would

welcome help in the form of something other than counterproductive criticism. Combined with

the level of instability mentioned earlier in this chapter, the diminished view of the teacher in the

public eye that is both a part of and further exacerbated by education reforms, leads to a rather

bleak outlook:

> *Jones: Because, quite frankly, people aren't going to want to pay taxes. They look at, the only thing the public ever hears about are test scores, "Well, you're test scores suck." Well of course they suck, I got 31% of my kids are SPED (Special Education). But, that, to me, the future of public education—is it's not there. It's why I actively discourage people from going into the field. It's like…you really don't want to do this.*

> *I: Right*

> *Jones: Not only do you have to walk out of here with a ton of debt when you walk out of school, they're walking into an industry, which is basically collapsing. I think there's going to be a lot of changes made, one of the things I think will happen in public education in the next 10 years is, I think, we will have true year round school.*
> *I: Right*

> *Jones: Right now they have a balanced calendar, but I think it's going to become a true year round school as soon as they get to the point where teachers are no longer paid on a 182 day contract.*

> *I: Right*

> *Jones: As soon as we get to the point where you're just a salaried employee, then schools are going to become all year round and probably evening schools will be a big part, they're already trying to put evening school in with some of the schools*

> *I: And with intercessions too, I mean, you have break, but not all kids have the whole break. Some kids still have to come in.*

> *Jones: I don't even think it's going to go that route. I think the days of spring break, summer break, Christmas break, they're coming to an end. It's just a question of when.*

Jones echoes the pressure felt and lack of respect teachers get, but goes several steps

further. First, he is actively discouraging others from joining a profession to which he has

devoted a significant amount of time and energy. Secondly, while it might seem as a leap to

discuss year-round school, in the larger context of the interview, Jones sees year-round school as

result of education becoming so focused on test scores such a schedule will be necessary to

prepare for tests that are high-stakes. This connection between testing and the downfall of public

education is clearer in another part of the interview with Jones:

> *Jones: I did that for 11 years, I gave individuals tests, administered individual tests and if the person wasn't in the right state of mind to take the test, I just didn't give it to them. But, no I'm not going to do that. Here, it doesn't matter, you can walk in under any circumstance whatsoever and you've got to take this test at this time. This is what you've got. So, until we get to the idea where we understand and we're not teaching curriculum and we're teaching students instead, we're going to have problems.*

> *I: Right, um…*

> *Jones: Told the guys at NPR (National Public Radio) last year when they were asking about it, after we were told in October that the school was closing and I told them, it's like, we're the dance band on the Titanic. We know the ship's sinking, there ain't no question about that, it's we're trying to get as much done as we can. Try to keep people calm and, you know, organized, get them on the lifeboats as much as possible. But we know what time it is. I don't think there's anybody in this school and nobody that I worked with for the last few years that wasn't very well aware that we're fighting, basically, a losing battle and we're doing it to the best of our ability.*

While more attention is paid to testing and standards later in this chapter, it is worth discussing here as Jones sees such reforms a direct cause of the end of public education. While some may argue that there are more factors involved, the perception of participants that these reforms (pushed by those who are so disconnected from schools that they are beyond any agency teachers might posses to stop them) are ultimately ineffective and destructive speaks to a nihilism in regards to one's own demise.

Teacher Training. Although not discussed often in terms of number of excerpts, teacher training is important to note, as it has changed vastly due to free market reforms. The growth of alternative licensing programs like Teach for America and the move away from graduate level teacher education to fulfill continuing education requirements have left the field with a diversity in ways how teachers received their degree and/or licensures. Perhaps the underlying philosophy of such changes to teacher training is the de-emphasis on pedagogy and curriculum classes while an emphasis on the idea that content knowledge is the most important type a teacher can have.

For those teachers who received a balanced education of both, such talk can prove frustrating:

> *Garvey: And I think that is part of the other problem that we are running into with education right now is where people from the outside looking in that make the assumption "Oh well, anybody can teach." Really? Ok come on in the class. We've got, and I love them dearly, but we have got people in this building right now who didn't go through the traditional teacher preparation. Didn't go through the practicum experiences or the student teaching that literally, "Oh well I worked for Lilly and know science so I am going to go in a science room," just an example. Actually, our science teachers this year are pretty good. But then they go "Well, wait a minute. Why are they having discipline problems? Why are they having trouble writing lesson plans? Why aren't they…?" Well, it is because you just threw somebody in who wasn't prepared.*

In Garvey's mind, given the state of flux the school was currently facing, such unprepared teachers did not help stabilize the environment in the school. A reoccurring theme in the participants' discussion of education reforms is the nondescript "they" behind such reforms. As seen earlier, when pressed, participants will cast blame on various people in terms of the reforms promulgation; although initially the "they" is seemingly vague, it is powerful. In this particular instance, we see "they" believing that anyone can teach, which then results in a new class of unprepared teachers. The cause and effect here is direct, with little mention of how such policies actually become codified. While it is probable that when pressed, Garvey could give more detail of the process, his initial response speaks to a perceived lack of agency on the part of teachers who are traditionally trained to do nothing about these "new" teachers other than to just "deal with them." Additionally, Garvey alludes to the sense of pride he has in his own teaching and bluntly states later,

> *Garvey: Just because you have a college degree in science, in math doesn't mean you know how to teach.*

While participants might be resigned to working alongside teachers with alternative certifications, the view of them is not completely negative. Perry, when discussing a year in which the school saw a high teacher turnover discussed these teachers:

Perry: Many of them, probably about, I think about 7-10 of them, I don't know the exact number, but it was around that number were actually transitioned program people, like the teaching fellows or the Teach for America groups.

I: So alternative license.

Perry: Right, alternative license individuals. So, very unproven, but very excited individuals, and that's…

I: Sure

Perry: Say what you want to about those groups, they hire some very, very go-getting individuals. Many of them aren't here any longer…for personal choices.

The contradiction here is glaring. Perry wants to be fair in his assessment of the alternative license teachers, adorning them with positive characteristics. And yet, as is often the critique of these alternative licensing programs, these same individuals are no longer at the school by their own choice. The question remains if any positives such teachers contributed were undercut by their fleeting presence within the school.

Budget. While not an education reform per se, budgetary concerns are included here, as they were often mentioned in the same breath as other reforms efforts. Again, the budget was discussed in terms of something out of the participant's control that directly affected their practice and the school. Decisions about the amount of money (often within the purview of the state and federal government) and how the money was spent (decided by the district) were often, if not always, seen as insufficient and ineffective, respectively. This notion is encapsulated below:

Borkowski: [The district] financially has gotten in trouble and have put cuts and unfortunately these cuts have come back and hurt. You know, you're going to spend 50,000 dollars on a car, but put junkyard tires on it and go flying down the road at 80 miles per hour hoping they don't blow. It's not working.

Here we see a perception that money was being spent recklessly within the district. However now, either through current cuts or mismanagement, crucial expenses are being

ignored. This has resulted in a very nice car with the inability to function correctly. The

metaphor's discussion of "flying down the road at 80 miles per hour" seems to harken to the

instability and chaotic nature within the school. It is almost as though such instability and chaos

could be handled if the car was better tuned for such a drive. Borkowski goes on to lament that

because of the cuts, the inefficient spending within the district hurts even more:

> *And it's that financial (attitude of), "Well, we're going to make cuts across the board, we're going to, you know, destroy our students' education by cutting up the teachers and not giving the kids the sizes that we know what works. By giving them the technology we know what works, but we're going to keep as much administration downtown as we can."*

Borkowski's frustration is palpable here, as well as her disdain for the district's

mismanagement of the schools' money. Blackburn mentioned budget cuts as one of the top three

education reforms impacting his teaching and the school. Again, this reiterates the conflation of

budgetary decisions as education reforms. It is not a far stretch, given how much such decisions

affect teachers and how arbitrary such decisions seem.

> *Blackburn: As far as next year, how that impacts the district and the school I think this year the district was already fourteen science teachers short, I mean the Director of Science of [the district] was actually taking her mornings to teach a 7th grade science class. So, I mean, it's—as well as doing a million other things, so I'm not sure…well there are budget cuts should have been done a little bit more strategically rather than…*

> *I: Just across the board.*

> *Blackburn: Across the board. And it's not like, not even looking at who is doing a good job, who is not doing a good job. Like, let's keep the good people and get rid of the rest, you would think that would be…I don't—so that's something that is kind of weird.*

Arbitrary monetary decisions are not only hurtful to the school and integral to the overall

chaos, signaled specifically by the district's Director of Science taking on classes, but they also

contribute to a lack of agency on the part of teachers because such cuts are difficult to understand

or to see the logic therein. While Borkowski seemed to suggest that enough money was spent at

some time, Blackburn's comments hint that the school and district was already financially

strapped from the beginning. Regardless of how much money was spent or not, both participants clearly feel that random acts of budget cuts and their ramifications seem to have had an adverse effect on the school and students.

Choice/charters. Participants often alluded to choice and charters in the same breath, which makes sense. Charters are often presented as an alternative choice to public schools and, conversely, the public school system must be opened to choice so that parents and students can make use of these other options. Participants were quick to counter this narrative as seen in the exchange below:

I: I am going to just do some word association. And we are going to skip some stuff. What do you think of when I say the following: school choice

Perry: Dangerous. (laughter)

Jones: Ignorant.

Perry: There is not enough education around it.

I: In terms of for the people that are making the choices?

Perry: Exactly. It is a blind choice.

Blackburn: I think it also just creates like, almost like an unregulated transient population. So just constant switching, grade dodging. "Oh I am moving to this school because why? Like I don't know. I don't like my other school."

I: Right. Which already exists in urban school to begin with right?

Perry: Right

I: You have a huge transient population

Perry: It just made it even more porous—because now you are talking about two different or three or four different communities, or not communities, but districts. You know?

So while choice is presented as a right for parents to pick the school that is the best fit for her or his child, participants saw it as a dangerous factor that assumed people will make correct, or even

rational choices. Additionally, choice increases a student mobility rate that already adversely affects public schools.

Charter schools were not as negatively viewed:

I: Charter schools

Perry: Possibility

Borkowski: Russian roulette.

Jones: Great for the kids that get to get into the good ones. I mean basically I am old enough to remember the blue birds and robins and sparrows and what we got with charter schools is we are basically doing the same thing. Because a charter school has the option of saying I don't like you. You are not going to do anything for my test scores, get out. And we have, we don't have that option.

So, charter themselves were not necessarily a problem, but their presence was not guarantee of a good education for those students who chose to attend them. If anything, charters were envied for their ability to "choose" their student population. This ability further exacerbated the choice problem mentioned earlier. What is interesting is that participants often lamented not necessarily the charter schools, but the impact that "choice" as a concept had within their own district as it relates to magnet schools. These characteristics can been seen in the quote below:

Garvey: When you have so many, and I am not opposed to charters, so, don't misunderstand this statement. I actually am one of the few public school teachers that will tell you, I think that charter schools can be a good fit for a kid. I think, we have got to think outside the box and I think there is some nontraditional stuff that is good for kids. I think what an unintended consequence that we have seen from not just even charter schools but the magnet school setup that [Polk's district] has done is there is such this push for performance. This push for well if you know they are going to yank our charter and all if our attendance isn't there and testing and all this stuff that they are kicking these kids out. We have kids that are coming here now who should be going to Sunny Side High, who should be going to Bayside High, who should be going to their neighborhood schools but because they…

I: They get kicked out.

Garvey: Yeah, because these companies are running them. Or their closest school is a magnet school. I mean we have got kids that live right across the street from San Dimas High School that are being bussed all the way over here because they don't, you know, "Oh he cussed at a staff member get him out. Ok. What do his test scores look like?" So, you know, there are some reforms that need to be done. And I think we are starting to, from when I was talking to the board president a few weeks ago; I think we are going to see some big changes on that, at least on the [district] side. That if you are a magnet school if you take a kid you are not kicking them out and sending them back to the schools, you are going to deal with the discipline, you are going to deal with this.

Garvey makes a very astute observation about choice and its relationship to accountability and high stakes testing, two themes that will be discussed later. Here Garvey notes that while the stated intention of "choice" is to provide freedom to explore other school options, options he contends might be a "good fit" for a student, another consequence is that schools are more willing to push and pull students in and out of schools due to the high stakes the schools face. In other words, if a student is causing discipline problems, a school is more likely to push her out and, conversely, if her test scores are high, they are more likely to accept her or keep her in spite of problems. Very often, this type of chicanery is associated with charter schools and choice. However, while this inner/outer dynamic is a new phenomenon due to the charter schools, it has a similar feel to previous iterations:

Jones: What it amounts to is, we all know this, charters schools, private schools and the county schools [those schools outside of Polk's school district] do not have to take the students they don't want. But we do, we pretty much have to take anybody that walks in the door. So, we have kids that who will go to—and this is an old trick, the county schools have been doing this to [Polk's district] for years. Kids will go the county school until the first ADM (Average Daily Membership), once they're paid, once they get the money for that kids (Jones makes a whoosh noise) out they go. And it's the same thing with the Charter School USA. They do the same thing, they'll take a kid on, they don't want him there doing testing, but the minute testing's over, they'll welcome them with open arms and they'll take kids, sometime when ADM's over and then send them out.

Regardless of the specific forms of student mobility, they happen more freely due to the concept of choice being introduced to the public school system. In the case of Polk, the participants often felt the victims of such mobility in that they lost many a good student and had

to take in "problem" ones:

> *Blackburn: I think a lot of times we are almost shooting ourselves in the foot with these magnet schools, because, for example Polk is not a magnet school, despite the fact on a lot of the math scores and things like that we are outperforming these magnet schools. But then, it's like they'll constantly take away the top twenty or thirty percent of our students and give us their bottom ten and twenty percent. Of course it's going to be harder for us to make all these improvements if we are continually getting new kids…*

Notice here that Blackburn makes no mention of charters, but does lament the mirrored "choice" within Polk's school district. In other words, while charters operate as an alternative outside of a public school's district, Polk's district emulates such choice through the use of magnet schools. Theoretically, a district might lose its best students to charters, or in the case of Polk, to vouchers or magnets. It is further problematic because the district pulls top students from one school and puts them in another. Perry echoes this:

> *Perry: The district on the whole is struggling. We lose…You know I don't know if you know this but we are not the biggest district anymore, we used to be, we should be population wise, but we're losing that fight too. I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that we continue to operate as if there is not a NCLB (No Child Left Behind) system. We have magnets. Were they take our best and brightest out of the school and put them in another school.*

Perry speaks to not only a diminished student population in terms of numbers, but in terms of quality as well. Perry equates the outer student mobility, from public to charters (or other options), to NCLB and contends that a united school district would be better served to combat the loss of students with other options, rather than a fragmented solution of magnet and non-magnet schools. Borkowski had a stronger take on the quality of charter schools and the effects they have on public schools, more specifically on the students of public schools:

> *The charter schools aren't much better on the teaching aspect today. You're given a bit more freedom, but then again, but like some of the charter schools expect you to do at a much higher level because they figure you're working with the best kids, but the amount they expect to do for the pay, there again, sometimes does not balance out.*

She seems to be hinting that, much like public schools, charter schools are a mixed bag of results

and conditions for the teachers within them. She would go on to repeat the theme that others

mentioned above: student mobility. However, she looks at it from the student and parent point of

view:

> *Oh, it's a huge effect, what happens when they get kicked out of charter schools? What happens when they get kicked out of the magnet? They have to find a school that isn't within their boundaries that will accept them.*
>
> *I: Which is here and…*
>
> *Borkowski: For now, we are supposed to go magnet next year, so what happens? That's just it, charter schools, private schools can decide whether or not they want to accept who they want to accept. We don't get that option, we have to say, "Okay, time to fill out the paperwork." Even if we know, we know that these kids are bad news. We still have to bring them in. And that's where the problem becomes, we are going to have all these specialized schools going well you have to…this schools deals with this or this school will only accept these kids. What happens to the kids that don't fit those charter schools?*
>
> *I: Right, They have to go somewhere.*
>
> *Borkowski: So, what are we going to have? Like, 15 New Days?*
>
> *I: What's New Days?*
>
> *Borkowski: A New Days is an alternative school where smaller classes, like maybe six to a class? Imagine that? Hey, the kids actually get more help, they're more…*
>
> *I: Right, But those are few, there aren't that many of them are there?*
>
> *Borkowski: No, so what happens to the kids that get kicked out of charter schools when there is no more [district] dumping schools? What are those kids going to do then? End up locked up? And, they have got that far. That's in the next couple of years what we'll see. Part of its [the district], part of it is parents are trying to figure out where else to send their kids. They've had problem after problem after problem, we're pretty much the last stop before…*
>
> *I: Right.*
>
> *Borkowski: …for a lot of these kids, unfortunately.*

Borkowski speaks to the musical chair-like quality that choice creates. The unfortunate

effect is that eventually the music stops and some kids are left behind. In the case of Polk, they

find themselves in a school that is inadequately prepared to handle the influx. Borkowski's

apocalyptic view of the future for these kids, who are consistently dumped, is not far-fetched.

Do they continue to be shuffled from school to school until the alternative left is too frightening

to mention? Unfortunately, as Borkowski notes, only time will tell.

While participants did not like the version of choice currently within the public school

system, they were not willing to throw away the concept altogether. The nuanced view is that

the current choice model is not really about giving students options, but the illusion of options,

which is demonstrated in the excerpt below:

> *Perry: Low and behold, our test scores are missing the highest end. You know, of course, you take the brightest kids out and you don't get the high scores and we get punished for it. That doesn't make sense. So, the district just keeps doing that and keeps doing that and keeps doing that and I understand, they want to compete but it doesn't, you know, our kids don't want to go to [another district school] to get those programs. They want to stay here. You know, we've got kids who want to be in the automotive programs at [another district school], but they don't want to leave Polk, so they just drop out instead. You know—follow the logic on that, that's what teenagers do. If it's not where they want it…*

While magnet schools present more options within a district, whether or not students take

advantage of such options is suspect as far as Perry is concerned. From Perry's perspective,

students want those magnet school options within the school they currently attend. When faced

with the possibility of going somewhere else, they just assume they should drop out. While

Perry might chalk such action on the part of students as illogical, he seems to empathize with the

choice. Perhaps the reason Perry feels this way is that he sees such magnet school options as

insufficient. He continues:

> *It's all about accountability for sure for public schools. I think the charter schools get a little bye on that. I'm not sure why, but it's, they want choice and they want options and they want, you know, all of this stuff, but they don't want it to cost more. But, they're also saying, don't raise the taxes, don't change the funding and, you know, we're going to cut that funding.*

I: So, how then does choice get achieved?

Perry: Yeah, and it's a false choice is what it is, and you know, the charter schools have blatantly, some of them, not all of them, have blatantly booted the special education kids out or the ESL (English as a Second Language) kids out. Something has to happen and I don't know what that answer is, but something needs to happen. Where we…because choice is important, that is important. We need to get away from that idea that everyone has to go to a four-year college.

I: How do you tie that together with choice in terms of…?

Perry: That's where you would have to do some sort of choice of, you know, of vocational program or a sort of certification of this or you know…

I: So let me clarify. So in your mind, the choice that you're talking about is a choice more of, to accommodate differences in students' want and ability in terms of what they want to do

Perry: Yeah.

I: But right now we have a choice in, like, which school is better…

Perry: Which school do you want to go to…

I: And is better..

Perry: Yes.

I: And is better at sending you to college.

Perry: Yeah, and that's all, it's always about that, it's always about get them into college, get them into college, get them into college, get them into college.

I: Right, so therefore, I'm looking at test scores, I'm looking at all the stuff that…

Perry: And that's what it's always focused on

I: Right

Perry: And it's focused on that all-important number of a standardized test and, you know, I got a 1438 on the SATs, that's not who I am.

I: Right

Perry: You know? That's just a number I got one time on a test when I took it. You know, years and years ago, that doesn't determine who I am, I mean, you know, I don't

know. It's rough.

Here we see Perry not discounting choice altogether, but wanting a different type of choice from the one public schools currently have. For Perry, all schools have the same goal for students—to get them into a four-year college. This homogeneous nature of all schools, from private to charters to public, makes choice a false one. Perry believes that truly effective choice would be schools with different intentions in term of goals for their students. In other words, a mix of vocational, academic, and other options would better serve the various needs of students. Instead, choices are not made on best fit in terms of the needs of students, but rather on the potentiality of a test score.

Testing/Standards. Testing and standards are presented together to demonstrate how participants often linked the two together in their interviews. For example, participants would mention pacing guides and the importance to stay within their parameters mainly due to the standardized tests. Additionally, while participants, in some instances, felt standards could be a beneficial tool for their teaching, such benefit was undercut by connecting these same standards to specific objectives on a standardized test. To see this link fully, it is helpful to begin with participants' thoughts on standards. Below is a rather lengthy exchange with Jones in regards to teaching and standards:

> *Jones: For example, when I went to high school, Algebra was considered an elective. Now, to get a regular high school diploma in [this state] you have to get Algebra 1, Algebra 2 and Geometry. All of that was elective back in the seventies. So, they're increasing the difficulty level. They're raising, like [the district] now, the, you can't pass with a 60%. You have to have 65% to get to D-, 70% will get you a D. Now is that realistic in terms of the actual bell curve? No, that makes no sense to me. But that's what's happening. We're raising the bars and raising the standards all the time, but the number of kids who lack the academic ability seems to be increasing. At least within the inner city schools, these kids don't have it.*

Whether someone agrees with Jones' assessment of the abilities of students is certainly a point of

discussion, but what is of more interest here is that Jones (and, perhaps teachers in general) have little to no say in how standards are decided. While Jones used the pronoun "we" throughout, it is clear that these decisions are being made outside of input from teachers, or at the very least, his input. While Jones may or may not be correct in the capabilities of his students, in his mind, no one takes into account some cored principles in terms of developing and setting the standards. He continues:

> And, you know, we don't take into account any sort of developmental thing, we don't take into account, for example, right now we're trying to get a lot of these kids to do abstract thinking. Well, you know, anybody that's even done precursory studies of developmental psychology realizes that that development of that particular ability is slow and definitely not uniform. And they can walk around a track, but they can't run. But they can do something, you're meeting them where they're at. We don't do that. We set the bar here, you know it's just like the whole concept of rigor—which I argue vehemently with people. If me and my ninety-year-old aunt and Arnold Schwarzenegger go to the gym for a rigorous workout, we ain't all going to be using the same machine.

> I: Sure. Or working out the same amount of time.

> Jones: Rigor is individually set, but we're trying to say rigor is the standard. Standard is a standard. That's great. I'm glad people can jump that hoop. But you know, seriously, rigor is individual.

When one extracts what Jones is saying about the *process* of determining standards, there are some interesting points—especially his distinction between rigor and standards. In Jones' mind, the standards set today contain a set definition of rigor and therein lies the problem. While Jones seems to have little problem with setting a standard of learning or curriculum, he draws a line in defining rigor across the board for all students. How would Jones determine rigor? He continues:

> What can I do? What's, the kid sitting over in this corner is one of our BR-0 kids, he writes a like a three year old.

> I: What's BR-0?

> Jones: He's below any reading level. When they give him the computer test on rating he

scores nothing. He doesn't get anything right. So he's below kindergarten. Writes like a preschooler and he's expected to take the same tests and the same classes as everybody else. What's the point? He needs to learn how to write. They sent out, for SUCCESS, they sent out a, "This is what you're supposed to be doing in [class]". Well, that's cool, but after talking to the people that come up with the curriculum, you know, one of the people that did the math said, "You know, I don't do the math curriculum with them, because my kids can't do it." But I could, because I had that relationship with them. In an ideal world you would never had over twenty kids in a classroom because, realistically, teaching is a relational art, it is not a science. If it were a science, it would be easy. We would already have it done; we'd never have any problems. Because, science fixes things pretty quick. This is an art. You are dealing with people and if I don't have the time to get to know the kids, if I don't get time to spend with them, individually, we're not going anywhere. Because they really don't care about the academics, the academics that we teach students does not relate to them.

I: Right. So it's not a matter of, that they can't achieve it…

Jones: Achieve something

I: …but it's a matter of we can't do it the way we're doing it and you expect to get the results that you want to do.

Jones: I mean, think it about from the point of view of a gym class. Every kid in that gym class plays basketball, every kid in that gym class goes out on the track; I do not expect all the kids to make the basketball team. I do not expect all of them to be on the track team. I just expect all of them to get out and do something.

Jones' definition of rigor is directly related to how he defines teaching—as a relational art, not a science. In order to set rigor on an individual basis, customized for each student, Jones sees a need to develop a relationship with those students first. This is a process that takes care and time, which, in Jones' view, runs directly in contrast to the speedy quick fixes that the philosophy of teaching as a science offers. When standards are developed outside of the relationships between teachers and students, they will, almost by default, inherently contain presumptions of rigor as well. Jones' point here is integral to the discussion of testing later in this section. The navigation of standards with rigor statically defined universally for all students can be seen in another participants excerpt. Here, Borkowski is asked how her pacing guide affects her practice:

Borkowski: It's like allowing teachers to teach, the schools that have done that, the classes do better—but that's something that we don't do either, we have a pacing guide. Granted for first year it's kind of nice to go, "Okay, follow this pattern". But, then again, that pacing guide is set to an assessment. Our main goal is to show in our assessment that these kids who are in the lowest percentile, you know, in the red basically [move] all the way up to the green, when some of them are still at a fourth grade reading level and this eighth grade material. The schools that have it based on stuff like that are having trouble.

As others will note later, when standards are linked to objectives on a test, which, in turn, is linked to the assessment of a school and its teachers, they can create a level of pressure for the teacher to hit those standards hard, ignoring other concerns. However, Borkowski is not opposed to a pacing guide, as long as its main goal is to guide, not to dictate.

I: So in general do you see the pacing guide as an asset or a hindrance or it just depends or…?

Borkowski: It depends because, there's a lot of stuff first semester that we had to just go, scrap it. You know, these kids, it was for some of them, okay, what's a noun?

I: And those aren't, the [pacing guides] already assuming that they…?

Borkowski: The [pacing guides] assuming that they are at a remote eighth grade level, not functioning at a fifth grade level. So, it's a lot of it we're like, we're supposed to be covering the standard this week, but they're not happening. We're still trying to build up and scaffold. And that was a big battle first semester. So, that and the pacing guide doesn't allot for that so much.

I: Right, they're assuming that you're all working on a certain level; otherwise you wouldn't be able to have it as a pacing guide.

Borkowski: Yes.

I: So, it works if you feel like it's reaching the students where they're at and in terms of their ability? But a lot times that doesn't happen.

Borkowski: (Nods) And we've had to pull numerous resources, deviate from the quote/unquote pacing guide. Go with different types of vocabulary. And find different ways to use vocabulary, get spelling used. And that's so much a battle with these guys, a huge battle.

This seems to support Jones' claim that the standards set do not allow teachers much flexibility

in meeting the abilities of her or his students. Indeed, Borkowski notes that in order to meet the

level of the students, she often has to scrap the pacing guide altogether. In the next excerpt,

Borkowski is asked about a specific example of the pacing guide and how it used in her practice:

> *I: It seems like the biggest battle was, I mean, they were engaged, even with the Seinfeld stuff, (Borkowski was using a clip for comedian Jerry Seinfeld's stand-up routine to demonstrate the concept of anecdotes) that they didn't necessarily find funny, they were engaged, but they were engaged with it, while watching it. It seems like where the dropped off happened, okay, now let's write.*
>
> *Borkowski: Yup*
>
> *I: And they were telling stories, they were telling anecdotes. They were thinking about those types of things. Is that typically the case?*
>
> *Borkowski: Oh, yeah.*
>
> *I: Why do you think that is?*
>
> *Borkowski: Brick wall. Because they don't, they don't see the connection to having to write, even a couple of paragraphs about something when you don't do that in the real world. We do one little thing with job application and that started to get the hamsters rolling, but most of them shut down like, I don't get it. So, it—they sort of…because some of them do have that writing level where writing a paragraph is highly difficult. Or some of the ESL (English as a Second Language) students, they'll have huge issues spelling and they don't, they're so used to being penalized for it, I have to remind them, I'm not docking you for this, that or the other. I'm docking you if you don't do it.*

When followed, the pacing guide sees students' progression as a step-by-step process:

watch the clip, have a discussion, and finally, write a paragraph. The problem with this path, as

Borkowski notes, is that it disregards possible accommodations that need to be made in order for

students to move from one step to the next. If connected to the previous points made, such

accommodations are student-specific and take time to uncover. This leads to another question:

What would standards that allowed some flexibility look like? An excerpt from an interview

with Perry might point to some direction. Here, Perry talks about standards around skills, rather

than content:

I do like the idea of teaching skills instead of teaching content because you know, the skills are what stick with you. It would be awesome if that was my standard to be able to like…because now, I can only get so much time per topic, but if it was a skilled based thing, shoot, I can project up one side and down the other. We just ingrained those skills into what we are learning.

I: And it still gives you some control over the content.

Perry: Yeah, absolutely. When I taught a class that didn't have a pacing guide, that's what I did. I did project based learning, I took small skills to start with and wove them in all through the semester and by the end those kids could write papers, they could present the papers, they could make a PowerPoint about the papers, and they could do web searches and all kind of stuff. They were awesome and, you know, that was fun.

Perry's desire to focus on skills, rather than content, seems to allow some freedom.

Regardless of what the standards looked like, the empowerment Perry feels from his example

seems missing from Borkowski's hectic dance of meeting the needs of the students and yet

holding true to the pacing guide. Perry indicates that such empowerment is lacking from his

current situation as well. To transition from the discussion of standards to that of testing, below

is an excerpt from the focus group that touches on both. This was another example of word

association; in this case the word was Common Core, the national standards movement pushed

by many education reformers, including Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan.

I: Common Core

Perry: Lost ship.

Blackburn: Possibilities.

Jones: Standards by any name. It is the same thing. We keep dancing around the problem that one size doesn't fit all. And when you are starting out with a concept of a common core, well your accountability is tied to this kid knowing this. Well, we have to teach them all at the same pace, the same stuff whether they can get it or not.

I: There is a difference between having a common curriculum and having common standards that are assigned to test scores.

Jones: Yes

Jones returns to a point made at the beginning of this section: that standards, as long as they are

tied to high-stakes testing, undermine their very purpose. While a common curriculum might be

well and good, the pressure of testing makes adapting it nearly impossible. Others were not

outright dismissive of the Common Core, but had some reservations:

> *Blackburn: I like the Common Core. I think that it is…it poses a lot of great things in concept. But the way that it is being implemented, I mean there has been zero talk within [the district] about what is the Common Core and what do we do with it? So I mean we could have this amazing product but if no one knows what it is or what to do with it then it is going to fail.*
> *Perry: And that is why I said it was a lost ship. I mean just nobody looked at it. We just let it kind of float away.*
>
> *Smith: I like Common Core also but what scares me about it is that it essentially takes out all review. So, you are assuming that everyone who starts your class comes in with [certain skills]. That maybe is possible but we are not anywhere close to that. Right now we review for an entire semester. Fail rates will increase.*
>
> *Blackburn: And that goes back to preparing for the Common Core. Like it is a lot more rigorous and if we are doing nothing now and then we are like "Oh, yeah…Common Core time."*

If we took Jones' assessment of the Common Core out, others still believed that it posed

difficulties because of the haphazard way it was being implemented. Blackburn seemed to

believe that a concern such as Smith's could be addressed if more time was spent discussing the

Common Core. This led to the discussion below:

> *I: How much control do you have over the curriculum that you teach?*
>
> *Perry: Zero*
>
> *Jones: Very little. Very little.*
>
> *Perry: I have control over how I teach but that is it. I was watched to a certain extent when you come down to benchmarks and things like that. But I definitely had a, you know, within a two week window, I should be around this stuff. So, how I can teach it is still my thing.*
>
> *Blackburn: Yeah. I mean, (laughter) back to that point (of the Common Core). One of the English teachers actually offered to hold like a Common Core presentation for everybody*

and the principal essentially said, "I'll give you a couple of minutes".

I: A couple minutes? What? Couple minutes?

Perry: What? (laughter)

Borkowski: Imagine that.

A nuanced point is made here. In the eyes of some, it was not that the Common Core took control away from teachers. In fact, Blackburn sees it as a potentially useful tool, if time and energy were spent discussing it with teachers as to how they will use it, not just that they have to use it. So, while teachers may have some leeway in how they adapt the Common Core, the absence of discussion nullified any possible adaptation. This ties into a final point that Jones made about curriculum:

> *Jones: But to get back to the curriculum thing, I think we have, at least I felt like in English I had a ton of control over what I taught. It wasn't that I didn't have control of what I taught. The problem was I wasn't going to be assessed on the same thing. It is like you pick what you want to teach but this is what we are going to, the kids either get this or they don't. I mean we could pick what we wanted to use in order to teach whatever skills we chose to teach but we are still going to be assessed the same way. So in a manner of speaking at least within the English classroom there was an illusion of control.*

With testing, and as will be discussed later with accountability, how much control a teacher has will always be an illusion. It is almost as if this is why the Common Core did not receive as much discussion as it warranted because all parties knew that testing would continue to drive the curriculum bus, not a common national curriculum. In another excerpt from another interview, Garvey points to this illusion as well:

> *Garvey: I think it is just all snowballs. And I do think we do, we get into this lexicon that ties us with education reform and it is not very positive. I mean it looks at it. I think it (education reform) looks at things from a very deficit perspective. And testing is a great example. I know we keep, I know it is not all about testing but that is a big chunk of it. For example, here is one of the great oxymorons in education: your lesson plans, be creative do projects, posters, you know do all this interactive stuff. Here is your pacing guide, which takes out all the creativity. Here is your test, which is "Ok, now we are going to figure out how much this kid knows about math on four questions." Wow,*

really? Where is the performance measurement on this? You don't want us to teach for a test, but yet you are going to tie everything to this test. And a test that is so contradictory to the way we want to teach and the way we know kids learn—wait a minute, guys. And using an assessment model that any statistician will tell you is not valid. If you turned in the [standardized test] assessment as a measure for your doctorate your committee would look at you at go no way.

Garvey certainly is illuminating the way education reform discourse employs deficit thinking in it positioning of public education. More specifically, while reformers (and administrators) might say they want creative teaching, such talk is empty because of the importance placed on testing. Certainly the teachers felt that the only thing those outside of schools care about is the test scores:

Smith: It is getting to the point, like I said, people, when it comes to teachers, the general public doesn't get a view of what we are doing. Unless they happen to know teachers and interact with them in some way all they see is schools are doing badly, the test scores are bad, therefore teachers must be bad.

Smith believes that the public has replaced any qualitative judgment of teachers squarely on the shoulders of test scores, and certainly, when discussing accountability, the public might be taking reformers' lead. Such an emphasis on test scores finds administrators focusing on the subjects in which testing matters the most, Math and English. Smith discusses the pressure felt by teachers who have the heavily tested classes she used to teach:

Smith: Yeah, that teacher, he feels it. So, it's liberating for that kind of intense extreme pressure is off me. But then it also…like because it doesn't matter—It's less bad this year, but our previous principal, she was very, very, very, very good, but she understood very directly, Algebra 1 and 10th grade English and middle school math and English…

I: And everything else is whatever

Smith: Yeah, I mean, and that's how kind of it had to be because the school's like…but, that meant any resources went directly to those places first. Which I do understand, but I don't know. And also, like, that makes, I don't know, it can become like a dumping ground, like, if you passed your…

I: If you passed your ECA's (End of Course Assessments)?

Smith: Yeah, like it doesn't matter.

I: So, then where do you go?

Smith: Yeah, for graduation you have to take [specific classes], so, they should, there's just—it's less of a problem now that there's been some stability in the department, but it's like a shoving, a dumping ground, like if you pass these classes it doesn't matter if you've got D's in every single one of them, then of course your are ready for [an upper level class].

The first point is that because some subjects, or in this case, specific classes, are more important than others due to their connection to testing, they have more resources directed their way. At the same time, with limited resources available, other classes suffer. Secondly, after students pass their tests, which are the largest factor in their graduations, they are often passed through other classes with little regard to their grades in those classes. And while testing has its negative effects, one teacher did see a possible positive one:

Garvey: I think it is kind of almost one of those side, I don't know if side effects is a good way to put it, but kind of one of those side effects of the testing push is we are so focused on these kids have to score well. Well, ok in order for a kid to score well, you know if a kid just spent the night last night at (inaudible) and is coming into school today that is going to affect your thing. If a kid is not taking their meds, if the kid, hey you know what? "Dad just got out of, Dad just got locked up." The kid is kind of discombobulated.

Because testing is so important, teachers and administrators, at least from Garvey's vantage point, are more focused on the things that could negatively affect the student's ability to do well on the test. But, at the end of the day, such a focus on testing can lead to ridiculously myopic view of what is important in the child's life. Garvey continues:

Garvey: 95% of the kids have to take the test or you are failing. You know, and I think it just goes back to that whole thing and I have given tests in hospitals for kids. The kid had sickle cell, was doped up on morphine but by God he had to take that ECA test that day. So I am sitting in there at a hospital bed as buzzers are going off. So, I think part of my big issue with this is that what is the point of having special education if you are going to count everybody as the same when it comes to a test?

The image Garvey paints is not very appealing; a child who is sick being forced to take a test is

an extreme example of point made my Jones in the beginning: testing-based standards ignore the specifics of students, even when those specifics clearly hinder the ability to take the test in the first place. Jones himself is hopeful that public schools can adapt, change, and survive, but it begins with the end of the overreliance on test scores:

> *Jones: My sense is of [the district] does begin the process of reforming at the top level and start, well, you need people in charge of the schools who are dynamic and not the egotistical type. It's got to be more, it's got to be more of a running it by committee where you've got one person who's making the decisions, but they're getting real serious input and taking it from other people. You cannot have a hierarchy and be successful. And that's one of the things that's been—problems with schools for years. And we've developed a hierarchy and there's too many people making decisions that don't have any real buy-ins to the outcomes. So…it depends. It can be done, it's possible, but it's going to take a lot of change. We don't change, if we don't make the changes, if we don't become more agile, more disciplined and more…involved with other things besides worrying about the freaking test scores, we're going to fall apart. We're going to fail, because we can't compete on that level.*

This quote serves as a good transition to a discussion of accountability, because it highlights a concern that many participants have about accountability. Accountability takes decision-making outside or away from teachers. With the overreliance on test scores in accountability measures, it does not seem likely that the change of which Jones speaks will happen.

Accountability. As alluded to in the previous section, standardized testing is linked directly to teacher accountability and often serves as the deciding factor in evaluating teachers. The participants were quick to point out the failings of such a system that puts so much emphasis on one particular thing:

> *Jones: Because it's going to be based on things like attendance and test scores and stuff like that over which we have no control. I mean, realistically, no matter how hard we tried, there's a lot of these kids that are never going to pass [the statewide standardized test] and a lot of those kids are going to drag us down score-wise and attendance wise don't live in this district.*

Jones sees a certain level of futility in judging a school's success on elements that have more

than teaching as a factor. While Jones hints that if students live close to the school, there is more

of chance of making a positive impact, his alluding to students who are coming from outside of

the district as a drag on the school's (and teachers') assessments speaks to that being an ultimate

impossibility. Perhaps the entire concept of accountability is flawed from the start due to a

nebulous definition of who is accountable for what. Consider this excerpt from the focus group,

when asked to word associate with "accountability":

> *I: Accountability*
>
> *Borkowski: What? (laughter)*
>
> *Perry: Consistency. Lack of*
>
> *I: In terms of?*
>
> *Perry: In terms of accountability for whom? You know who gets held accountable when the kids don't learn? And you know whose choice was it ultimately? I thought they had choice?*
>
> *Jones: How do you measure accountability? I mean seriously? I don't think anybody in here really honestly buys into the concept that standardized tests does what it is supposed to do.*
>
> *Blackburn: (Gasp) (laughter). Yeah, sorry sarcasm.*

Not only is the overreliance on test scores stated again, but Perry speaks to accountability

as only applied to teachers, not students or parents for the choices they make in regards to their

education. Regardless of the critiques of accountability, what do accountability measures

actually look like? According to the participants, it depends largely on how such measures are

discussed and created:

> *Blackburn: So [the district] has taken the [a specific evaluation system], that has been a little bit different in regards to, I think the most interesting difference has been at the overall department level for [the district]. So [my subject], I cannot say enough good things about the, the [district subject director], she has been amazing, she's done a lot of very, very wonderful for the [subject] in general at [the district], aligning things, getting curriculum, etc., so the [subject] department it wasn't a huge issue to have beginning—a*

pre and post assessment in which you would be scored on, so she's helped create those. I've helped write those assessments, as well as a lot of the other department people here. So I think it even provided spreadsheets with standard breakdowns and things we could enter the answers in and kind of compare at the end pretty easy. And not only that, the test was aligned to what was taught during the semester, which you think would be kind of the first question you would ask yourself when you are grading the assessments, but found out quickly that was not necessarily the norm for other departments. For example, the [other subjects], they would have different standards at the beginning and end, so it's like that—to judge a teacher on a very poorly put together assessment creates a world of problems not only for the teacher but also the students.

Blackburn lays out a seemingly efficient system in terms of developing an assessment protocol, but does not believe such a process is typical for other subjects. Thus, not only is the assessment model flawed, it is applied and developed unequally depending on the subject. This is more apparent when compared to another teacher talking about his assessment:

Perry: But the district has written what they call benchmarks. And I lead the district and have led the district for the past two or three years in those schools.

I: Are those benchmarks tied to any accountability on your end or…?

Perry: I, my, [name of evaluation protocol] evaluation and my [name of evaluation protocol] goals are tied to performance on the final benchmark exam and yes, my evaluation is somehow, someway based on those benchmarks, but I mean I've been doing well on those.

I: Are they tied to student graduation at all?

Perry: No, mine aren't. Except that I tie the benchmarks myself, this isn't a requirement from the district or the state or anything like that. I tie it to passing my class. So, they have to pass my class to graduate. So, in that way, yes, but not in the way, not in the high stakes testing.

While Perry has a general idea of how his accountability is measured, because he does not teach a subject that has a statewide standardized test associated with it, his description of the protocol seems less structured than the one mentioned by Blackburn.

While standards and testing play directly into the accountability measures schools and district use to evaluate teachers, there are other aspects at play, hence giving accountability its

own section. Accountability is more complex, and as the excerpts below will speak to, time-

consuming for teachers in terms of meeting the various requirements.

> *I: So would you say that's a larger characteristic of the larger forms, that there's an emphasis on testing?*
>
> *Borkowski: Unfortunately, that's what our evaluations binders are put to. I've heard from quite a few principals that administer, you walk in a good teacher's room, you know it, you walk into bad teacher's room, you know it. This binder, this stuff, I get it, it's to ensure and help out and do stuff but the, the amount of time that I've spent playing with this. It's one thing for a portfolio to keep track of your good stuff. This binder, which, won't even come into play this year itself, into next year, is more of a, really, problem than it is anything else.*
>
> *I: Right, because it's just filled with your students' assessm---*
>
> *Borkowski: It's not even the students' assessments! It's, it's stuff like, "How many times did you call parents?" Really? You know, give us a copy of all your phone logs. How many discipline issues did you have? Have you gone to any after school activities for the kids? Really? My paycheck depends on whether or not I able to make every home basketball game for the boys? And you expect me to take care of A) B) and C also? Yeah, that's where, the whole [evaluation] thing needs to be looked at again.*

Borkowski notes that on top of an already taxing workload of instruction (and all the

aspects that go with it: lesson planning, contacting parents, addressing behavior issues, grading,

etc.), the school expects teachers to continually document their activities for their own

evaluations. Borkowski makes this point:

> *Borkowski: How do we handle the kids with IEPs (Individual Education Plans) or the kids that don't. Because sometimes it is emotional, that's why they're acting—but overall it's just straight frustration. You've got class of 30, 40 and they're expecting perfect, you know, Norman Rockwell looking class. In which the students are sitting there, hands folded and penalizing us for not having that. If you want us to have that, then cut down my class size. Cut down all our class sizes.*
>
> *I: Class size seems to be a big…*
>
> *Borkowski: It's huge because you don't have, even with two teachers in the room, we don't have the time to get to everyone. You know, that's where the disruption occurs, that's where the fights occur. We've had fights in this class. Because, it's, the pack rat, it feels like we're getting caged in, crushed in. We're a bunch of cattle or sardines and tempers flare and even on the teaching aspects, you know, having materials, having*

enough, having kids that have…it's just an upward battle and it feels likes we're going backwards for every step we take we take about three back. For that type of feeling, teachers that say this is your first year in this school are highly frustrated, not too many…many are not coming back or not looking forward to coming back.

The expectations associated with assessment and accountability are posited here as unrealistic, unsympathetic, and inefficient. To end, this exchange from an interview with Smith seems to touch on all these characteristics:

I: Are there any other defining characteristics that you see of the larger education reforms that are going on? You've got accountability; you've got standardized testing…

Smith: I don't know, that's mostly what I feel, the teacher accountability.

I: Are probably the one's you feel in your own practice? Like…mostly directly affect what you're doing on a day to day? Or how you teach?

Smith: I mean, yeah. I feel like personally…I don't need someone—maybe that's why all this accountability bothers me—because I would do it anyway. I don't need someone to tell me that I need to work hard and I have to do this, this, and this. And then prove it. Like, I'm going to do that. Like…

Smith sees teacher accountability as insult to her practice, as it insinuates that she is not doing her job well without any evidence. More specifically, she knows what it takes to teach well and does those things, by asking her to document it along the way to "prove" it insults her status as an expert and professional in her field.

I: Does the proving it add to your workload, because you have to document so much stuff?

Smith: Yeah, but less so for me because of my evaluator. And that's another thing, it matters, even though they're trying to make it most objective thing ever, it really matters a lot. Like, my evaluator, doesn't, like, if you are doing okay, whatever. But we have, in this building, we have people like literally making things like binders, like this to prove that they are working. And so, yes that adds…

I: Is it an eye test kind of thing, like they come in and they like or does it just depend on the person? Do they come in and go, oh well, clearly…like to be honest, I sit in your classroom and I'm like she's a good teacher, like I don't need any objective kind of like, measuring or anything like that.

Smith: No, it doesn't matter at all. It matters, I think, from what I can tell, is are you an administrator that…

I: Takes their job seriously.

Smith: Yeah. Like, but following the letter of the law, I think my evaluator, he's all, whenever I drive past here on a Saturday, he's always here, I think he takes it really seriously, but he doesn't care about that kind of stuff. So, I like, showed him that I put together a binder and he's like "meh". (Laughs) But that's not, even in this other teachers that don't have him, so that's doesn't seem fair. It's not fair. So I have to do some things to prove that I'm actually working, but it's not nearly what other people have to do to prove you are working. It doesn't work. It doesn't. It's just like it doesn't' work in… I mean transpose that to business, business managers going to say, "People in this office aren't working hard enough, but if you are working hard you know who you are." What? No. You reward people who are doing a good—so you say something to people. That matters.

Again, we see that teacher accountability is applied in an uneven manner. In this case, teachers are dependent on who their evaluator is and how he or she carries out the evaluation process. In other words, Smith respects her evaluator, and he seems to see her as an excellent teacher, ignoring most of the bureaucratic paperwork she fills out because he is confident in his opinion of her. However, other teachers do not have this type of relationship and, as such, might have a harder time in terms of the accountability measures being used. At the same time, Smith has a problem with accountability measures being applied across the board to all teachers without acknowledging those who are working hard. One might assume, if she was pressed, that all teachers are working hard with little to no acknowledgement as such.

Full Service Community Schools and School Context

In this last section are excerpts that deal directly with participants' thoughts about the Full Service Community School (FSCS) model as it specifically relates to the Polk Community High School. The code FSCS Model, was used to capture any references to the model itself, how the school used the model, and ideas about Polk as a "Community School." The excerpts here cover three general categories: descriptions of the FSCS model, the ways in which Polk

does or does not fit that model, and how the FSCS model at Polk interacted with the instability

the school experienced due to the influx of new students from outside of the immediate

community. Most excerpts dealt with more than one of these themes, so they are presented here

divided by participants' interviews and focus group. To begin, below are some excerpts from the

focus group interview:

> *I: When does Polk High feel the most like a community school? What moments exist in terms of like this is different than other schools?*
>
> *Blackburn: I think the way that it is the most like a community school to me is the fact that students can come in and get breakfast, lunch, and dinner are provided. (They) are provided late transportation – 5:30, and even 6:30 for sports. There is after-school tutoring, after-school programs. There is a full service clinic. They can come in get their eyes checked. Mental health…*
>
> *Perry: The weight room*
>
> *Blackburn: Yeah the weight room, just all that stuff. The pool. And I talk to other teachers and other people and I am trying to explain where I work and they are like, "Wait a minute, is that your school?" And I am like, "Yeah". It is really cool how all of this is there.*
>
> *Jones: Yeah. There is a lot more, to me, I have been in several [district] schools and there is a lot more community involvement. There are people coming in (saying), "What can we do to help?" I have never ever seen that at any other school that I have been in in the two different school districts I have worked at. Never seen anything like that.*

Two ways in which Polk exhibits traits for the community school model are the various services

that are housed within the school that are offered both during the school day and after school

hours. Secondly, the community involvement is seen as unique to Polk, with more members and

organizations from the community coming in to offer help to the school.

> *I: Did those things at any point in time, the aspects of what makes it a community school serve as a way to deal with, like help deal with the chaos? Like would it have been worse if Polk was just Polk? If it wasn't a full service community school?*
>
> *Perry: Yeah, absolutely.*
>
> *Jones: I believe so.*

Perry: I think it would have, the community part almost acted as an anchor in stormy seas. You know it kept us down and kept us from floating away in the chaos. And so without that element, I think we felt that this year. We didn't, we weren't a community school this year.

Jones: We had kids coming from all over town.

Perry: Yeah, all over town and it just, it rocked us to our core. Shook a lot of things lose.

Blackburn: I guess on that note like at the leadership meetings there were a lot of conversations happening about, with the grant (a large federal grant Polk received) essentially being pulled from the school how we are really going to have to rely a lot more on community partners. And look to them for a lot more help that we are no longer going to have at this school. And so how can we go back to that whole community, and you know really take advantage of all the things that are around and are available.

An interesting point here is made that will be reiterated by others in this section—while the community school model is seen as positive, an "anchor in stormy seas," the stability it offered was severely undermined by the influx of new students. So, while other chaotic elements seen in the school over the years were lessened in terms of their impact, the influx of new students not only negatively affected the school, but also impacted the basic tenets of the school. The history of the school, in terms of its birth as a FSCS, plays directly into these points as well. Garvey notes reasons he believes Polk has been successful:

Garvey: The neighborhood wanted it, this is what the parents and what the kids wanted. And the businesses they never, we were lucky here. We had you know [local university] that hooked on real quick. [Nonprofit corporation] was monstrous. You know three community centers, and I think there is another. There too is another distinction you look at the difference between the community centers we have over here and you look at those over there. It is two different type of community centers. So yeah, you know, Randy Smart (Polk's Director of School/Community Engagement], I think, has always said it best you know you can slap community on any school, it doesn't make it a community school. And I have been asked this all over the country "What made Polk successful?" I said we legitimately started (with a) blank slate with this is what the neighborhood wanted. I said that is a very hard thing to replicate. You know we didn't have, "Oh, well this is the way we did it last year." I was here for it. I can tell you point blank, it was literally "Ok, how do we want to start this tradition? Ok well so every year we are going to do blank, blank, blank." We didn't have a lot holding us back saying... because there was no back. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity. I think it really, you can go your, people their whole

career and never have the opportunity that we had here 12-15 years ago. You just won't.

Garvey's points out that because Polk was a closed school that was reopened, it allowed those in

the planning stages to literally start from scratch and ask the community members what they

wanted from their school. By doing this, Polk was designed with specific input from the

community and built from those ideas, as opposed to changing an already existing school into a

FSCS without little input from the community. Due to this distinction, Garvey sees those that do

not engage in this type of community communication as a community school in name only. He

continues:

> *Wait a minute, how dare you just take everything good that we have done here, overload us, understaff us, and you know it is like wait a minute you know? But then on the flip side then we are getting things from [the current State Superintendent of Education] and all that we are the model that they want to use in the rest of the state. Which is great. Awesome.*

Garvey recognizes the difficulty and uniqueness of Polk's opportunity to start from

scratch with significant input from the community, which only goes to fuel his frustration with

how such an opportunity was attacked by the factors he mentions. At the same time, and in spite

of this setback, others still see Polk as a model for other schools. This section is reflective of the

pride participants feel in terms of the school's rare qualities, which is equally matched by the

sadness felt at its embattled state. It is ironic that one of the reasons Polk was reopened was the

desire of those in the community to see their children go to a school located in their community

when the influx of new students, who's own neighborhood school has been closed or taken over,

is negatively affecting the school in the mind of the participants. Garvey says,

> *I have always said we were, we were reopened by a true grassroots and high school dropouts. If you really look at what got this school reopened, it was kids, adults in the neighborhood in a lot of cases who never graduated themselves saying, "No, our kids deserve better." They went to [various community members] and said help. This is what we want in the neighborhood. We are not sending our kids to [other schools]. We want our kids here. And you have seen even just down Monroe Street (the street where Polk*

Community High School is located), we don't have nearly as many abandoned buildings here as we used to. The businesses behind of, there are very few empty buildings back there anymore.

Again, Garvey notes how the community was essential in reopening the school, which, in turn, led to its continued involvement in how the school developed over time. Such a partnership has benefited the community and the school. Polk would then become a victim of its own success in two ways. The first was mentioned earlier in this chapter—that when choosing schools, those from outside of the district chose Polk because of its success. The second was the district's seeing a correlation between Polk as a community school and applying that same model to other schools. Unfortunately, such an application was seen by participants as in name only, resulting in a dilution of the perception of FSCS by the general public:

> *Perry: And we got the awards in the early days for being an award winning community school and for reaching out and for doing the things that we did and then the district saw and said, "Hey, look at what they have!" And all they saw was a seventh through twelfth (grade) building, so they slapped the label "Community School" on a few of the buildings around the district and gave them seventh through twelfth. And at no point, did community school ever mean seventh through twelfth. This community wanted seven through twelve, so that's what we gave them.*

According to participants, what the district failed to notice was not that the school contained grades seven through twelve, but rather that the school listened to the requests and inputs of the community and modeled the school around those requests. This was what made it a FSCS, not the grade levels it housed. However, those lines of communication were threatened by the impact new students were having on the school. Garvey mentioned that the influx of the students from outside of the community had impacted the relationship between the community and the school:

> *They [students and parents] are not in the neighborhood. You know, we used to have family nights, I can remember coming back to school for family nights. And you had to be careful driving down Monroe (Street) because people would be coming from the neighborhood, walking over to the building, you know with five to six of their kids. That*

cafeteria was packed. I mean if you didn't get here, if it started at six (o'clock) and you weren't here by 5:45 you were going to be standing kind of a thing. So, I do think we have seen, and I think they—the community has felt neglected a little bit the last few years.

A harkening back to times when the relationship between the community and the school was stronger was not uncommon among participants. As mentioned in earlier sections of this chapter, the line of demarcation is clearly when the influx of new students came in at the beginning of the year, not only in terms of struggles for the school, but the eroding of FSCS model. In this next excerpt, Garvey envisions what must happen for the FSCS and Polk to continue in the face of challenges presented by outside of the community students:

> *I: So that would be my biggest question is if, if a major part of being a community school is having local kids and that helps, which it seems like you are saying it does help.*
>
> *Garvey: Oh, it absolutely does.*
>
> *I: Can you still do it? Like how do you include those kids? Because right now you have no choice. You have to take them.*
>
> *Garvey: I think maybe, this might be very pie in the sky dreaming, but I would love to see that if we are going to continue this bussing in to hold the parents to some kind of improvement. Of saying "Look, if you know something happens you need to come up to the school." Transportation is not going to be an excuse for missing parent meetings or whatever. And start holding, I think we need to hold parents more accountable. I really think part of it too comes back to that. I think we let parents off the hook way too easy.*
>
> *I: Do you think there needs, also needs to be a kind of proactive education of kids and parents coming in and saying we are different. This is what we do differently.*
>
> *Garvey: I think we need to do that, set the expectation, this is the expectation. If you don't like that or you can't meet that then your school is (not) here.*

Several things are implied here. The first is that having local kids from local families coming to a school is an important factor in the ability to act as a FSCS. The second is that because of their location relevant to the school, the parents and students come in with an understanding of what is expected of them. Thirdly, those parents from outside of the community do not have that same

understanding, and lastly, if they are going to come to Polk, there needs to be some way to not only educate them about the expectations a FSCS places upon them, but to hold them accountable to those expectations. At the same time, others saw the only way to save Polk was to shut those kids out:

> *Jones: When you get right down to it, I said this probably 20 times last year, if this school is going to be successful they are going to have to go back to what they know. They are going to have to be a combination of a magnet and a neighborhood. And that is it. You cannot let people who are basically being kicked out of other schools show up at your door and come in because they are not going to change their behavior.*

Here is a crucial challenge when it comes to the future of Polk functioning as a FSCS: whether to remain open to students from outside of the community or close its door to those students. The first option would require a way to incorporate students, parents, and caregivers into a carefully constructed culture that was uniquely built. The second would be to deny students, who are generally in severe need of the services Polk can provide, the opportunity to attend a school that may be their last refuge. Either option is not appealing and seems daunting, especially given the other issues raised in the preceding sections in regards to instability Polk encounters as an urban school and the negative influence neoliberal education reforms are having on the teachers therein. The overriding question then becomes: can a FSCS survive in neoliberal times? While the next chapter will not specifically answer this question, it will consider it and mourn that the question has to be asked at all.

Chapter Five: Analysis

In Chapter Two, two major components of neoliberal education reforms, accountability and choice, were used to frame a larger discussion about the characteristics of neoliberal education reforms. In the case of accountability, teachers and schools were evaluated, largely through standardized testing, as to their effectiveness. These accountability measures had very little to do with student learning, ignoring factors outside of the control of schools and teachers. The concept of school choice contends that individuals should be free to choose which school they attend, be it private, charter, or public, no matter their location, status, or ability. Individuals were assumed to make rational choices based on the aforementioned accountability measures. These components and their elements represented structural change to public education writ large. By framing the larger structural implications of neoliberalism in public education, a better idea of how such reforms played out within the practice of teachers at Polk High was the initial goal. Given the findings in Chapter Four, this chapter looks beyond teacher practice and instead shifts to how such reforms come to be embodied by the teachers and students within the school. By relying on the framework of Curriculum Theory/Studies and Cultural Studies mentioned in Chapter One and Two, this chapter considers participants and their lived experiences as they relate to neoliberal reform. More specifically, it examines how such experiences had material effects on Polk Community High School.

Additionally, these material effects are examined vis-à-vis the tenets of Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) as discussed in Chapter Two: holistic education, measurements of success, school as centerpiece of community, and services house/partnered with the school. More specifically, what is the likelihood of a FSCS holding true to its theoretical framework given the way neoliberal reform affects its teachers and students? This question holds significant

weight, not only for the future of FSCS, but also for the ability of the teachers therein to both

support and benefit from the aims of such schools. Such a line of questioning leads to a

discussion of whether the framework of FSCS needs to be altered to better position teachers and

students within FSCS to deal with neoliberal education reforms.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the interaction between these two spheres—neoliberal

education reform and FSCS is the main thrust of this research. However, given the findings in

Chapter Four, such an interaction is less about the overall structures of both, or even, the larger

conception of public education, but more about the specific lives of the teachers and students

within. Here it would be helpful to elucidate the connection (or lack thereof) between the

findings of Chapter Four and the literature discussed in Chapter Two regarding neoliberal

education reform. In Chapter Two, the literature focused on the larger structural changes

neoliberal education reform poses and has caused in terms of our understanding of public

education. Many of these same sources, especially Ravitch (2010) and others (Apple, 2001;

Taubman, 2009; Watkins, 2012b), frame such changes historically and structurally. However,

when taken in the larger context of curriculum change (Kliebard, 2004; Tyack & Cuban, 1995;

Watkins, 2012a) neoliberal education reform has done little in terms of fundamental change in

curriculum and pedagogy within schools. To a certain extent, the findings of Chapter Four, at

least indirectly, support this, as the data dictated a change from teacher practice to an ontological

understanding of the lives of these participants. However, in the spirit of reconceptualized

curriculum theory (Pinar et al., 2008), in which the focus becomes not just curriculum as far as

what is taught, but the "lived experience of schools,", the findings demonstrate a level of change

that speak to the structural effect of neoliberal education reform as discussed in Chapter Two. In

other words, while neoliberal education reform might be impacting teacher practice in the way

this research initially envisioned, the impact on the lives of the participants as it related to their experience within their school certainly are material concerns. Moreover, as will be discussed later in this chapter, the specific tenets of both neoliberal education reform (choice and accountability) and FSCSs (holistic education, measurement of success, school as centerpiece of the community, and services housed/partnered with the school) are brought back into focus as they relate to the findings of Chapter Four.

As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, Tsing (2005) posits friction between the local and global as a better heuristic than simply posting both as opposites in a seeming dichotomy; this chapter posits such friction is demonstrated by the participants' thoughts, feelings, emotions, indeed their very being, within the given dynamic of neoliberalism and FSCS. In other words, the goal is to move beyond a simple dichotomous explanation of neoliberal education reform and teachers to a more nuanced, complicated, and, often, messy, interaction between the two—where lines of demarcation are difficult to discern. By using the Cultural Studies components (Hall, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 2006; Helfenbein, 2003, 2008) mentioned in Chapter Two (materialism, anti-essentialism, social constructivism, and radical contextuality), this chapter sees the findings of Chapter Four as an example of how the epistemological/ontological and the theoretical/material come together. Additionally, with Cultural Studies at the theoretical core of this research, it is perhaps inevitable that it started in one place, but ended up somewhere else. As Grossberg (2010) writes:

> Cultural studies tries, as best it can, to accept the fact that things are always more complicated than any one trajectory, any one judgment, can thematize. If the world is complex and changing, then it would seem obvious…that the practice of knowledge-production demanded that one do more than constantly discover what you already know. In other words, where you end up (in your analysis of what is happening) will rarely be where you began, or even where you might have expected to arrive. Instead of the disjunctive (either ... or...) rhetoric of the modern academy, cultural studies adopts a conjunctive rhetoric, "yes (that is true), but so is ... (and so is ... and so is...)," a logic of

"yes and ... and ... and," where each additional clause transforms the meanings and effects of all the previous ones. (pp. 16-17)

In order to dissect the findings of Chapter Four, I rely on several theoretical conceptions/metaphors. First, as briefly mentioned in Chapter Two, Quiggin's (2010) notion of zombie economics is expanded to discuss not only how neoliberal education reform continues despite evidence of its ineffectiveness or danger (its "death," as it were), but also how it is perpetuated through the infected bodies of teachers and students themselves. By examining various ways the zombie has been characterized in popular culture, I posit the zombie as an ideal metaphor for the discussion of the specific ways teachers feel the effects of neoliberal reform within Polk. Such a metaphor is not taken lightly and is not meant to diminish the effects of reforms on people; As will be discussed, by using the metaphor of a zombie, one sees neoliberal reform beyond the discourse around public education to how such reforms come to be embodied in the actors within public education. Zombies bring an understanding of how reforms affect schools, but also speak to the complex relationship of how those reforms and actors feed each other. In the end, a zombie is an undead body, but a body nonetheless moved forward by some other nonliving power.

The use of zombies not only serves to elucidate friction, but also as a link to another useful theoretical metaphor—hauntings. Similar to zombies, hauntings are an attempt to capture an understanding of the human beyond its traditional definitions by relying on affect. As Madison (2012) notes,

> Affect is the conscious subjective aspect of feeling and emotion. It refers to the complex ways that feelings and emotions are produced and the ways they generate knowledge and our very existence, that is, epistemology and ontology. (p. 75)

As Gordon (2008) discusses, hauntings address affect as it relates to something that has been missed, misunderstood, or misplaced in the past by an active appearance in the present, which is

often marked by affect. This chapter contends that the hauntings within the participants' school were evident by the chaos therein. Additionally, within Polk such hauntings not only point towards both the failures and successes of neoliberal education reforms, but also the perpetual failure and success of public schools, historically, to help students who are in the most need. Hauntings seek to capture the affective as it relates to the experiences of the participants in this study. It should not be misinterpreted that hauntings are specifically clear in how they point to what we are missing or forgetting. Often hauntings are felt rather than seen, unexplainable to others as to their effect on the haunted. Attempts to capture the specifics of a haunting are oftentimes incomplete and only scratch the surface of their true meaning.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the chaos within Polk Community High School was a major theme of Chapter Four. It is the contention of this chapter that such chaos stems from the zombies and hauntings therein. Such concepts are taken to be parts of a larger understanding in the case of both students and teachers. More specifically, I use Puar's (2007) discussion of contagious bodies to posit Polk Community High School as both shaped by and contributing to the ways in which zombie ideas and hauntings came to inhabit the school. In other words, the chaos within Polk can be described as a place of contamination in which bodies became easily infected at a rapid rate, increasing to a level that become difficult to contain and effectively combat. Perhaps more telling, when hauntings and zombie ideas are placed within Puar's notion of contagious bodies, one can track their movements from one body to the next— thereby creating a fluid understanding of the identities of both teachers and students. No longer are teachers and students static; in terms of their identities, they are contagious bodies in which such neoliberal ideas as accountability and choice are able to attach, detach, and reattach according to the specific context of the school itself.

Lastly, the material effects such a contamination of zombies and hauntings had on Polk undermined the ability of those within to implement the framework of FSCS. It is the eventual contention of this chapter that the ability of neoliberal reform *to become* embodied and material is the very reason Polk High's ability to rely on the FSCS as a means of support was problematic at best. Theoretically, neoliberalism and FSCS run counter to each other on a larger scale. However, of more interest here is the ways that the materiality of neoliberal education reforms within Polk make the FSCS model ineffective. In other words, while neoliberal education reforms themselves do not specifically neutralize the ways in which FSCS seek to operate, it is the way in which they become materialized in a school, embodied by teachers and students, which do so. As is discussed later, the notions of community upon which the model of FSCS rely might need to be altered in order to truly support those within a FSCS and the surrounding communities.

By using the theoretical concepts mentioned above, this chapter is not seeking to place a framework of understanding on top of the participants in this study. Rather, by articulating (Grossberg, 1996) the findings with these theoretical concepts together, it is my hope to present a better understanding of the lives of participants. In other words, this is a side-by-side process, not a top down one. Indeed, the participants' use of zombies and contagions in describing their experiences within Polk were directly responsible for the theoretical journey this chapter undertakes. Additionally, the use of hauntings to address the unexplained, mysterious contradictions within the findings attempts to capture the affective nature of such contradictions without simply explaining them away. As such, this chapter refuses to be seen as a totalizing of the findings of Chapter Four, but rather a continuation of the process begun by the participants in their attempts to explain their lives at Polk.

While the theoretical framework set forth in Chapter One will be relied upon heavily, it is helpful to be reminded of one particular aspect as it relates to the additional theories mentioned above. Stuart Hall's conception of articulation (Grossberg, 1996) looks to connect ideological elements in academic examination that are dependent upon the specifics of the subjects that they seem to effect. In this case of this dissertation, I connect the findings of Chapter Four and the concepts I have outlined above. Concepts such as zombies, hauntings, and contagions carry with them an ideological weight full of meaning and context. In the case of zombies and hauntings, both terms have a mythological history that has recently been crystalized and mutated through various popular culture iterations. In the case of contagions, scientific understanding as it relates to disease and medicine is brought to mind. This is not an accident, and rather than syphon such excess meaning away, these understandings will be embraced in the hope that they give further understanding to the results in Chapter Four. These concepts are not merely props, but tools with ideological weight and heft meant to build (and in some cases deconstruct) knowledge and meaning. However, they should not be seen as nuggets of understanding that encapsulate the entirety of the findings. Indeed, I use these concepts in a free floating way, talking about ideas, participants, thoughts, feelings, and emotions as a means to capture not total understanding, but the contradictions and ambivalence that are contained in the complexities of the participants and the small sliver of access they granted to me.

Indeed, it is the contradictions contained with the data collected from the participants that serve as a touchstone for this research. Participants, as with all of us, did not present a unified, meta-theory as it related to the happenings within Polk High. Neither collectively nor individually did they present a consistent account of their own thoughts and feelings. These theoretical metaphors are meant to tackle the following, larger contradictions contained in the

findings of Chapter Four while concurrently examine potential new ones: (1) participants viewed new students at Polk as a systematic cause of the larger problems the school faced, but were loathed to place the blame directly on the new students themselves; (2) participants decried many of the changes neoliberal reform wrought on their lives as teachers, but seemed complicit to some of the demands placed upon them by these same reforms; (3) participants accepted a certain level of chaos within their school, but classified this current year's chaos as different and unacceptable; (4) Polk High's carefully constructed understanding of community, as discussed by a FSCS framework, seems to sometimes run counter to, and at the same time, support neoliberal education reform.

Imperfectly to be sure, I sought to place my own research positionality at the very forefront of this study in Chapter One specifically because I wanted to engage in a type of articulation in which my own experiences and knowledge was placed next to, not on top of, the same from the participants. Obviously, the very act of writing this chapter runs counter to such an aim as it places my voice prominently last. However, it must be written despite the risks inherent in such an undertaking—a double bind, much like the ones of which Spivak (2012) speaks in which she questions how those of privilege can effectively highlight the voices of the oppressed. In the case of a double bind, the subject finds itself with two determinate decisions, both wrong (or right) and the burden of the double bind is to decide, so I make my decision(s) with this chapter, accepting full well that they are imperfect and imprecise, but I do so hoping to honor the voices I join in the telling the story of Polk Community High School.

Zombie Neoliberalism

John Quiggin (2010), in his book *Zombie Economics: How Dead Ideas Walk Among Us*,

describes the ways in which ideas associated with market liberalism[20] continue beyond their lifespan. In other words, even though these ideas are proven wrong by facts and research, they continue to have a major influence in continuing the ideology of market liberalism forward. Quiggin uses the term *zombie* for various reasons, mainly for the singular characteristic of zombies: they continue on past their death. Quiggin focuses on how such ideas become zombies through a political and larger societal process in which they are championed by certain schools of economics and the political elite. This chapter takes his conception of ideas as zombies and applies it to neoliberal education reforms. The difference is that while Quiggin focuses on how the undead is reanimated through larger discourses, this chapter will focus specifically on how zombie ideas continue on in the embodiment of teachers and students at Polk High.

The use of zombies as a means to discuss neoliberal reform is not happenstance. In the findings in Chapter Four, Ms. Borkowski made use of zombies as a metaphor to describe the circumstances of the school year as chaotic, overwhelming, and discouraging.   When asked how she would tell the story of the previous school year, Borkowski replied, "It was almost like a minor zombie apocalypse movie. The middle schoolers were the zombies." She would go on to say that she felt constantly under attack with "blood going everywhere." This answer came during a focus group and two other participants agreed with her assessment. But why was the zombie metaphor so apt to describe her year? More specifically, why did she describe the students as zombies? To begin, it would be useful to discuss specific traits of the zombie and then discuss these traits as they relate to how neoliberal ideas are embodied.

There are many variations on the zombie theme throughout popular culture, although this

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[20] Quiggan (2010) equates market liberalism with neoliberalism, Thatcherism, Reaganism, economic rationalism, and Washington Consensus (p. 4).

chapter is not the place to catalogue them. For the purposes of this chapter, the focus will be on

the most prominent, recent popular culture iteration of zombie, *The Walking Dead* comic book

(Kirkman, Adlard, Moore, & Rathburn, 2009) and television series (Darabont, 2010)[21]. While

fascinating, the particulars of the storyline are not germane here, but how zombies are portrayed

is. The first characteristic, mentioned previously, is that zombies are the undead—bodies that

live beyond their mortal death in an altered state. Secondly, zombies are not benign creatures

walking amongst us; they feed on living humans, attacking them and eating them alive.   In both

the comic book and the television series, *The Walking Dead*, the zombie condition is the result of

a disease that is spread through humans—if infected, a human will become a zombie upon his

death. In the television series it is revealed that the infection, previously thought to only spread

by being bitten by a zombie, has seemingly infected the entire human race, so all the living are

condemned to become zombies once they die. The virus itself reanimates the body by triggering

the lower functions of the brain, only enough to move the body to its next feeding. Therefore the

monsters are inarticulate and incapable of human thought or emotion. Once a zombie, the

monster is difficult to "kill." Since they are already dead, the only true way to stop a zombie is

to cut its head off. This is difficult to do, as zombies are at their most dangerous when travelling

in packs—the more zombies there are, the less likely one is to escape alive. Finally, while

becoming a zombie transforms a human, the transformation is incomplete enough that the person

stays in human form. In other words, while a zombie is easily recognized as such, the living can

still see the person it used to be. Indeed, in the television series, various characters struggle with

this dissonance and cannot bring themselves to kill zombies in the hopes that their dead loved

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[21] My own reading of *The Walking Dead* is incomplete as I am a watcher of the television series
and am reading the comics in a manner as to not "spoil" the yet to come episodes.

ones might return to them.

A word of caution is extremely important to note here. There is a danger inherent in deploying a zombie metaphor to describe actual, real human beings—to do so marks them as zombies and therefore all the negative connotations accumulated over the many popular cultural iterations are sure to be brought along regardless of how specific this chapter is as to what iteration it uses. To be clear, zombies are mindless monsters causing destruction and chaos and the people within Polk High are human beings with agency (limited, of course, due to the constraints of living in a society built on structures of power and control), thoughts, emotions, and feelings. The use of zombies and, more specifically *The Walking Dead*, is used to discuss how ideas that make up the ideological framework of neoliberal education reform live on past their own life. Moreover, because the zombie metaphor was used by the participants themselves, it serves as a link back to their voices and stories. It is the contention of this chapter that in the case of Polk High, these ideas continue on because of the powerful resonance in the lived experiences of those within the school. There is an ability of these zombie ideas to latch on or become a part of who people are as demonstrated in their actions, thoughts, and feelings—people carry the zombie idea, but that does not necessarily make themselves zombies. Admittedely, however, my use of this metaphorruns the risk of marginalizing the very participants of this study—of whom I hoped to share their stories in meaningful and productive ways. As will be said later in this chapter, if such ideas had a way of becoming ingrained into the beings of those within Polk, there is nothing special about those of us outside of the school walls that would make us immune. It is reasonable to assume, but further study would be required, that the swiftness to which neoliberal education reform has attacked public education is a result of its ability to become embodied on a larger scale. Indeed, Taubman (2009) discusses how the self-

perception of teachers as worn-out saviors looking for any help, regardless of where it came, made it easier for such reform to become embedded in schools and universities.

So how do zombie help us understand the ways in which neoliberal reform become embodied by teachers and students? The first is the notion that neoliberalism's ideas continue even though they are "killed" by research that shows them to be dangerous and ineffective. As discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Four, there is plenty of discussion showing the dangerous effects neoliberal education reform can have, and yet, these reforms continue to be implemented in public schools mainly due to the continuing support of major political and business leaders who espouse the merits of such reforms, enacting laws to implement them. In the case of Polk High, participants often remarked how the reforms of accountability (Apple, 2001; Gam & Cobb, 2008; Giroux, 2010; Kliebard, 2004; Kohn, 2012; Ravitch, 2010; Taubman, 2009; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Watkins, 2012a)and choice (Buras, 2012; Cobb, 2012; Gam & Cobb, 2008; Giroux, 2010; Mead, 2008; Ravitch, 2010; Raymond, 2009) were negatively impacting their practice. However, what is interesting is how these reforms come to be embodied in the teachers and students themselves through their actions and perceptions of each other. Much like the virus of the television series infects the living and leads to an eventual transformation, neoliberal reform infects teachers and students, forcing them to transform to something other than their human nature, a neoliberal zombie as it were.

The first of these infections can be seen in the quote from Borkowski above in which she describes the middle school students as zombies. How did these students become infected? In Chapter Four, all of the participants remarked on the influx of students from outside of the Polk's community as a major factor in the chaos within the school. Not only was the school not provided the staff required to deal with the influx of new students, but also because of the

students' status as living outside of the surrounding communities, they were easily marked as "other" from the rest of the student population. This "otherness,"", at least according to the participants in this study,, seemed to transcend all the usual marks of difference discussed in Chapter One: race, class, gender, and sexuality. Perhaps, this is due to the common demographics the new students shared with the old—most, if not all, were of low socio-economic status and minorities. The new students still lived within Polk's school district and such characteristics are similar district-wide.

Regardless of the actual specifics of the demographic differences between new and old students, participants perceived the majority of these students as having behavioral and learning disabilities. More specifically, teachers tended to link the behavioral and education problems of these students as a major contributing factor to overall chaos at the school. Additionally, students at Polk from the surrounding communities often either suffered from the chaos, or joined the new students in creating it. As Mr. Perry said in Chapter Four, "Our old kids are either drowning in the chaos or joining in." Whether or not the new students had a higher rate of learning or behavior problems is irrelevant here because the perception of these new students as different was easy to do. Because the students were not "from here," they could easily be marked as not an original Polk High student. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter Four, both students and teachers knew how to identify these new students. Furthering this distinction was the perception among teachers that the effectiveness of the school was directly related to the proximity of the homes of students and teachers. Therefore, the ability to help these students was made difficult because they lived outside of the community.

Here we see new students marked as something other than a normal Polk student. They were recognized as students, but were also categorized, by their status of outside of the

community, as not Polk students. However, what accounts for their presence at the school? The cause of infection here is the zombie idea of choice (Buras, 2012; Cobb, 2012; Gam & Cobb, 2008; Giroux, 2010; Mead, 2008; Ravitch, 2010; Raymond, 2009) in public schools. As mentioned in Chapter Two, choice relies on the concept that individuals, when given the freedom to do so, will make informed decisions about where they should go to school. In the case of Polk because the boundaries between schools in the district were porous, these new students could choose (or be moved there regardless of their choice) to attend Polk High.

In the abstract, the concept of choice (Giroux, 2010; Mead, 2008) is discussed in terms of the freedom it grants upon parents and students to send attend whatever school they deem fit (Giroux, 2010; Mead, 2008). However, here we see that such choices result in the material movement of bodies from one school to another, affecting the number of students in the school, the ability of the staff to deal with that population flux, and how such movement into a community school like Polk marks these new students as different as soon as they walk in the door. Choice as an embodiment creates material effects in terms of resources such as textbooks, desks, and classrooms. Urban schools, whose resources are already limited, must now decide how to marshal such resources effectively dependent on the movement of students due to the choices either they make or are made for them. In addition to all of this, not only can bodies move, but they can also move freely, increasing the mobility of what the participants viewed as an already highly transient population. As such, the bodies were not only differentiated for the their presence and quantity, but also because of their instantaneous appearance in the school. The epidemic (or as will be discussed later, contagious disease) quality that these bodies of new students came to represent is indeed zombie-like with the driving force of choice to spur them onward. The point, is that while choice might be a zombie idea, their true effect on Polk

Community High School was felt by its presence in terms of the bodies of new students and their ability to infect the rest of the inhabits of the school.

Ironically, at least according to the participants in this study, most of the new students were not there through an active exercise in choice, but rather because the schools they attended previously were taken over by the state and assigned a corporate school agency to run the school. As a result, students chose not to attend their former school, but stay in Polk's district, leaving them with Polk as their only choice. Here, choice is both active and passive—active in the sense that the students chose to stay in the district and therefore in a public school, but passive in that they did not choose *which* public school within the district. This is because the state intervenes firstly by making movement of students easier, thus setting the stage for active choice. However, those students who do not actively choose their school can be moved from school to school within a district. In other words, because their school was closed and the other high schools in Polk's district were magnet schools with application processes, Polk was the only place for these students to go. Their choice was made for them. Participants in this study began to see Polk as a dumping ground, a place for the zombies to be quarantined.

And yet, even though these students were marked as different, they were still recognized by the participants as students. Perhaps the most effective way to deal with these students would have been to shut them out, in effect cut off choice as the infectious driving force behind their zombie-like state and save the other inhabits inside. Obviously, structural factors in both the district and the school prevented this from happening. However, what is telling is that participants tended to put the decision to shut these students off outside of their purview—their own feelings of how to deal with these students was a mixture of sympathy and remorse. Participants did not blame these students for their infection, but recognized the context of public

education as the major cause. As Borkowski, who called the students zombies, said, "So, what happens to the kids that get kicked out of charter schools when there is no more district dumping schools? What are those kids going to do then? End up locked up?"

The ultimate point is important enough to flesh out a bit more here. It is not something inherent about the ideas within neoliberal education reform that makes them immortal zombie ideas, but perhaps it is their ability to become embodied by those within the public education realm that is the real source of their zombie powers. Regardless of the reasons, it must be noted that something beyond the merits of their arguments extend the life of these ideas beyond mortality (Quiggin, 2010). At least in the case of this study, the zombie ideas became strengthened by the people they infect. In the case of the students, choice became solidified as a characteristic of public education not because of its effectiveness in terms of improving student learning or public education, but because students become the embodiment of choice, thereby solidifying its place within public education. However, students are not the only ones infected by zombie ideas—teachers within Polk were as well.

The neoliberal zombie virus known as accountability infected the teachers themselves. As mentioned in Chapter Two, accountability measures are less about teaching and more about creating an audit culture to which everyone is beholden—by creating a system in which teachers are measured not only by test scores, but also of a daily tracking of their time to make sure they are "doing it right" (Apple, 2001; Gam & Cobb, 2008; Giroux, 2010; Kohn, 2012; Ravitch, 2010; Taubman, 2009; Watkins, 2012a). The participants' responses in Chapter Four echoed this when they discussed the inaccuracies within and overreliance on standardized testing. Additionally, they commented on the bureaucratic hoops through which they jumped to be evaluated—paperwork that had to be filled out, in addition to a tracking of not only their

students' performance, but also their own teaching. Not only does it add an extra workload, but it is also insulting. As Smith said, "Maybe that's why all this accountability bothers me— because I would do it anyway. I don't need someone to tell me that I need to work hard and I have to this, this, and this. And then prove it."

This type of control over the work of teacher is nothing new (see Apple, 2013), but accountability marks a change from implicit to explicit control as it becomes tied to teacher job security and pay (Ravitch, 2010). But how does this account for zombie ideas infecting teachers? Much like the students and choice, accountability marks a change in which teachers can still be vaguely recognized (by others and themselves) in terms of traditional notions of teachers, focusing on pedagogy and curriculum. However, the change has made them something "other than" teachers, perhaps bureaucrats whose main concern is meeting the expectations of an audit culture, which has little to do with actual teaching. Regardless what they perceive themselves to be (or how others perceive them), the zombie metaphor here is less about the end result and more about the transformation process itself. The participants changed by concerning themselves with things beyond their control (standardized tests) or that which was an added burden (bureaucratic paperwork). Thus, the transformation is marked by the ways in which accountability spurs the teacher body forward, much like the virus that triggers the brain of the zombie to move forward to its next victim, accountability moves the teacher towards the attainment of high test scores and meeting other accountability measurements.

While accountability can begin a transformation from teacher to something other than teacher, for a moment it would be helpful to consider accountability as a zombie idea, specifically as it relates to an idea that will not die. Chapter Two discusses the inherent problems in accountability measures, and yet, such measures do not seem to be disappearing according to

the participants in this study. If anything, there are becoming more numerous, making the ability

to ignore them difficult—another zombie characteristic. But if there is research, or better yet,

teachers who are saying such accountability measures are dangerously ineffective, why do they

persist? Much as choice was embodied in the new students of Polk High, the ways in which

accountability are embodied as teachers makes it nearly impossible to kill. While participants in

the study often lamented accountability, they still participated in those accountability measures.

I pass no judgment here; their very jobs were dependent on meeting those expectations set forth.

As such, by enacting accountability in terms of their own practice, the participants welcomed all

that goes with accountability as well—the privileging of data and science making teaching a

quantifiable process. Even though the participants might feel it is otherwise, as Jones noted,

"Teaching is a relational art; it is not a science"; by being compelled to take part in

accountability measures, their actions ran counter to such a belief. Indeed, even when not

required, some participants strengthened the accountability ties. Perry said, "Except that I tie the

benchmarks [tests] myself, this isn't a requirement from the district or the state or anything like

that. I tie it to passing my class." While Perry's performance was already tied to the district

mandated benchmarks, he placed even more importance on such tests by tying it to his student's

passing and failing. It would be interesting to note whether his student passing rate was

originally a part of his evaluation. However, it hardly matters now as he has made it so by

placing emphasis on the benchmarks. In the end, either because those in position of power

(administrators, politicians, and other education "leaders") impose it upon them or they do it to

themselves, teachers have embodied accountability and all the baggage that goes with it.

So how does one stop the infection of accountability? There are no easy answers and I

certainly do not presume to have any here. What I will say is that it is clear from the findings in

Chapter Four that the participants care for their students often in spite of the infection. From

Jones' efforts to practice what he sees as a relational art that focuses on one-on-one interactions

with students to Borkowski's willingness to have a teaching style that runs counter to classroom

management ideals because she believes it strengthens her bond with her students, all the

participants spoke of a level of affection and care for their students that seemed to be outside of

the concerns placed upon them by accountability measures. However, one wonders which

interpretation of the teacher will win out in the end if the definition continues to be solidified

through the embodiment process as mentioned above. Perhaps, this is where the FSCS model

can be of some solace and comfort for teachers as they wage this identity struggle and this will

be addressed later in this chapter. I also wonder if the struggle of defining teachers proves too

difficult for most and accounts for some of the participants in this study leaving the profession

altogether. This leads to another reason why the zombie metaphor is useful, as it marks the

negotiated process of distinguishing who is infected and who is not.

There is a specific passage in *The Walking Dead* comic book (Kirkman et al., 2009) in

which the main character, Rick, questions which are truly the walking dead, the zombies or the

living. He says (emphasis in bold is the author's),

> We **already are** savages. The second we put a bullet in the head of one of these
> monsters—the **moment** one of us drove a hammer into one of their faces—or cut a head
> off. We became what we are! And that's just it. **That's** what this comes down to. You
> people don't know what we are. We're **surrounded** by the **dead.** We're **among** them—
> and when we finally give up **we become them!** We're living on **borrowed time** here.
> Every minute of our life is a minute we steal from **them!** You see them out there. You
> **know** that when we die—we become them. You think we hide behind walls to protect us
> from the **walking dead!** Don't you **get it?** **We** *are* **the walking dead! We** are the
> walking dead.

Here we see the character of Rick encapsulating an overriding theme of the comic and, to

a lesser extent, the television show. Delineating who exactly are the zombies (the walking dead)

is difficult at best, especially when all are infected by the zombie virus. While the spectacle nature of the zombies' horrific state is certainly the premise of *The Walking Dead*, it is not necessarily the focus. The more compelling stories are born from the interactions of the living as they deal with the ramifications of life in a zombie apocalypse, thereby questioning and challenging traditional definitions of what being human means. In the end, both zombie and human become floating signifiers and the differences between both become non-distinguishable (and maybe besides the point). The only differences are the material ones, and as stated earlier, even those are not enough to make a clear line.

So what does this mean for those inside of Polk High? Primarily that while the use of zombies as a mode of understanding sheds light in terms of the implications of neoliberal education reforms, perhaps the best understanding can be gleaned when applying zombies in their most current pop culture iteration—the lack of distinction between the living and the dead. In other words, the ways in which neoliberalism infects the lives of teachers and students is ambivalent at best; even more so when deciding who is *more* infected—the teachers or the students? In the end, the concept of zombie, as presented by *The Walking Dead,* captures an ontological uncertainty not by trying to define the condition of the neoliberal body, but focusing on the affect of such a condition. It is an uncertain state of being that ebbs and flows depending on the specifics of the relationships to other bodies (both zombie and human) and the context of the schools they inhabit. Indeed, it is the ways in which those bodies interact with each other as zombie/human or human/zombie within specific places that makes the ability to define them as either zombie or human increasingly difficult. I would contend that attempting to define teachers and students as either zombies or humans misses the point, as it is more important to try and understand the state of flux represented in their identities as they relate to each other, the schools

in which they find themselves, and to neoliberal education reforms.

In this vein, I have used the term "zombie" to describe both ideas as they relate to neoliberalism and the infection of the bodies of teachers and students within the school. To do so is an attempt to problematize the simple understanding of how education reforms affect teachers and students. It is not as simple as X reforms results in Y action on the part of teachers and students. Instead, the ways in which ideas infect bodies and are then manifested are complexities full of contradictions. At best, a thread of meaning might be able to be connected from those contradictions. I have attempted to do so with the term *zombie* here, as it sheds some lights on the ways in which neoliberalism "works" on bodies. The important caveat is that by using zombie, I do so not as solely epistemological or ontological, but a combination of both. Such a combination does not seek to explain, but rather highlight the ambivalent nature of the relationship between the two.

Nostalgic Hauntings

Putting the concept of zombies aside for a moment, the presence of the "new" students at Polk represents another possibility of articulation in the form of hauntings. As briefly mentioned in Chapter One, in her book, *Ghostly Matters: Hauntings and Sociological Imagination*, Avery Gordon (2008) posits hauntings as a means to capture the aspects of complicated life that are often superficially addressed. Gordon contends that hauntings draw "us affectively, sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition" (p.8). She also writes:

> What's distinctive about haunting is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely. I used the term haunting to describe those singular yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done-with comes alive, when what's been in your blind spot comes into view. (p. xvi)

In this sense, this section posits Polk High as a haunted school, full of ideas and bodies whose presence represents the animated state of which Gordon writes. Indeed, considering the findings of Chapter Four, the excerpt above matches the thoughts and feelings of the participants in this study.

As detailed in the previous section, the presence of the new students at Polk had a profound effect on the school in the eyes of the participants. The articulation of zombies was an attempt to discuss this effect and explain the link to neoliberal education reforms. When seen as a haunting, the presence of these students are not only the embodiment of neoliberal education reforms, but could also result in an affective state on those within the school—a level of discomfort that is pointing them to a "repressed or unresolved social violence" of the past.

Certainly, neoliberal education reforms have focused our attention on the present situation of public schools in the United States. As mentioned in Chapter Three, there is an ample amount of scholarship (see Watkins, 2012b for a small, but diverse example of such scholarship) that seeks to understand how neoliberal education reforms are affecting students, families, and teachers. The past is mentioned only as prologue in terms of how these reforms came to be in the first place. Crisis tends to focus one's attention on the moments at hand. Indeed, in terms of the zombie apocalypse presented in *The Walking Dead*, the living have very little time to contemplate how such things came to be as they are more concerned with surviving. Such survival mentality is noted by Pinar (2004, 2012) in referring to the current state of education as the "nightmare that is the present" and, later, "the problem of the present." Borkowski, when interviewed for this study, echoes this sentiment, "[Polk turned] into a true triage. This year was nothing but a MASH unit. The bombs are going off, we're trying, we're figuring out, patching people together and running off." And yet, the presence of these new

students was about more than a crisis of the present—it was also about the past.

As detailed in the excerpts chosen in the previous section, the participants spoke in contradictions when it came to the new students within Polk. On the one hand, they saw them as a contributing factor to the problems they were facing, mainly due to the school being understaffed to deal with the increased numbers and the learning and behavioral issues these students brought with them. At the same time, the participants were loathe to blame the students for their presence, realizing it was a result of a complex web of circumstance that brought them here. The simplest solution to the problems these students represented would be to remove them, but participants either recognized the impossibility and/or realized the negative ramifications for the students if they were to be removed. At any rate, the participants did not see the students leaving anytime soon, and thus their presence was a reality with which they had to contend. And so, the students' continued presence not only made the chaos seem permanent but only served as a reminder of the impossibility of their circumstance—trapped in a place that did not want them, but could not get rid of them. In other words, ghosts.

To what could these ghosts be pointing? Because the current state of education reforms privileges the present, it tends to ignore the past. These hauntings represent past failures of public education (Anyon, 1997, 2005; Kozol, 1991, 2005)—more specifically, the failure of Polk Community High School, to address the needs of underserved students. By focusing so much on how neoliberal education reforms had changed their identity as teachers (from artists to data driven bureaucrats) and dealing with the current issues related to the influx of new students, participants created an idealized notion of the years before the effects of both reforms and new students were fully felt—years for which they were often nostalgic. The haunting of the new students challenges such nostalgia. If it were simple to return to these idyllic times, all that

needed to happen was to shut out these new students. If it were that simple, the contradictory

feelings participants had towards them would not be as prevalent. Furthermore, participants still

tried to help students and did not seem to distinguish between new students and old in their

teaching. More specifically, the presence of the new students created a crisis in the present so

terrible that the past seemed better in comparison and yet, to banish these new students from the

school would be to disavow the failures of the past in public education.

Below are a few of the excerpts that demonstrate participants as longing for this idealized

past before the chaos at Polk Community High School and neoliberal reform:

> *Perry: There have been some effective things, there, you know, a lot of our initiatives have great merit behind them. Um, it's the implementation that goes awry.*

> *Garvey: So we (Polk High when it first opened) were this, the brand new baby. It is exciting, it is new.*

> *Garvey: I have always said I am going to have to sit back and write a book about what I have seen around here.*

> *Perry: And, that's just, it's never what Polk was, we were always the "different" school and now we are not.*

> *Borkowski: And they were our over/under kids that are looking at these eight graders and going (makes a laugh noise). "We weren't that bad, we had issues, but we were not that bad"*

> *Blackburn: So that was really cool whereas here, even as—its' not as bad now, but you walk through the halls and its kind of a different—you get a different feel.*

> *Garvey: I can remember coming back to school for family nights. And you had to be careful driving down Madison (Street) because people would be coming from the neighborhood, walking over to the building, you know with five to six of their kids.*

These are a few examples of the overall sense of longing for the past that permeates

Chapter Four. Specifically, in the excerpts above, participants think back to previous successful

school-wide reform efforts, the school's opening, recounting the history of his teaching in

memoir form, how Polk was exceptional at one time, the changes in the students (even the

students themselves remarking on how they used to be), the different feel of the school, and recounting the "good old days" of community involvement. While such specific types of nostalgia are important, I contend that nostalgia coats much of the participants' perspectives in terms of the where the school was versus the disaster of the current year. It is important to note here that I do not pass judgment on the participants' nostalgia or call into question the veracity of their recounting—to do so would miss the point of highlighting the *condition* of nostalgia that neoliberal reform heightens in public education. Indeed, even though participants wistfully call upon the past, they do not necessarily recall perfect pasts without problems. They often qualified these looks back with commentary such as a "we weren't perfect" characterization. It is not that this past was idyllic in the traditional sense, but rather only in compared to the current state of Polk. Put another way, things had become so bad that the past was better only in comparison.

It could be that neoliberal education reform heightens an already existing condition of nostalgia for an imperfect past is a product of neoliberalism's influence on education reforms. As detailed in Chapter Three and discussed above, neoliberal education reform (and perhaps all school reform)—by focusing so much of attention on the present in terms of the crisis of public education and the urgency to implement reforms—erases the past, or at best, clouds our recollection of it. Moreover, in the move to privatize public education (Apple, 2001; Watkins, 2012a), the erasure of its failures and successes would be complete. These participants detail a present so abhorrent, the past offers a convenient escape from such a reality. Could it be those of us who see ourselves defending public education from neoliberal education reforms are guilty of the same? It certainly is not a stretch, considering that the discourse around public education reform has been shaped so much by neoliberalism. Indeed, neoliberal reformers often attack those who question the purposed reforms as "defending the status quo" and ask, "What is *your*

plan to fix public education?" (Guggenheim, 2010a). This strategy positions those against the current round of reforms as relics of the past. We do ourselves no favors when our entire position comes down to the removal of neoliberal reform as the solution to public education's problems. However, much like the new students at Polk, if it was as simple as removing them, why has it not happened? There are certainly political, economical, and structural issues at play in answering such a question, but I contend that these reforms and the students who are the embodiment of them are hauntings pointing us to the failures of public education before neoliberalism came on the scene.

In the case of Polk, the new students are trying to say, "We were suffering before we came here, we existed outside of the confined walls of your community school and you did not acknowledge us, think about us, and/or care about us." And while the participants long for a past without these new students, their presence reminds them that such a past was exclusionary of them; it was a past that ignored the changing landscape of reforms which meant such an exclusion was becoming tenuous, and finally it was a past, that now in hindsight, was wiped clean of any failures of those *included* students at the time. But it is not just Polk High whose past has become sanitized in terms of its previous failures—it is all of us. Neoliberalism seeks to put the start date that *now* is when we really started to care about fixing public education, and so everything that came before is prologue. It was a time when we did not know any better about fixing the inequalities of the school system. The problem is that we did know better. The presence of students like the ones at Polk High are both victims of the ineffective destructive nature of neoliberal education reforms and also the hauntings trying to remind us of the past failures of public education.

Contagions in Public Education

In the case of both zombies and hauntings, this chapter has been an attempt to capture the affective as it relates to the findings in Chapter Four. More specifically, these concepts are posited as episte-ontological—capturing both knowledge and being as it relates to the participants within this study. The use of such concepts in this manner speaks to a larger concept of bodies within the realm of public education. In both cases, the characteristics of the concepts themselves are used to give justice to the fluidity contained within the lives of the participants and Polk itself. In the case of zombies, all bodies within the school become infected, creating an ambivalent environment in which it is difficult to discern who is a human and who is a zombie. Hauntings detail how the presence of certain bodies affects those around them, infecting their thoughts and emotions by calling attention to the forgotten or repressed. Both speak to ways in which ideas, feelings, emotions, and energy transfer from one body to the next, manifesting themselves in different ways. In the end, the discussion heretofore is about subject formation and so it is helpful to briefly mention Foucault's (1990, 1995, 2006, 2010) work around the formation of the subject at it helps to introduce Puar's (2007) conception of contagions. I do not intend to engage in a Foucaultian analysis here in this chapter, but rather invoke Foucault as a means to, at this point, center the conversation upon subject formation, which, in turn, contextualizes Puar and contagions. Certainly Foucault's own work is incongruous to the point that to discern a single theory in regards to subject formation is nearly impossible (although many have tried). The more powerful work is from those who operate in the spirit of his work— augmenting the general concept of subject formation in an attempt capture the complexities of human life and simultaneously call into question the very definition of human.

For the purposes of this chapter, I combine Puar, who I see as operating in this Foucaultian spirit, with findings from Chapter Four, and the theoretical metaphors of zombies

and hauntings to discuss how teachers and students have become immunocompromised. Puar (2007) contends that by using the concept of contagion to shift the focus of study to affect we "move from 'What does this body mean?' to 'What and who does this body affect? What does this body do?'" (p. 174). These are questions that this chapter has attempted to ask by using the notions of zombie and hauntings. More specifically, neoliberal education reforms do not manifest themselves in ways that are discernable in terms of what teachers and students are defined as within such reforms, but rather how do these bodies affect each other given the neoliberal context. Puar goes on,

> While the notion of contagion is slightly overdetermined in relation to unwanted and afflicted bodies, in this case I am suggesting not that specific bodies be read as contagions, but that all bodies can be thought of as contagious or mired in contagions: bodies infecting other bodies with sensation, vibration, irregularity, chaos, lines of flight that betray the expectation of loyalty, linearity, the demarcation of who's in and who's not. (p. 174)

If we apply Puar's conception that *all* bodies are contagious, it becomes easier to see how neoliberal education reforms do not affect schools through a traditional sense of changing curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, but rather as contagions that are passed from one body to the next in a variety of forms. Neoliberal reform is interested in the "demarcation of who is in and who is not" by placing blame on "bad" teachers (Apple, 2001; Gam & Cobb, 2008; Giroux, 2010; Kohn, 2012; Ravitch, 2010; Taubman, 2009; Watkins, 2012a), giving choice to parents so they can improve their children's education (Buras, 2012; Cobb, 2012; Gam & Cobb, 2008; Giroux, 2010; Mead, 2008; Ravitch, 2010; Raymond, 2009), and, by implementing these reforms largely within urban schools of color, marking which students are in most need of these reforms and which are not (Buras, 2012; Buras et al., 2010; Watkins, 2012a). By setting the parameters of the entire discourse around public education reform, one cannot help but operate within such logic of a static understanding of the individuals within. Contagions and contagious bodies

problematizes the fixed lines of identity placed upon teachers, students, and parents by

neoliberalism. Lastly, Puar says:

> Contagions are autonomous, unregulated, their vicissitudes only peripherally anchored by knowable entities. They invoke the language of infection and transmission, forcing us to ask, "How does one catch something whose trace is inchoate or barely discerned?" Contagions conduct the effects of touch, smell, taste, hearing, and sight—the five primary senses (from the vantage of western science)—into shivers, sweat, blushes, heat, and pain, among many other sensations. Contagions thus complicate even the most complex articulations of affiliation; that is, contagion returns the process of affiliation to indeterminacy and contingency. (p. 174)

By flattening our understanding of public education, neoliberalism has created a

discourse where an attack on the reforms themselves runs the risk of reifying the static

definitions. That is to say, if the attack on neoliberal reform continues to focus on a simple

causation line of thought, in which facts and research are used to discredit them, it brings a level

of credence to those reforms as simply bad ideas. What this reasoning ignores is the zombie

nature of such ideas; they are not killed with research and counterarguments. As such, they are

able to live on because and through the complex context of the schools themselves due to the

contagious nature Puar describes, which flies in the face of simple explanation. Additionally,

when operating in such static definitions, the prescribed ways of resisting neoliberal reforms are

based on static, simple understandings of the those who are most affected by these reforms. By

ignoring the affective nature of neoliberal education reforms in terms of the bodies within

schools, any type of "resistance" propositioned is doomed to fail. Furthermore, such proscribed

resistance ignores the myriad of ways the bodies deal with such contagions as their movement is

dictated by evolving, changing circumstance and does not fall into determinate patterns. I am

not saying we simply sit back and let neoliberal reform run its course. Instead, our focus should

be less about the effects of neoliberal reform and more on what conditions serve to enable their

ability to be contagious in public schools. To stay within the contagion metaphor, we need to

focus less on the symptoms of neoliberalism and more on the why the bodies of public schools are susceptible to infection in the first place.

In the section of Chapter Four that dealt with neoliberal education reforms, participants often spoke with a resignation of inevitability. Accountability measures were seen as part of the job—with little they could do in terms of stopping or resisting them. Not only were accountability measures inevitable, but the lack of control of their own curriculum was as well. In the focus group interview, when asked whether they had control of their curriculum, they responded no. They did say they had some control over pedagogical aspects, but even that claim seemed tenuous at best when considering other findings of Chapter Four. For example, when one of the subject departments had developed a specific order for classes that they deemed fit for the students at Polk, the district office overruled them so an online class could be inserted into the curriculum. Here, we see the control of not only the curriculum, but pedagogy as well. During an observation of one class, a participant mentioned briefly a literary work that had personal meaning to her, but was also relevant to the current lesson she was teaching. Rather than go into more detail, the teacher pressed on with the pacing guide—a moment lost perhaps because the teacher felt she was not allowed to continue down an alternative path. When asked about this later, the teacher explained it as a small offering to the students to pursue on their own if they wanted and a test to see who was listening. Perhaps an effective teaching strategy, but one wonders what a lesson built around that teacher's interest would have looked like.

The point here is to not call into question the agency of the participants in this study to resist being situated as contagion, but rather question how the role of teacher in which they find themselves is itself contagious. For example, a teacher's position as a transmitter of knowledge already positions her as a conduit, much like contagion. However, teachers are not only passing

knowledge from themselves to students, but also from society at large through them to the students. As such, it would be naïve to believe that only knowledge passes through without all the baggage that goes along with it. When knowledge is presented as something quantifiable, science and data become contagions that are transmitted to the teacher along with the knowledge they are supposed to teach—transforming the role of teacher from artistic to scientific. In such a transformation, of course accountability becomes inevitable as one must measure, track, and confirm the process of knowledge transference as data. When knowledge is cemented as data, the flow of neoliberalism is a faucet that cannot be easily turned off—the dam has been broken and flood continues. In the case of the participants, the symptoms of contracting scientific data resulted in the emotional stress they often discussed in Chapter Four. Here, the episte-ontological combination is fully crystalized as the very act of teaching in neoliberal times, that is the transmission of knowledge, as data from society through the teacher to the student, results in particular ontological states as it relates to the participants in this study. In other words, the symptoms were stress, fatigue and depression and the contagion was data.

The route of neoliberal contagions is not limited to accountability and data. In the case of students at Polk Community High School the contagion of choice resulted in a sudden impact on the school. School choice positions students' being denied the right to choose as the main contributor the their underprivileged status. When posited as an individual right denied, school choice becomes a highly communicable contagion, because who would argue rights should be denied in the seeming democratic state of which we live. Conversely, underprivileged youth, whose rights have been denied, become a susceptible demographic for such a contagion. It makes perfect sense for the right of choice to be passed on to the group who has been positioned as historically denied of such a right. Whether or not school choice is beneficial for these

students is irrelevant, as the granting of the right for them to choose is of the ultimate importance. The new students at Polk were so infected with school choice, it seemed that their presence could not be called into question or denied even as it was contributing to the overall destruction of the school. Indeed, the transient nature of the student cannot be called into question, as the role of student now included making a school choice, thereby freeing his or her movement from school to school in order to exercise that right to its fullest. In the end, the symptoms of school choice—understaffed faculty, influx of new learning and behavioral problems, the distance of the student's home from the school—were the only things participants and teachers in the school could treat because school choice as a contagion of the students was incurable.

What cannot be lost in all of this is that contagions are not only the neoliberal ideas as symptomatic manifestations in the teachers and students, but also the material and its role in the spreading. For example, in the case of participants, the contagions are the pacing guides, the evaluation binders, the forms to fill out, the standardized tests, and the technology used in the classroom. All of these material items enhance the petri dish-like quality of a school like Polk. These materials become a part of the teachers' lives, impacting how they teach and who they are, but more important, multiple avenues of transmissions for the contagions discussed above. In the case of students, the forms they fill out to attend school, the physical closing and reopening of schools, the modes of transportation to bring them to their chosen schools, operate in the same way—material transmissions of contagious principles of neoliberalism. With this in mind, the next section attempts to reconcile how a school full of zombies, hauntings, and contagions interacts with the very physical place of a FSCS. More specifically, it will reexamine the tenets of FSCS as they relate to the view of Polk Community High School as presented in the previous

pages.

The Full Service Community School in Neoliberal Times

The question posed at the end of Chapter Four was "Can a FSCS survive in neoliberal times?" This section will not attempt to answer that question, but rather wrestle with the context that forces such a question to be raised at all. Given the findings of Chapter Four and the subsequent analysis here in Chapter Five, it seems that the existence of FSCS is tenuous at best. The hope here is that by reexamining the characteristics of FSCS discussed in Chapter Two, the specific tensions between a FSCS model and how neoliberal reform has become embodied by the teachers and students in Polk Community High School can be better understood. Whether FSCSs are an attempt to hold onto progressive ideals in public education or, rather, simply another form of neoliberal reform is not only debatable but a potentially rich area for further research. However, the contention of this work is that those components of the FSCS philosophy that trace back to more progressive ideals (see Dewey, 2008; 2012, ; Noddings, 1992, 2006, 2007) are no match for the larger neoliberal context.

To review, the tenets of a FSCS are: holistic education, measurements of success, school as open centerpiece of a community, and services housed/partnered with the school. In Chapter Two, there was a brief mention of the ways in which a FSCS model interacts with neoliberal education reforms as presented in the same chapter. The key difference between that discussion versus the one presented here is that the former framed the interaction on a structural level while the latter is more concerned with what the epist-ontological framing of the teachers and students within Polk Community High School means in terms of the ability of the school to hold true to the FSCS framework. Additionally, by discussing the FSCS traits in this way, this chapter argues for a change in both the application of the FSCS and, perhaps, the model itself.

Holistic Education and Measurements of Success

If the discussion of teachers and students heretofore has, at the very least, questioned traditional notions of what it means to identify oneself and others in those roles, then the concept of a holistic education (Adelman & Taylor, 1998; Basch, 2011; M. Blank & Berg, 2006; Dryfoos, 2000b) must be questioned as well. That is, holistic education, as presented in Chapter Two, tends to revolve around traditional needs of physical and mental health, involving proven means to treat and service them. More specifically, the notion of "holistic" is problematic given the fluidity of identity as presented here in this chapter. A defined holistic education results in limits and boundaries being placed upon individuals thereby making what is outside of holistic non-important or irrelevant. If a holistic education is to truly take care of the whole individual it must be as fluid and malleable as the human itself.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, holistic education still centers on the academic goals of student achievement. While taking care of the whole child is important, it is only in the service of the child doing well in school. Given how zombie neoliberal ideas infect the bodies of teachers and students contributing to their own zombie transformation, could such a centering of the holistic on the academic further neoliberalism's influence on education, thereby speeding the turn from human to zombie? At the very least, a FSCS must contend with how student achievement is defined and contrast that with the goals of the community it services. Should the academic even be considered? Does a holistic education risk its very existence by tying itself to measurable goals of achievement? In other words, if students fail to achieve based on the standards set forth by testing, would the holistic approach be blamed, thereby leading to cuts in funding for those services in favor of funding for more academic support? The possibility of such a scenario should at least give FSCS advocates pause in placing a holistic education in

subservice to the academic.

Lastly, a holistic education tends to focus solely on the student. However, if we were to take the notion of bodies as contagions seriously, to only focus on one specific population within a school would be insufficient. As discussed in this chapter, bodies interact and affect each other—oftentimes in an ambivalent way, but nonetheless the interactions occur. A holistic education cannot stop at the limits of the person it is trying to help, but must seriously consider the bodies around that person and the interactions thereof. In other words, to concern oneself with the wellbeing of the whole child, a FSCS must also concern itself with the wellbeing of all its members. While there is evidence that FSCS do this to a certain extent, as many services are provided to the community members and families of students, this is typically done under the auspices of the wellbeing of the student. Much like decoupling the holistic from the academic, FSCS might consider doing the same with the student as well. For example, in an interview excerpt not mentioned in Chapter Four, when asked how to improve the FSCS model, a participant mentioned installing a health clinic for teachers. Furthermore, a holistic education cannot exclude individuals by delineating a line between who is to be helped and who is not. It must recognize that the zombie ideas of neoliberalism have infected all of those in public education, teachers and students alike—we are all zombies now.

However, it is not enough to simply care for all individuals; instead, a holistic education should also take into account the interactions between bodies themselves—viewing such interactions as something of which a holistic education can address. A difficult task indeed, especially when such interactions contain affective qualities difficult to define or discuss. In this case, a holistic education must acknowledge that the ways in which bodies are affected can be complicatedly intangible and present ways in which hauntings can be discussed and examined in

serious manner.

A recurring question throughout this section will be, "Given the questions posed about FSCS, what would a FSCS like Polk now look like?" A difficult question to answer given that this dissertation deals with the specifics of participants within Polk Community High School, and the attempt to generalize guidelines for other schools from the specific context of one has always been problematic for school reform (see Tyack & Cuban, 1995). With this in mind, it is possible to glean some general ways in which the tenets of the FSCS model should be questioned and tease out the implication of such questions.

In the case of holistic education, FSCS could begin by eschewing static notions of such comprehensive education. These definitions not only reinforce fixed concepts of those in education, but also limit our understanding of how best to serve and provide support for those individuals. That is to say one cannot have a complex understanding of the human with a simple understanding of how best to care for humans. This could begin with the aforementioned move of holistic away from the academic achievement of students. To do so could ensure holistic education's survival independent of the measured achievement of students on standardized testing. The expansion of the definition of holistic must also include how education reforms efforts affect the bodies of those in education, which entails seeing these bodies part of larger structural elements beyond the academic. In this sense, a holistic education should move from treating symptoms to dealing with causes. If this is the case, it would insist that a holistic education expand beyond traditional notions of wellbeing and become active in political action to thwart efforts that are ultimately detrimental to teachers, students, and families.

In the end, a holistic education cannot exist independent of an evolving understanding of the individuals it seeks to help, but rather must be able to quickly adapt and expand in its'

implementation to account for the rapid ways in which bodies within a school are changing. To a certain extent, FSCS purport to do this already by listening to the community's concerns as to what "holistic" means. However, such a charge must be taken one step further to go beyond even the community's static understanding of what it means to be a student and teacher. Furthermore, as will be discussed later, the definition of community may no longer be static enough that such a process is the reliable or a one-time affair. Instead, a FSCS must constantly be evaluating how its community is defined as it relates to the definition of what holistic education it seeks to provide.

School as Open Centerpiece of a Community

The findings of Chapter Four and discussion in this chapter problematize the very basic notions of "open" and "community" in a way that makes adherence to this FSCS tenet difficult at best. To begin, while a FSCS might be "open" as a resource to those within a specific community (Altshuler, 2003; Belenardo, 2001; Benson & Harkavy, 2001; M. J. Blank, Johnson, et al., 2003; M. J. Blank, Melaville, et al., 2003; Cummings et al., 2007; Dryfoos, 2000a; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Epstein, 1995, 2005), it is still closed based on the parameters of the community itself. Community is defined by mainly physical limitations thereby closing a FSCS to those outside of those definitions. When this is done, bodies within that school become inscribed with the very limitations in which the community defines themselves. This could be relied upon as a strength, reinforcing the bond between those in the school and those in the community. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, if one considers bodies in terms of zombies, hauntings, and contagions, the characteristics of a given community are a small part of a greater assemblage that makes up the individual's identity. Thus, just as neoliberal education reforms are contagions passed between bodies, so are a community's cultural characteristics. As

mentioned before with neoliberal education reform, the ability of these characteristics to transmit themselves between bodies depends on the context of place and complex relationships to other bodies. In the case of Polk, when students outside of the community become enrolled in the school, these static definitions of community become even more problematic. This is because students who lived in the surrounding communities of the school were more susceptible to the infection of "community" label and the new students were immune to such an infection because they lived outside of these same neighborhoods. As such, these new students became instantly marked as "other" from the "community" students. Therefore, teachers and students were able to define themselves and the new students in terms of who belonged and who did not. The students were not seen simply as a presence, but as an infestation of undesirables, ironically because of their immunity to become infected with the community virus. Polk High did not have the power to bar them from attending; therefore they were left to negatively distinguish them—effectively placing them outside of the school even though they were in it.

Polk High is no longer an "open" school at the time of this study, but rather a school of shifting borders determined by the "original" Polk students and the zombie students. Limited by the social and political capital to shield the school from students outside of the community, those inside relied upon subtler means to hold the line by placing the problems of the schools squarely on the shoulders of the new students themselves. The definitions of community as crystalized by Polk's classification as a FSCS served as the tools to continually distinguish who these new problem students were and mark them as different bodies. In the end, these new students could never be a part of Polk, as long as Polk was a community school. Additionally, by having a constant presence of students who offered a means by which to define them as belonging, students and teachers were able to deny their own zombieness. At the same time, no matter how

much effort was made to keep the zombie students at bay, their constant presence was a haunting reminder that by "othering" them, the teachers had betrayed what it meant to be an "open" school.

Returning a moment to the lack of social and political capital Polk's administration had in preventing students from outside of the community from coming in brings to bear the ways in which neoliberal education reforms not only shape the discourse around public education, but also around community as well. When students embody school choice by the ease with which they can move from school to school, be they public, charter or private, the students are transgressing the physical, social, and historical boundaries of communities. With such transgression comes the degradation of those same boundaries—boundaries by which FSCS rely upon to define what it means to be a community school. If the concept of communities is changing, or even eroding, what does this mean for the FSCS model itself? Not only are students transgressing these boundaries, but if we look at bodies and ideas as contagions, the transgressions increase infinitely. Combine these border erosions with the simple notion that neoliberalism places emphasis on the individual at the expense of the community, and it becomes increasingly apparent that FSCS must come to terms with what community means in a neoliberal context.

So what does a FSCS do to not only survive, but thrive, given the discussions in this chapter? To begin, there needs to be a shift away from trying to shield the school from the zombies. In other words, it is a lost cause to fortify oneself from students outside of the community from attending the school. Firstly, it is doubtful, given the proliferation of school choice and the eroding of community boundaries, that a school could successfully do so. Secondly, it is not conclusive that these new students are the apparent cause of problems they

seem to be. The fact that a school must go out of its way to categorize itself as a "Community School" shows that the traditional notion of the school as a centerpiece of a community is long gone. Even in towns where there is only one high school, schools face a diminished role as long as the sole purpose of schools is purely academic. Instead, FSCS advocates should join the battle to define what "community" means, recognizing that they cannot just call for a return to traditional notions of community. For starters, community can no longer be defined strictly on the proximity a student lives to a school. Rather, community can be defined in terms of political and social interests in which the affinity of its members are defined by the various ways in which neoliberal education reforms continue to disenfranchise and oppress them. In this scenario, new students are no longer seen as outsiders infecting a school, but as additional support in the stand against oppression. Regardless of the ways FSCS advocates for a more nuanced understanding of community upon which to base their framework, it can no longer be apolitical. FSCS advocates must acknowledge that to claim "community" as a part of a school's identity must be done in strict defiance of neoliberal education reforms' effects on public schools and the inhabitants therein. To do otherwise renders the word "community" in a school's name meaningless.

Services Housed/partnered with School

The opportunity to shape the word *community* in a way that opposes the neoliberal erosion of it is within the material services offered by a FSCS (Dryfoos, 1994, 2000b; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Weist et al., 1996). However, before such an opportunity can be approached, the divide between those of the community and those outside of it must be addressed. Regardless of whether all students and staff have access to services within and/or partnered with the school, if a differentiation between "community" members and non-members exists like the one at Polk,

some will already be deemed as more worthy of the services than others. According to the participants, Polk already faced a limited amount of resources and a triage mentality had already taken place. While it is not clear that certain students were given preference over others in terms of those limited resources, the line of demarcation between original Polk students and new ones could be an easy one to rely upon. A discussion of any services meant to help students has to first address any divisions along the lines of community that exist in the minds of students and teachers.

All this being said, if a FSCS wants to redefine community, it should look no further than the services it seeks to provide. To begin, if the student body does contain students who live outside of the physical confines of the community that surround the school, services cannot be dependent on such proximity to make the delivery of the services easier. For example, some of the participants in the study lamented the distance parents and students had to travel to the school and noted it as a major barrier to involving parents in their child's education and the school itself.

Here we see how the division of inside and outside the community immediately brands parents in the "outside" as out of the reach of the positive effect a FSCS can have for them and their children, regardless of whether such a distance is, in fact, a detrimental factor. It is easy to blame the distance a family lives from the school when it is already the major way in which you distinguish students from one another. Once such a distinction is made, it becomes difficult for one to rise above the characterization—once a zombie, forever a zombie. To battle such a distinction, at the very least, services provided should try to overcome distance as negative and, at best, rely upon it as a resource. For example, by having students outside of the community in the school, it could allow students and teachers to find commonality outside of their community to build a social and political network against the overall erosion of their city and schools.

This networking hints towards another material change FSCS can produce in the offering

of specific services. While health (both physical and mental) services are often offered, the

literature or findings in Chapter Four do not show any evidence of FSCS or Polk offering

services that may help in the community-organizing purview. If a FSCS is going to offer a

definition of community that seeks lines of commonality along political and cultural lines that

transcends geography, it is going to need to offer space and opportunities for organizing and

mobilizing along those lines. If the teachers, students, and administrators see the public school

as apolitical, such services could be nearly impossible to implement. Therefore, before such

services are offered, a large amount of work is required to shed light on the ways in which

positioning the school as political would be beneficial for the survival of the school, its students,

and community. In the case of Polk, such work would not be seen as completely foreign to the

participants in this study as they were very much aware of the trajectory of current education

reforms and the ways in which they were impacting their students in a negative way. I do not

argue that a FSCS becomes a major force in community organizing overnight, but it should begin

with providing opportunities for conversations across traditional divisions of community as a

place to undercover what needs to be done to benefit all the students of its school.

Limitations

I insert a discussion of limitations here as abrupt pause to garner attention from the

reader. I do so to stay within the cultural studies framework that insists upon radical

contextuality and anti-anti-essentialism (Grossberg, 2010). Up to this point, this analysis has

provided insight into the lives of the teachers at Polk. However, it must not be taken as a

totalizing account by any means. Rather, it can only mark the brief intersections of those lives

and my own. Inherent within such an intersection are my own scholarly interests and expertise

with the lived experiences of the teachers, at least the portion they chose to share with me. While I believe what has presented thus far is a compelling picture, it must be acknowledged to be incomplete, due not only to the complexity of our world itself, but also my the limitations of the study, which I mean to discuss here.

In Chapter Three, various limitations were mentioned to note how they shaped the development of the methods used in this research. These limitations should also be considered in the overall analysis as well. To begin, the hesitancy of Polk's school district to approve this research certainly had an effect on myself as researcher and the research itself. In a very practical way, it shortened the original timeline planned for this research, which, in turn created other limitations that are discussed later. More directly, the denial and eventual approval of this research created a chilling effect on myself as researcher. While I had a letter of approval from the principal of the school, it did not seem unrealistic that such approval would be revoked at some point. Especially, as noted in Chapter Four, Polk Community High School went through three different principal changes while I was at the school. As a result, the original principal that approved my work was no longer with the school by the end of the year. I met with subsequent principals and explained my presence, my research, and its approval. They all verbally agreed to let me work continue. And yet, there was an immense amount of pressure to get the data as quickly and effectively as possible. The change was happening district-wide as well, as one superintendent left during my time at Polk and an interim took over. It must be acknowledged that such instability within the school and district had an impact on my work while at Polk. Additionally, it is quite possible that the reluctance of the district to approve my work had ramifications for the teachers at Polk as well. While I sent out a school-wide email to solicit participants, only one teacher responded. I had two teachers who I had worked with previously

on other projects tell me they would not participate in this study. Was this reluctance because teachers knew about the district's initial skepticism towards my work? Unfortunately, a question unanswered, but one that must be considered in the overall context of the research itself.

As mentioned before, the timeline for this research was greatly reduced, which resulted in a tight window in which to collect data. To complicate the matter, the majority of the data collection took place during school breaks and standardized testing, which made the participants' schedules extremely busy. As not to negatively impact their teaching, I was very respectful of their schedules and gratefully took the time they gave me. This impacted the decision to move quickly away from observations and focus more time on interviews. The shortened timeline also impacted the time needed to create another data point that this research had originally proposed. It was originally conceived that teachers would be given the opportunity to provide their own data through narratives. The format was vague by design as the hope was the participants would help in determining the best course of action to contribute. Unfortunately, due to the shortened timeline, the participants' lack of willingness, and my goal of not overburdening them, there was not ample enough time to develop such an instrument, let alone implement it. No doubt the findings would have been strengthened by such an addition. As such, this research does not include the voices of the teachers to the extent originally intended. To compensate the loss of this other data source, Chapter Four includes as many lengthy excerpts as possible.

Lastly, the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) instructions for this research specifically ruled out any interactions with students or data collected about them. IRB required a letter be sent home to the parents of the students I observed explaining my presence and that I would not collect data about the students. This limited the scope of the observations themselves, as I had to focus specifically on the teacher in the classroom and not on the students. While a large amount

of the data collected dealt with participants' views on the students at the school, those students'

voices are noticeably silent in this research. As such, the lives of those students are marginalized

by this research and its IRB limitation.

Conclusion

The first two theoretical metaphors, zombies and hauntings, were utilized to capture the

affective nature of human bodies within a particular place. In this case, they were used for the

participants of this study from Polk High. While I believe I have made the case for their

suitability for this specific study, their imperfections would become glaring if applied to contexts

outside of the parameters of this research. However, what can be broadened from this work is

the attempt of these metaphors to capture an understanding of the human beyond traditional

definitions. Think of these attempts as "Human +," in which traditional understandings of

humans are not simply discarded or disregarded, but rather are extended in order to address

anything that is beyond our current notions of understanding. They are attempts to bridge the

epistemological-ontological divide by not bracketing away the unexplainable, but opening up a

larger area that accepts the unexplained or unanswerable as valid parts of our understanding.

More importantly and specifically, as it relates to understanding how neoliberal education

reform plays out in public education, the goal should not be necessarily about how the reforms

affect teachers and students, but rather how they become embodied by teachers and students.

This embodiment had a direct impact on continual shaping of the culture and lives within Polk.

However, it is not just the fact that neoliberal education reform *is* embodied, but also the way in

which such reform *becomes* embodied. Contagions are an attempt to expand upon the first two

theoretical metaphors by addressing the process of embodiment.

Think in terms of the interaction between zombies and hauntings for a moment. The

ability of zombie ideas to infect the bodies within Polk created a dystopia or apocalyptic scenario in which chaos dominated the school—a present so nightmarish that it was ripe for the hauntings of the past as those within looked for some escape. In other words, a dystopia due to the contagiousness of neoliberal education reform created a longing of the past only because it was nostalgic in comparison to the present. The key here is that zombie ideas and hauntings did not happen within Polk independently, but simultaneously created and fueled each other's presence as neoliberal education reform as a result of the contagious nature of bodies within Polk. The embodiment of neoliberal education reform happened within and because of the specific contexts (in this case, a FSCS in an urban setting) of Polk as a place and the relationships between the bodies therein. In other words, neoliberal education reform did not happen *to* Polk High, it *became embodied* due to the contextual specifics within the walls of Polk High.

The question is then, what additional factors led to Polk's facilitating the embodiment of neoliberal education reform? Is it the FSCS model? Or, more broadly, do public schools in general facilitate the embodiment of neoliberal education reform? This chapter has answered this question in several specific ways, but also acknowledges that there are probably more. First, it should be noted, this is not a one-sided process. As detailed in Chapter Two, neoliberal education reforms contain characteristics that aid in the embodiment process. Indeed, a more detailed study in the formation and promulgation of neoliberal education reform as it relates to embodiment is needed (see Tsing, 2005). However, in the case of this study, characteristic of Polk as a FSCS played a factor. As discussed previously in this chapter, this has implication for the FSCS model itself. A point that has to be considered here, and that subsequent research surrounding FSCSs might explore, is that the FSCS framework is an outgrowth of neoliberalism, and, therefore, an example of a variation within broader neoliberal education reform. If this is

indeed the case, FSCSs may be prone to the neoliberal embodiment detailed here because they share some ideological DNA.

It should be noted that I went into this research with the intent of finding resistance to neoliberal education reform—hoping that the FSCS model could be a source of such resistance. Instead, I found what I have described above and questioning whether or not true resistance is possible. Perhaps, resistance is too static a term to insert into the fluidity as described here. Instead, if the position that embodiment of neoliberal reform is informed by place and relationships between bodies, then it would be safe to assume that the creation of place could impact the ways in which the reforms become embodied. Polk is still a place of opportunity— teachers still remain to teach and students choose to go there—and as long as those bodies remain within the walls of the school, it is possible to consider how a better-designed FSCS would transform the embodiment process from passive to active. In other words, resistance to neoliberal education reform seems difficult, as it implies a stopping or repelling, but to change the ways in which such reforms become embodied warrants consideration. To do so would acknowledge the current ways in which such reforms are embodied and are spread contagiously. In this chapter, I have alluded to some starting points for FSCS advocates to do such an acknowledgment and it would be helpful to clarify them here as to end on a somewhat constructive note.

To begin, I do not suggest that traditional notions of community should be thrown aside. Instead, much as this research posited a "Human +" it might be beneficial to think of "Community +" in the spirit of the Cultural Studies call for a "yes…and…" understanding of the world (Grossberg, 2010). In other words, we can build upon the existing definitions of community to move beyond the physical limitations often put upon them so that political and

social commonalities can be emphasized. Once a FSCS seriously considers such an expanded

definition, the design of the school itself, from the services offered to the contact with parents

and community members will have to change as well. In the end, perhaps any consideration

must include a critical view of place—much as Soja (2010) recommends. The guidance here

cannot be more specific as it depends on the contexts of each school and the newly-defined

communities themselves. All of this depends on the position FSCS and public schools take

towards neoliberal education reform. If they are seen as a bureaucratic burden with which

schools have to contend, the type of embodiment described here will no doubt continue. If,

however, a school and/or community see neoliberal education reform as destructive and

problematic, they must first look inward to uncover how their specific contexts facilitate the

embodiment of such reforms and what can be changed to alter (not necessarily stop) their

condition. I do not discount active political action or resistance as a part of this process, but it is a

small part. The real battle will be with ourselves—the places we create and the relationships we

forge that will determine what type of "Humans +" we are and the "Communities +" we create.

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Appendix A

Observation Form

Time/Activity	Observation	Reflection

Appendix B

Teacher Interview Questions

INTRODUCTION: Good morning and welcome to our session today. Thank you for taking the time to participate in our interview. My name is Gabriel Huddleston

Today, we want to find out about your expectations and experiences as a teacher at Polk High School. There are no right or wrong answers – please feel free to speak freely.

Before we begin, let me make a few requests. Please speak up. We are tape recording the session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. **We will be on a first name basis today and in our later reports no names or identifying characteristics will be attached to comments**. Our session should last about 20-60 minutes. Let's begin.

Theme: Experience of Teaching

-How long have you been teaching here? (Have you seen changes over time? Where else have you taught? How does it compare?)

-How do you feel/What are you thinking about when you walk through the door each morning?

-How do you feel when you go home at night?

-Tell me about the pd you've had while you've been at Northwest. What's been useful? What hasn't? Do you choose PD, or is it usually selected for you?

-Why did you want to be a teacher? Are you achieving your goals?

-Can you describe a moment when you really enjoyed teaching?

Theme: Good Teaching / Student Engagement

-Can you tell me about a class recently that went really well? What made it good?

-Can you tell me about a class that didn't go well? Why didn't it?

-Can you think of a colleague at this school that you think is a really excellent teacher? What

makes them excellent? What do other teachers at this school need to be as excellent as X?

-What do you need to be a better teacher? (technology, pd, work environment)

-Tell me about a lesson you taught this week and how you decided what you would teach (if you decided at all).

Theme: Student Success

-Can you give me an example of a student in one of your classes who you think is successful?

-What makes a student successful or not?

-What makes a successful student different from others?

Theme: Supports for At-Risk Students

-Are there students in your class that you think are danger of failing or dropping out? How do you know? Why do you think this is happening?

-Tell me about your relationships with those students. Is it different from others?

-Does the school do anything different with at-risk students?

Theme: Full Service Community School

-Tell me about your school? What are its defining characteristics? How is it similar to other schools with which you have experience?

-How do you understand the concept of a Full Service Community School? In what ways does this school fit that description? In what ways does it not?

-Describe the typical teacher at this school? Does this description fit you?

Appendix C

Focus Group Protocol

Just a reminder that all personal information is changed to protect your identity. Also, answer only the questions you want to and if you would like to stop the interview at any time, please let me know.

1) Paint a picture for me of the beginning of this school year. What was the mood? What was everyone talking about? What were you looking forward to and what were you dreading?

2) As the year moved forward how did these things change?

3) What was your sense of the kids in the school from beginning to end?

4) Describe the dynamic between the middle school and high school in the same building. How do teachers, staff, and students interact or affect the other?

5) Describe how the events happening in the district outside the school are perceived inside Polk High? What is the relationship like?

6) When does Polk High feel the most like a community school? When does it not?

7) What gets in the way of teaching like you want to teach? Is there anything that can be a bulwark against those things?

8) What do you think the perception of teacher is right now? Is it fair?

9) How much control do you feel you have over what you teach and how you teach it?

10) What do you think of when I say the following?

    a. School Choice

    b. Accountability

    c. Public education vs. private educat

d. Vouchers

e. Charter schools

f. Standardized testing

g. Common Core

h. Standards

i. Poverty

j. Race

k. Social Justice

Gabriel Huddleston

FIELDS OF INTEREST: Curriculum Studies, Curriculum Theory, Education Policy, Urban Education, Cultural Studies, Qualitative Research, Theatre as Research Method, Multicultural Education, Teacher Education, Full Service Community Schools, Student Activism, Participatory Action Research, Secondary Theatre and Speech

EDUCATION

Ph.D.

Curriculum Studies with minors in Cultural Studies and Inquiry, School of Education, Indiana University-Bloomington
Dissertation: Zombies, Hauntings, and Contagions: A Study of Embodied Neoliberal Education Reform
Advisor and Committee Chair: Robert J. Helfenbein Jr., Ph.D.
Dissertation Committee: David Flinders, Ph.D., Barbara Dennis, Ph.D., José R. Rosario, Ph.D.
Program of Studies Committee: Robert J. Helfenbein, Jr, Ph.D., David Flinders, Ph.D., Purnima Bose, Ph.D.

M.S.

Secondary Education Curriculum, School of Education, Indiana University-Indianapolis
Advisor: Robert J. Helfenbein Jr., PhD

Teaching License

Theatre and Speech, Secondary Certification
School of Education, Indiana University-Bloomington
Minor Certification in Government

B.A.

Political Science and Theatre, Denison University, Granville, OH

British American Drama Academy's Midsummer in Oxford, Baliol College, Oxford, England.
Program was a month long and focused primarily on Shakespearean acting; however, instruction was also given in Movement, Modern Acting, Voice, and Auditioning. Instructors included Kevin Spacey, Jane Lapotaire, John Barton, Ben Kingsley, Alan Cox and Derek Jacobi.

EMPLOYMENT

Managing Editor, Journal of Curriculum Theorizing
- Manage the review process for submissions
- Final formatting and editing for issues
- Part of Leadership Team for the Bergamo Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice
- Lead on Conference Schedule, Registration, and Attendee Support
- Chair for Bergamo Conference Graduate Student Advisory Council
- Coordinate social media for promotions of Journal and Conference

Graduate Assistant/Researcher, Indiana University

<u>Courses Taught and Assisted</u>
- Instructor, J500, Instruction in the Context of Curriculum (IUPUI)
- Lead Developer and Instructor of an online version of J500 (IUPUI)
- Instructor, Y510, Action Research (IUPUI)

- Instructor, T590, Research Practicum (IUPUI)
- Teaching Assistant, J500, Instruction in the Context of Curriculum (IU, Professor Jesse Goodman, Instructor)

Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME) at Indiana University-Indianapolis
- Project Lead on the following:
  - George Washington Community Schools Federal Grant
  - Warren Township Lilly Endowment Evaluation
  - International Academy Pathways Project
  - Reading and Writing IUPUI Grant
  - IPS Stimulus Grant Case Study-George Washington High School
  - A-MUST IU School of Medicine Grant
- Led the Following Training Sessions
  - Observation Protocols
  - Using EndNote
  - Using InVivo: Qualitative Coding Software

Co-Director of the Drama Department (2004 to 2009)   Warren Central High School
- Directing credits include: *Twelfth Night, Our Town, The Importance of Being Earnest, Into the Woods, Noises Off, M*A*S*H, Pippin, Pride and Prejudice,* and *A Raisin in the Sun*
- Coached Anne Thompson in the English Speaking Union Shakespeare Competition, in which she competed and won the national competition in New York City
- Assistant Coach for the Warren Speech Team, winner of the 2005 State Championship
- Instructor for Theatre Arts I, Theatre Production II, Theatre History, and Advanced Theatre Arts
- Theatre Program nominated four times as an outstanding High School Theatre Program by the American High School Theatre Festival
- Drama Club Sponsor

Committees/Service
- Electronic Gradebook (Committee Member)
- Career Clusters (Coordinator)
- Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS (Fundraiser and Silent Auction Coordinator)
- Coordinated with Dr. Kipchoge Kirkland (Indiana University) on using Spoken Word Poetry in the classroom

Actor/Road Manager (August 1999-April 2000)   Bridgework Theatre Company
Bridgework Theatre performs shows for elementary and middle school age children. The plays deal with conflict resolution and teach children how to solve problems through several techniques. As an actor I played various parts in these productions. As road manager, I was responsible for the upkeep of the productions while they were on tour. I scheduled rehearsals and filed weekly reports to the artistic director on the progress of the tour.

SERVICE
Treasurer for the Foundation for Curriculum Theory (2013 to present)

Committee for Curriculum Theory in Policy—Steering Committee, Website Designer, and Member (2010-present)

Social Theory Reading Group—Organizer (2010)

PhD Student Writing Workshop and Seminar—Organizer (2011)

Treasurer, Foundation for Curriculum Theory

Nominations Chair, Critical Issues in Curriculum and Cultural Studies SiG, American Educational

Research Association

PUBLICATIONS

Huddleston, G. (2013). Thinking spatially and moving towards the material: An Essay on *Seeking Spatial Justice* by Edward Soja. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education, 13(1),* 112-117.

Helfenbein R., & Huddleston, G. (2013). Youth, space, cites: Towards the concrete. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education, 13(1)*, 5-10.

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Huddleston, G. (in review) Researcher Stance as Awkward: Of Spivak and double binds. *Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices*

Huddleston, G. (in review) Governmentality and the crisis of public education: A Foucaultian perspective of education reform. *Educational Philosophy and Theory.*

Huddleston, G (in review) A dark knight for public education: Neoliberalism's false choice between chaos and order. *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies.*

Huddleston, G. (in press). We're riding Splash Mountain at 10:07am: An autoethnography of Walt Disney World's MyMagic+, Touringplans.com, and the curriculum of planned spontaneity. In J. Maudlin & J. Sandlin (Eds.), *The Disney curriculum.* Routledge.

PRESENTATIONS
(Single Author unless otherwise indicated)

The Aesthetic Answer (2009), Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Conference (Bergamo), Beavercreek, OH.

Rescuing Shakespeare from the Canon (2010), Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Conference (Bergamo), Beavercreek, OH.

Huddleston, G., Helfenbein Jr, R., Gershon, W. S., & Sandford-Gaebel, K. (2011). *Questioning Consensus/Considering Dissensus*. Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Conference (Bergamo), Beavercreek, OH.

The Inner-City Student Exchange Program: A Personal Narrative of Education Reform (2011), Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Conference (Bergamo), Beavercreek, OH.

Using Theatre to Explore Identity at a Full Service Community School (2011), Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Conference (Bergamo), Beavercreek, OH.

Using Theatre to Explore Identity (2011), Curriculum and Pedagogy Conference, Dayton, OH.

Huddleston, G. & Helfenbein, Jr., R. (2012). *"Waiting for Superman" A Cultural Studies Analysis in the Nightmare of the Present.* American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Vancouver, BC.

Cultural Studies and Stuart Hall: A Move Towards the Concrete (2012), Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Conference (Bergamo), Beavercreek, OH.

A Dark Knight for Public Education: Neoliberalism's False Choice Between Chaos and Order (2013), American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA.

Co-Chairs: Mark Helmsing and Gabriel Huddleston. *Political Pedagogies of Popular Culture: Encounters with Public & Personal Curriculum*. (2013) Critical Issues in Curriculum and Cultural Studies SIG,

American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Helfenbein Jr, R., Houser, J., Branon, S., Carr, K., Huddleston, G., Jackson, R., Williams, N., (2013) *Translational Research in Urban Education Contexts,* The 15th Annual IUPUI/Indiana Urban Schools Association Summer Conference on Urban Education, Indianapolis, IN.

Chair: Provoking Dialogues: *Donald Blumenfeld-Jones' Curriculum and the Aesthetic Life: Hermeneutics, Body, Democracy, and Ethics in Curriculum Theory* (2013), Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Conference (Bergamo), Beavercreek, OH.

Adams, S., de Oliveira Andreotti, V., Huddleston, G., Gershon, W., Helfenbein, R., Milam, J., *Spivak in Six Voices: Sifting the Ashes for the Embers of an Aesthetic Education* (2013), Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Conference (Bergamo), Beavercreek, OH.

Chair: *Critical Perspectives on Policy and Practice* (2014), American Educational Research Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Acting Workshop for High School Students, Instructor, Franklin Community High School, 2001

HONORS

Denison University
    Heritage Scholarship (Half Tuition Scholarship)
    Alumni Award
    Ace Morgan Theatre Scholarship (Theatre Award)
    Vail Scholarship for the Fine Arts (Theatre Award)
    Senator Richard Lugar Program Graduate
Other Awards/Nominations
    Encore Award Nominee, Best Actor in a Dramatic Role as Richard Roma in *Glengarry Glen Ross*

Writing Sample, Transcripts, and References available upon request