The Dissertation Committee for Mary Jo Flint Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Treasures and Damages: Portraits of Veteran Teachers with/in the Standards Era

Committee:

Cynthia S. Salinas, Supervisor

Mary J. Worthy

Noah DeLissovoy

Keffrelyn D. Brown

Patrick Slattery

Treasures and Damages: Portraits of Veteran Teachers with/in the Standards Era

by

Mary Jo Flint, B.A., M.Ed.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2014

Dedication

This is for my mom.

And to my friends and family who waited so patiently.

I am practicing saying these words again:

Yes.

I'd love to float the river this afternoon.

Yes.

I'm in my studio, painting.

I'm working in the yard.

Come for dinner. I'll cook.

Let's go to a movie. To a concert. To lunch. For cocktails.

Yes.

Let's take the dogs for a walk.

Thank you for waiting.

Love you all.

Acknowledgements

A group of folks deserve acknowledgement and gratitude for their support of this scholarly endeavor: Lisa Cary, Noah DeLissovoy, and Cinthia Salinas for shepherding me through the wilderness; Jane Saunders for being my at-elbow coach and emotional support; Amy Winters for outstanding editorial support and calm.

Treasures and Damages: Portraits of Veteran Teachers with/in the Standards Era

Mary Jo Flint, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

Supervisor: Cynthia S. Salinas

This project examined the life narratives of four veteran teachers, each of whom began their careers before the onset of the Standards Era and were still teaching in 2013. Seeking to surface both their ways of resilience and negotiations of their identities as teachers through their decades-long careers, the question is positioned in the neoliberal turmoil of high-stakes accountability, national curriculum standards, and widespread, large-N assessment, to determine if resilient, long-career teachers exhibit particular characteristics and support systems that enable their accomplished status. Using the postmodern, interpretivist methodologies of portraiture and oral history, richly contextualized narratives for each teacher were crafted as an initial analysis. A secondary analysis revealed three manifestations of identity: the socially constructed identity, the bureaucratically informed identity, and the emotionally shaped identity. Findings suggest that having a fully developed and robust set of identities might encourage teacher resilience and longevity, supporting existing bodies of research, and that storytelling is an important aspect of identity development and maintenance. An additional finding was the absence of adversity through veteran teachers' careers, which pushes against current research on resilience, as it positions resilience against adversity. An interesting question remains, which is in what ways might these veterans have renamed themselves—through

the development of multiple and fluid identities—and renamed the challenges and disruptions of their world of work so that they might continue in the classroom. As school leaders typically rely on the knowledge base of seasoned veterans—to inform curriculum development, novice teacher support, and professional learning communities—it seems important to consider the power of storytelling in those venues. In conclusion, the author suggests that the addition of research from the field of knowledge creation, usage, and stewardship could be useful to future research of veteran teachers and the ways their professional knowledge might be better leveraged for improved educational outcomes.

Table of Contents

"Emily Carstairs. There. You are inscribed."

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie

Chapter 1: Introduction

I open with this quote from a teacher movie almost as a prayer, an invocation. And I mean it as a way to ask forgiveness—forgiveness for the intrusion into the lives and minds and contested realities of my participants. I understand and fear the power of inscription. I know that even now, as I write my own reflections, as I craft my own theoretical framework, I am limiting my thinking—stringing words together within this linear, regulated grammar crafts an ill-fitting representation of my conceptual understandings. "If we write without thinking critically about our writing, it can be dangerous. Writing can also be dangerous because we reinforce and maintain a style of discourse which is never innocent" (Smith, 1999, p. 36). And when I consider that this work is designed for me to inscribe others—to reach into others' lives and recollections and to document what I find—I want to hold that reductive and transforming power of this writing at the onset: There, we are inscribed. We are guaranteed to be less than (on paper) and outside of and away from and different than ourselves when we began. So I begin in peril.

Looking back to look forward. Through history textbooks, museums, and numerous trips with my family throughout the national and state park network of the United States, I came to believe (and wanted to participate in) a particular slice of American history. In the mid-1800s, during the migration to settle the lands west of the Mississippi River and then west of the Rocky Mountains, scientists, explorers, documentarians, and artists roamed the newly colonized territories armed with the newly portable camera. After honing their photographic craft capturing the atrocities of the Civil

War, many turned their skills toward the landscapes, wildlife, and people of the West. As I learned about and saw evidence of the dawning of photography as art and document, I imagined it to be a highly refined process of capturing the truth of a subject, the reality of time and place on a bi-dimensional surface. The photos I saw seemed to me so much more sophisticated and honest than the representations of painters or sketchers—even more realistic than the best diorama or tableau.

So I began a quest, one summer about twenty years ago, to capture my own photographic record of the work of ancient artists—the petroglyphs of Western America, pecked, painted, smoked, and scored into the landscape. My photos would be proof that I had seen what J. S. Newberry and W. H. Jackson, photographers and explorers for the United States Geological and Geographical Survey, had seen more than one hundred years earlier, and that the artists hundreds of years before had created. Then I stumbled across a statement in a journal entry, pages reproduced photographically and posted on the wall of some visitors' center at one of the sites, describing that the photographer had outlined the petroglyphs with chalk in order for them to show up clearly on his photographic plates. And I could see the outlining clearly in his photographs and in my own prints and standing in front of the art on the face of rocks in the park. I was in Plato's cave allegory, and I had just turned to see the fire behind me—what I thought was real was representation and what I believed to be true was no longer. This seems an apt metaphor for a realization that I am coming to as I grow older and wiser—a realization within my field of study and about my field of work. I am "suffer(ing) a sea-change/into something rich and strange" (Ariel, in The Tempest,Wright, 1936) as I consider that all of the business of teaching and learning—all of the bureaucratic constraint to inform (through curriculum standards), document, and measure (through high-stakes tests) that business—are intrusive acts. These acts parallel the photographer's as, in the very act of recording (or capturing or scribing) the art, he changed the image and inscribed himself

onto the artist, onto the stone, and onto the idea inside the artist's mind. Even to document is to change and influence. (*Especially* to document is to change and influence?) At this point, the notion that I am me within the exchange of artist/art/viewer feels like a pebble in my shoe—annoying and niggling at every step and with every word.

I am fifty-four years old, and I have been a teacher for thirty-three years. Even that simple statement deserves some interrogation, as I now facilitate professional learning for teachers, and I spent some time as a school administrator: Still, I consider myself a teacher. At this point looking back, it seems as if I always wanted to teach. To be a teacher. I also recall periods of intense longing for the dust and dirt and digging of archaeology—intermittently throughout my schooling—mostly because the uniform was khaki shorts and a white oxford-cloth shirt. Once I was able to integrate that ideal uniform (khaki slacks and white oxford-cloth shirts) into my imaginings of teaching, I was all set. This was all set: my life as an educator, a teacher. I had no notion of what that profession might become for me, of the ways I might negotiate through understandings of teaching, of learning (the flip side of the same coin), or of curriculum (the coin spinning on its edge).

My notions of teaching took root during my childhood. My family were teachers: Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins served on school boards, taught elementary school, high school, and college, Sunday school and military school. I played schoolteacher and learner before I attended school, mimicking my family and what I saw on TV and in movies. And not once do I remember any conversation about what it meant to learn, about ways to choose what to teach, or about the relationships among teaching and learning and curriculum. (To be honest, I probably ignored such conversation. Boring.)

Reflecting on my own dozen years as a public school student, I can name several pedagogies and identify several sources of curricular decisions: teacher talk, family talk,

textbooks, library books, and student reading/writing/making/talking. These are not distinct from one another; they blend and blur into rich sensual recollection. Mrs. Stern standing at the corner of her big wooden desk, applying ointment to an awful nail fungus on her thumb and talking about her work as a missionary in Egypt—about seeing the pyramids, about riding camels, about eating dates and figs. I remember, too, drawing elaborate illustrations for her stories, sharing them with Oscar and Keith so they could draw planes and tanks, soldiers and gunfire—and blood—within my Egyptian landscapes. Each of us got hit with a wooden spoon for not paying attention, and I got a talking-to and a punishment from my mom, the school librarian—I had to research and create a bulletin board display for Mrs. Stern. So I drew a map of Egypt (pyramids, hieroglyphs, camels, date palms, and fig trees based on pictures from library books and my social studies textbook) in pastels on brown craft paper. I got to burn the edges to make it look like an old papyrus document. As a ten-year-old, I did not recognize any decisions about teaching; I was not conscious of learning; and I still did not know the word *curriculum*. Neither Oscar nor Keith advanced to the next grade with our class. I remember the smell of the ointment, and I still have a scar from the spoon.

When I chose to be a teacher, to get a teaching certificate, to focus my college career on an educational pursuit of an education career, I never considered purposefully, consciously, my experiences as a student: School had been good to me, and I wanted to stay. Nor did I consider consciously what it meant to teach, to be a teacher. Even after five years of undergraduate study with majors in both English and Studio Art and a teaching certificate, I had no sophisticated notions of teaching or learning or curriculum. I did write a vague statement of purpose as an attachment to my job applications—something about the joy of learning and the writing process, and the nature of thoughtful citizenry through literacy. I did not hold that purpose at the forefront of my thinking once I took a teaching position. Instead, I reified in my classroom what I learned in my

apprenticeship of observation. I used textbooks, library books, and conversations; I guided students to make, to read, to write, to talk: I tried to remake my memories for my students. In my first year, I taught more than one hundred and twenty students art and English language arts. I recognized the ELA textbooks as the same series I read from in high school. "This should be easy," I thought, and I taught 9th- through 12th-grade English in an art classroom. There was much joy and much exhaustion. There was teachers' lounge talk, carpool talk, and talk at home about the kids and the job. I worked hard mostly, and I still did not consider notions of teaching and learning and curriculum. Yet.

After seventeen years and four schools, after teaching middle school and high school English and history and art, after the advent of high-stakes testing and accountability, through the mandates of two sets of statewide curriculum standards, I moved into administration at the urging of a principal. That career change meant two more years of schooling that felt much like the years of public school and university learning that went before. I worked on curriculum projects with members of my cohort, and the process resonated with making the Egypt bulletin board: We worked to reflect what our professors talked about, and we got to burn the edges to make our work look authentic.

In a challenging doctoral program in curriculum studies over the past eight years, I grappled with a handful of ideas from a new-to-me world of scholarship: epistemology, ontology, and paradigm stumped me through my first several semesters; erasure, complication, space, and (im)possibility teased me with sexy intellectual complexity; and through my studies, my notions of teaching, of learning, and of curriculum became less and less certain, more and more elusive. These notions—rarely thought about through the first two decades of my practice—are now questions with a collection of close-but-not-

right answers, and these are at the heart of this knowledge project, this capstone to my formal studies.

I know that this project might be perceived as a vanity: exploring one's own notions through digging around in others' recollections and thinking. And in an anthropological sense, I suppose it is a vanity: I want to engage in conversation with other seasoned veteran teachers (some schools call them heritage teachers, some are called legacy teachers, others warhorses) about their notions of teaching and how those notions might have changed over time; I want to listen to them tell their stories, describe their pathways and their negotiations to get to this point in their careers. Why storytelling? I plan to use my own vagabond recollections (and from here on out I use the word *story* to indicate that there is as much fiction as truth in these words) as context for this study. I do not want to reduce my presence in this work to several paragraphs about researcher positionality because in this work, I am the context for every word, every question, and every moment. It is my project, and if I do not own that, if I do not position that belief with/in this work, I will have missed the point.

I frame this work with/in Pinar and Grumet's (1975) psychological notion of *currere*, an autobiographical exploration, while I remain aware of Geertz's (1988) warnings against autoethnography as "an unhealthy self-absorption—time-wasting at best, hypochondriacal at worst" (p. 1). It is necessary, also, to focus attention on the ways I claim knowledge in this highly situated narrative portraiture: Again, Geertz's notions of being *there* versus being *here* is particularly meaningful, as *there* is in our minds, our memories, and our fictions.

Limiting myself to my own thinking about my own experiences is not enough for me, however—I want to talk with other teachers, too, to perhaps find out how they became teachers, what it means to them to be a teacher, what fortified them along their lifelong professional journey. By surfacing that, by listening for resonance among our

stories, we might identify ways to fortify the next generation of colleagues. I get occasional moments to do this during my current work: Those moments are rare and I feel guilty as I engage because the conversations pull our attention away from the work I am paid to do. This project provided time, permission, and focus to spend on a selfish purpose—talking with teachers about teaching. Pinar's (2004) call for complicated conversations, conversations that center intellectual wrangling—wrangling with self reflexively, wrangling with others carefully, eruditely. And considering Cary's (2006b) Curriculum Spaces theory, "the individual is both active subject and constructed object" (p. 151), I am both researcher and researched in this project and must "persistently critique the discursive structures we inhabit . . . and reveal the desires and myths that shape us" (p. 162).

Vanity? Yes. Important? I do not know at this point. I am not looking for anything profound: I want to attend to my profession and my professional colleagues by engaging in discussions of knowing and being, epistemology and ontology, teaching, learning, and curriculum. I am proud of my life's work: I grew up proud of the teachers I knew, eager to have students feel about me in the ways I felt about my own teachers. And more than once, I have felt uncomfortable, discomfited, shamed when I heard the tsk-tsk of sympathy in the voices—and the silences—of just-introduced strangers at a party: "This is my friend, Jodie—she's a teacher." "Oh. Wow. How do you do it? You must be a saint!" I do not believe I can undo those moments of shame through this knowledge project: I do want to learn some good. My grandfather taught me that the grass is greener where it is watered, and I want to water what might be seen in our current culture as an arid and desolate place—the world of the veteran schoolteacher. In her poem "Diving into the Wreck," feminist poet Adrienne Rich (1973) grapples with the challenges of finding what is within the myth and the ways that words and observation are tools to find our way: "I came to explore the wreck. / The words are purposes. / The words are maps. /

I came to see the damage that was done/and the treasures that prevail." In writing about entering a place that changes whoever goes there, this poet describes the power of words both to provide impetus and to support finding one's way in an exploration. "We are, I am, you are / by cowardice or courage / the one who find our way/back to this scene." As the researcher here, my words are both purpose and map, wreck and treasure; and the we/I/are both researcher and researched, student and teacher, author and story-teller.

The conceptual framework for this project, outlined in the following section, describes the contextual underpinnings for the research. These foundations, introduced by an exploration of the current cultural context for public schooling in the United States and how this context developed, include overviews of several bodies of empirical research around teachers—sociological, feminist, and poststructuralist. Woven throughout are instances where I continue to grapple with notions of teaching. The complexity of this conceptual frame is intentional: As researcher and researched, I am struggling to represent the influences, negotiations, and wayfinding of my path to this point. With/in this layered and twisted context, I planned to ask veteran teachers a robust and scholarly question: ***In thinking about your career before and through the Standards Era, in what ways did you negotiate your understandings of teaching, learning and curriculum?***

But as I imagined asking that question, I realized it was one of those questions that assumed some quite particular and specific answers. And it was one of those questions that inscribed an additional set of characteristics onto the participants—teachers who came to the profession three and four decades ago. By asking that question, I was looking for myself in them, hoping to find that they, too, fretted over what it means to teach and to learn within the construct of standards and high stakes assessment. I chose, instead, to look at them, to listen closely to them, to honor their stories without presupposing mine—to see what surfaced through their narratives. So I asked simple questions:

- What did you think teaching was going to be when you started?
- In what ways has your thinking changed, and why?
- What keeps you coming back year after year?

These simple questions are posed within a hopeful unknowing that in the responses we might begin to surface answers to some more ethereal questions: What does it mean to teach? How might we know the relationships between teaching and knowledge? Between learning and curriculum?

In the methodology section, I discuss both the processes of this research and the theoretical foundations of portraiture as an ethnographic method. I also describe the processes for sense-making within the data. Yet even through structured procedures, the challenges remain: Nothing is innocent. Considering then notions of subjectivity—the mind of the thinking/writing subject—I hope to recognize myself in the Other, to reduce the distance between I and Other, and to enact Merleau-Ponty's (1968) complications of in/visible: that process where "movement, touch, vision, applying themselves to the other and to themselves, return toward their source, and in the patient and silent labor of desire, begin the paradox of expression" (p. 144). I want to ask teachers about their recollections of their own paths toward these ideas, and how their thinking might have changed over time or how they might have negotiated new understandings in new contexts. I want to use their stories to craft care-filled portraits. Just like campfire stories, one tale spurs the next story spurs the next memory, and it is through these stories that we might find our way to another juncture, another negotiation of our work, our understandings, and ourselves—the ways we are damaged and the treasures we still own.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

In order to frame the work of this project, it is important to consider the historical context for the study as well as an essential underpinning of theory and research. In this chapter, I discuss the context for this work, the ways in which teachers and teaching are related to knowledge, and the ways in which teachers name themselves and are named by others.

CONSTRUCTING/ED CONTEXT

As this project seeks to examine veteran teachers' recollections—particularly their notions of teaching (and themselves as teachers) situated in tension/s with notions of curriculum standards described by policy—it is important to contextualize those notions and provide ground for the question at hand. Context—that woven milieu of time, place, and ethos—shapes both what we can know of subject and of object, and the ways we can know those positions. In the 1950s, Lacan and Foucault argued that each epoch has its own knowledge system in which individuals are inexorably entangled: All questions must be settled within cultural and social context, within the confines that phrase the question. The context for this study of teachers and their work is decades long—from the early 1970s through the current milieu of public education in the United States. The framework below outlines three purposeful boundaries for this study: First, a historical narrative of the period—"the standards period" (Marshall, 2009, p. 113) or "the standards era" (Taubman, 2009, p. 12); second, a brief discussion of the concurrent focus on teacher quantity and quality; and third, areas of empirical research about teachers-thinking-about-teaching.[1]

[1] Underpinning this frame are my own recollections of my teaching journey, of my own thinking-about-teaching through those times, as my positionality looms large in this very personal knowledge project.

THE STANDARDS ERA: ESTABLISHING CRITERIA

Reflecting on my teaching practice throughout the Standards Era—including concerns about teacher quality, the widespread implementation of standards and the widespread application of high-stakes testing as a measure of teacher and school quality—I can see (through the lens of my middle-class White upbringing and my public school education in San Antonio, Texas) that this push for rigorous standards/rigorous assessment has as its foundation the grand, noble vision of American Exceptionalism. This belief, noted by 19th-century French sociologist Alexis de Tocqueville (2003), amplified through widespread conflict with different ideologies, like Marxism and Communism (Pease, 2007), and reified throughout my childhood in every social studies classroom, goes like this: The United States (government, people, industry, geography) is exemplary as a democratic institution and as a "new nation," a bright model of how the world should be. And, although this notion is highly contested by historians (Hodgson, 2009; Young, 2005; Zinn, 1980), it manifests in education policy as defensiveness to protect the best and competitiveness to stay the best. Kliebard (2004) notes some effects of that defend/compete mindset:

> . . . (Curriculum) underwent something of a sea change with the passage of the National Defense Education Act of 1958. Not only was the whole discourse about the curriculum radically altered, but the entry of the federal government onto the scene of battle on such a massive scale changed the dynamics of how the curriculum was shaped and instituted. (p. x)

And that mindset surfaced again in 1965 in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, established as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty: "To strengthen and improve educational quality and educational opportunities in the Nation's elementary and secondary schools" (*Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, 1965). Certainly, improvements to quality and access are contested (McNeil, 2000; Taubman, 2009;

Valenzuela, 1999, 2004; Weis & Fine, 2005), and I will not settle the contest here: This sweeping generalization is what I understood as a student in 1960s and 1970s south Texas, and it is what shaped my understandings of the purpose of teaching and learning—why I became a teacher.

I came of age as a teacher in Texas at the beginnings of the Standards Era in that state—a time when an uncomfortable alliance was formed, seeded by corporate interests and led by Ross Perot: the Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC). The business model of education promoted by TBEC focused on the bottom line: a measurable and predictably consistent product of student achievement—as a measure of equity and access—on standardized tests. This historic moment, the emergence of neoliberal culture, is characterized by critical scholars (e.g., DeLissovoy, 2008; DeLissovoy & McLaren, 2003; Giroux, 2008) as a culture feeding a competitive marketplace (i.e., we are here for the market, and each of us must compete for position, for capital, for property rights), and schools, rather than sites of emancipation, are designed for social reproduction and rife with technical violation (DeLissovoy, 2010).

With a desire to move toward a systemically simple Taylorism (control materials, control application, control outcomes) this Regressive moment (for further discussion, see Pinar, 2004) pushed its way into my classroom, and into classrooms throughout the state of Texas, in the form of the Essential Elements in 1985, a set of content standards designated as curriculum guidelines for all schools and classrooms in the state. These curricular guidelines, outlined within Texas state law, described what students must do within each course or grade level. The Essential Elements were revised into the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills in 1993, and with those revisions came multiple tests at multiple grade levels and in multiple iterations; scores on these tests, parsed by student sub-groups, are used to evaluate schools, districts, and teachers. In Texas through the past three decades, the high-stakes testing movement has gained much traction in leveraging

power in/through the educational system and communities across the state: Schools and districts install permanent signage touting the campus or district rankings from test scores; realtors advertise homes by referring to the neighborhood school's ranking; newspapers publish disaggregated test scores and create comparative charts and graphs of scores among groups of students, across communities, and across the state.

Texas was not the first, and certainly not the only, state involved in such educational policy-making: It is simply the context for my thirty years of work in public education in the state, and that context shaped my position in this knowledge project. As of spring 2014 in the United States, forty-six states have adopted the Common Core State Standards, developed under the auspices of the National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers ("The Common Core State Standards Initiative," 2012). Again, this set of standards, designed to serve as curriculum guidelines, is aimed at equity and access for all students through ensuring preparedness for the future:

> The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy. ("The Common Core State Standards Initiative," 2012)

A second stage of the Common Core State Standards Initiative is widespread standardized assessment; currently, two consortia are each developing a suite of tests aligned to the Common Core State Standards—". . . a shared set of high quality tests to better evaluate student progress. . . . smarter and better tests that help students, parents, and teachers" ("The Common Core State Standards Initiative," 2012).

In attempts to achieve the noble and grand outcomes promised by public education in the United States, educators and school leaders—and teaching and learning—are "stuck, so to speak, with conventional wisdom, which yields only to the 'onslaught of circumstance'" (Huebner, 1999a, p. 103). This onslaught of circumstance within the Standards Era is a complication of pressures, generated through educational policy at the national, state, and local levels; these pressuring agents include standards, high-stakes testing, and educational accountability—and educators are shouldering daily the weight of these pressures. With the "language of accountability as the governing principle in public schools" (McNeil, 2000, p. xxiv), professional educators are pushed out of decision-making roles and further away from conversations about teaching, learning, and curriculum. Pinar and his colleagues (2004) describe this circumstance as a time when ". . . multiple 'stakeholders' (not the least among them politicians and textbook publishers) have created something that may look like curriculum consensus but is more like curriculum 'gridlock,' in which the process of education is grinding to a halt" (p. 66). Stedman (2011) posits that—because of this push for measurement, for teacher accountability through high-stakes testing, and the resulting focus on testing—the Standards Era has failed to achieve the purpose of education . . . to ensure that students learn. And some suggest that the standards/accountability movement is dangerous to public education in the U.S. (Au, 2010; Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011; Stedman, 2011; Taubman, 2009), essentially undermining the entire enterprise.

MEASURING AND CENSURING: BLAMING TEACHERS

The Standards Era, reaching the current state of almost-nationwide adoption of one set of standards; widespread implementation efforts for those standards; and looming nationwide standards-based assessment, raises some uncomfortable assumptions about professional educators, as Au (2010) suggests:

1. Teachers are not competent. (*How can they be competent, if they are unable to determine what students know, what they need to know next, and how to ensure that? So we must provide them with an externally-developed standardized test to inform that determination*.)
2. Diversity is bad. (*It must be because the standardized test claims to measure student-by-student-by-standard*.)
3. Local conditions are unimportant. (*Otherwise, the same standard standardized test might not be presumed to provide valid measures of student-by-student-by-standard; if place mattered, it would be included in the equation of success*.)

These uncomfortable assumptions about educators manifest in additional assumptions about—and attention to—the profession and the ways teachers know, learn, and do their work.

In the early 1980s, several important and widely publicized studies focused national attention on the troubling intersection of two sets of demographic data—increasing student enrollments and the increasingly "grey" teaching force—and the burgeoning challenge of teacher shortages (Darling-Hammond, 1984; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Since then, "school staffing problems" (Ingersoll, 2001)—including both the quantity of teachers and the quality of teachers—have been positioned as a major problem and at the receiving end of significant reform efforts and policy initiatives, and as the focus of a substantial body of empirical research (for further discussion, see National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1997).

Two decades ago, Grumet (1993) noted the danger to teachers by highlighting the common sense of blaming teachers for a suite of national economic ills: "Extending the reasoning of the Reagan or Bush administrations . . . the balance of trade, the gross national product, and employment have all suffered because elementary and secondary

school teachers . . . have failed to educate children to be workers in a competitive market" (p. 205). Teachers are scapegoats, then, within an institution at risk of failing to meet its charge, while at the same time they are excluded from key decisions about their work: what to teach, how to teach, and how to know what students learned.

As demographic and cultural pressures mounted (National Academy of Sciences, 1987), empirical researchers and statistics analysts sifted through mounds of data to identify why teachers were leaving their jobs. Much of this work was located in the economics of supply and demand and the financial rationale of leavers (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987, 1997; Heyns, 1988; Murnane, 1987; Murnane, Singer, & Willett, 1988). Ingersoll (2001) examined the large-scale data aggregated through the Schools and Staffing Survey and its supplement, the Teacher Followup Survey, conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics; his findings situated much of teachers' rationale for leaving the profession within the educational system itself. And while economic and financial considerations seemed important, while the burdens of working in and managing large-scale educational bureaucracies surfaced as a critical challenge, "Few educational problems have received more attention in recent times than the failure to ensure that elementary and secondary classrooms are all staffed with qualified teachers" (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 499). And it is that attention—social, political, and economic—that continues to position teachers within a web of cultural expectations and tensions.

Notions of teaching and teachers—dereferentialized and idiosyncratic words, certainly—are made even more complex within the cultural expectations of public education. Within this world of the Standards Era, teachers are under the gun, under pressure, under scrutiny, under-funded, and under-nourished as they grapple with the complicated work of teaching children. Current conventional wisdom or "common sense" about schooling in the United States—those commonly held understandings of, beliefs about, and expectations for public education (Kumashiro, 2004)—is shaped by the

bastard stepchild of the Standards Era: the high-stakes accountability machine in which "testing and grades, not learning, drive instruction" (Stedman, 2011, p. 2). "High-stakes tests are a part of a *policy design* (Schneider & Ingram, 1997) that 'links the score on one set of standardized tests to grade promotion, high school graduation and, in some cases, teacher and principal salaries and tenure decisions' (Orfield & Wald, 2000, p. 38)" (Au, 2010, p. 2).

And while this policy design gains momentum, in a briefing paper for the Economic Policy Institute, Baker et al. (2010) found little evidence "to indicate either that the departing teachers would actually be the weakest teachers, or that the departing teachers would be replaced by more effective ones. There is also little or no evidence for the claim that teachers will be more motivated to improve student learning if teachers are evaluated or monetarily rewarded for student test score gains" (p. 1). Kennedy (2010) suggests that within the Standards Era, the conditions of work for educators affect public perceptions of teacher quality, the ways we can know what teachers do (teacher accountability), and the ways in which teachers work:

> The current emphasis on teacher accountability seems to be based on a similar sentiment: Even if schools encroach on teachers' planning time, interfere with classroom events, assign teachers to subjects outside their fields, or assign students who are disruptive to their classrooms, we nonetheless expect teachers to find a way to be effective. We measure and track their value-added test scores but we do not measure their teaching loads, planning time, student absences, proportion of difficult-to-teach or resistant students, frequency of outside interruptions, access to textbooks or equipment of good quality, or whether their instructional materials arrived before the school year began. (2010, p. 596)

Throughout—and in spite of—the various conditions of teacher work across the country, the policy push for standardizing the curriculum (and with that, teaching and learning, as

well) is stronger than ever, as represented by the Common Core State Standards Initiative: “These standards are a common sense first step toward ensuring our children are getting the best possible education no matter where they live” ("The Common Core State Standards Initiative," 2012).

Echoing, perhaps informed by, the policy stance that public education—and teachers and teaching, by default—needs the support, guidance, and structure of standards, public perceptions of public education, teachers, and teaching are less than positive. In a 2011 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll, 68% of respondents recalled hearing more bad stories than good about teachers in the news media (29% good stories, 3% don’t know/confused) (Bushaw & Lopez, 2011, p. 11); additionally, 70% of respondents believed that the ability to teach students is more the result of natural talent rather than college training (28% training, 3% don’t know/confused) (Bushaw & Lopez, 2011, p. 11). One might infer from these two findings that teaching is a talent or an artistic endeavor that is singular and irreproducible (just as pirated copies of a Warhol print are less-than-Warhol); in a recent study, researchers identified a professional predisposition among teachers “. . . to experience and explain their own and others’ expertise or its lack as inborn, the result of the presence or absence of a talent for teaching” (Scott & Dinham, 2008, p. 122). So this predisposition to write off expertise as a randomized gift of genetics positions educators themselves in the midst of and in agreement with the angry mob of accountability policymakers and pundits.

The idea that teachers—their essential selves—are held accountable for all of the intended and incidental outcomes of the public education machine (student accomplishment, financial thrift, cultural normalizing) is one that has gained much traction in the past decades. As recently as March 2012, criteria were set—based on schools’ aggregate student achievement results—to determine which teachers would

undergo re-testing for licensure in the state of Ohio, the first state to take such steps (Kissell, 2012). Within this milieu,

> . . . (t)he overall picture is a bleak one. In spite of a generation of effort, from *A Nation at Risk* and Goals 2000 to state testing programs and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), there are few signs of improvement. Achievement has generally stagnated, especially at the high school level; most minority achievement gaps remain as large as they were in the late 1980s and early 1990s; and students still struggle in the major subjects. (Stedman, 2011, p. 2)

A grass-roots political action group, Organizing for America, stated in its 2010 talking points that Americans must "stop paying lip service to public education, and start holding communities, administrators, teachers, parents, and students accountable" (Author's web archive, downloaded August 16, 2010). And in response to the call for accountability, scores on achievement tests are increasingly being used to make decisions that have important consequences for examinees and others. Some of these "high-stakes" decisions are for individual students—such as tracking, promotion, and graduation (Heubert & Hauser, 1999). Some states and school districts also are using test scores to make performance appraisal decisions for teachers and principals (e.g., merit pay and bonuses) and to hold schools and educational programs accountable for the success of their students (Linn, 2000). These decisions, perceived as critical measures of fulfilling the purposed of the profession, seem to be made with too blunt a tool for such vital discernments.

Even if we have agreement that schools—and teachers—are not doing the sorts of jobs needed to fulfill the noble endeavor of free, public education for all children, Ball (2011) suggests a quandary among possible responses to the problem:

> The disappointing news is that we are not using these agreements to figure out ways to get lots of skillful teaching in classrooms. Instead we are lining up for

> battle: Fire teachers. Pay good teachers more. Close colleges of education. Open alternate routes into teaching. End tenure. Measure teachers' performance based on their students' gains. Use portfolios to assess teachers' competence. We lob missiles with singular solutions instead of teaming up to build the systems we need to improve teaching and learning at the scale of this vast nation. What we need instead of a new war is a realistic action plan to build a system that can deliver good education to the 50 million school-age youth in this country. . . . And we need a new system to equip the huge workforce of teachers in this country with the skills and knowledge needed to teach this curriculum [Common Core State Standards] effectively.

In conjunction with the blame and the worry and the concern about the nation's teaching force, what they teach, and how well they teach it, researchers—some from the existential, phenomenological, psychoanalytic studies of the school, of individuals within the schools—began to shape an additional narrative in response to these questions: If we are concerned about having enough teachers and having teachers who are enough for our children, we need to attend to what it takes to be a teacher. How do teachers learn their craft? And how do teachers name themselves and know themselves? How do they develop a teacher identity?

NAMING: TEACHING AND IDENTITY

Learning to teach. What does it mean to teach and how do we learn to do it? Sociologists, curriculum theorists, and feminist scholars all have a part in surfacing and shaping our cultural understandings of teachers and teaching. Beginning with Waller (1961), who positioned his work as the first sociology of teachers, sociologists (e.g., Bernstein, 1975; Eddy, 1969; Illich, 1971; Lortie, 1975; Meyer, 1970) sought to locate teachers within the complex web of relationships of schools—among students, teachers, parents, administrators, and community neighbors. They described teacher development,

the collective behaviors of teachers, of teachers' interactions with/in organizational structures, and their social relationships. Social scientists (e.g., Eggleston, 1977; Goodson, 1992) also suggested efficiency models for curriculum, for instruction, and for the business of teaching and learning.

In addition to the sociological examinations of teachers and their roles in our community fabric—teachers' relationships to learning and to knowledge—theorists began to question the legitimizing forces of "scientific" and behavioral perspectives, to push against the social efficiencies of linear and sequential constructions of teaching and learning and to ask critical questions about the very processes and forms of knowledge production. Maxine Greene (1978b) shook her fists at the emerging "business model" of efficiency, as yet another social complication for the education profession:

> . . . [T]he new cultists of efficiency, the would-be scientific managers, create their own mystifications by attention to describe education as a technocratic operation, dependable because linked to what is most controllable and "real." This is one way of the many indications of the importance of working against what Dewey called a "social pathology" and to do so with as much passion as can be mustered. (p. 63)

These questions—Who decides what knowledge? What is legitimated as knowledge? And how? What are the conditions that structure the production of knowledge?—gained prominence in the coalescence of the curriculum moment known as the reconceptualist movement (see Kliebard's histories 1986, 1992), as studies of social efficiencies, of teachers' relations to knowledge, and the legitimization of knowledge began to explicate the concept of self in relation to shifting contexts, both social (interpersonal) and political.

Early autobiographical work attempted to examine such contextualized knowledge (Pinar, 1975; Pinar & Grumet, 1976), to acknowledge the interwoven

relationships among one's conceptions, perceptions, and understandings of educational experience, one's contextualizations of that experience within sociopolitical worlds, and one's constructional of knowledge as both reflecting and creating those worlds (Miller, 2005). Greene (1978b) surfaced the challenges and the demands for teachers to live with/in that reflective, creative space:

> To create the kinds of social conditions that provoke and sustain autonomy demands the most critical consciousness of the forces that seduce people into acquiescence and mindlessness. It requires a profound self-understanding on the part of the teacher, who has to live in a kind of tension simply to function as a free agent, to make choices appropriate to the often unpredictable situations that arise. (p. 248)

Enacting that "critical consciousness," more recent feminist, postructuralist work encourages individuals to review those relationships within larger contexts of predominant discourses that construct "selves" as well as relations of power and authority that frame every teaching practice. Attending to relations among language, subjectivity, social organization and power, "[f]eminist curriculum theorists were challenging the processes and intentions of knowledge construction and legitimation" (Miller, 2005), to look for evidence of external forces that have diminished them and to recover their own possibilities (Grumet, 1988)—to reconceptualize selves as processes and constructs that are influenced, informed, shaped by particular discourses (Britzman, 1992; Ellsworth, 1989, 1990; Lather, 1991a).

In an attempt to deepen and complicate the context for teachers' notions of themselves, it is also important to consider both the ways in which teachers know their work and the relationships of teacher knowledge to practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). As Pinar and colleagues (2004) suggest,

> . . . much of what is written today in American curriculum studies is about understanding the problem of being a teacher of students in seventh grade from the variety of perspectives which make it problematic. But that is not what is interesting about that situation. What is interesting is how your life history, politics, gender, race, and theology have come together in complicated ways to make a problematic situation. (Pinar et al., 2004, p. 8)

Building on Pinar's "life history," Johnson (1984) and Clandinin (1985) suggest personal practical knowledge as a useful frame for such consideration: "'Personal practical knowledge' is knowledge which is imbued with all the experiences that make up a person's being. Its meaning is derived from, and understood in terms of, a person's experiential history, both professional and personal" (p. 362).

While bureaucrats and political leaders fretted with teacher workforce issues and myths, while scientists, theorists, philosophers, and researchers were grappling with reconceptualizing the teacher:knowledge relationship, an important body of work emerged focused on the ways teachers know themselves and the ways we might know them.

The development of teacher identity. As the push for high-stakes accountability grew through the past three decades, as the national discourse of concern for a robust teaching force—both enough teachers and good-enough teachers—has continued, there has been a parallel development in the fields of study about teacher development and teacher identity. It seems as if it were crucial to name those held accountable and to know the ways that teacher identity is shaped, nuanced, inscribed through/with policy. It is important to explore the various approaches to and definitions of *identity* throughout this Standards Era to shape both the ontic and epistemic ground for this project. While much of this identity work focuses on early-career teachers, it is important to consider here how this body of research might inform *and* be informed by a study of seasoned veterans.

In the early 1990s, Lave and Wenger's central notions of situated learning (1991) hinged on identity, yet they did not produce a definition for that concept. Rather, they named processes for shaping identity, and positioned identity as a thing constructed: "Learning . . . implies becoming a different person [and] involves the construction of identity" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53). That same year, Kerby (1991) noted from the field of psychology that identity is shaped through individual perceptions, through the ways we receive the world around us; this psychological work positioned identity as the implied subject of the stories we tell, a subject shaped by both reflection and recollection. "Our own existence cannot be separated from the account we can give of ourselves. It is in telling our own stories that we give ourselves an identity" (Kerbey, 1991, p. 40). To Kerby, the self appears to be inseparable from a person's narrative or life story; through stories, a person generates a sense of self. These stories are based on perceived experiences and, by telling these stories, either in writing or verbally, a person shapes his or her self. Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) deepened the self:story:identity relationship and attached *identity* to *agency*: "People tell others who they are, but even more importantly, they tell themselves and they try to act as though they are who they say they are. These self-understandings, especially those with strong emotional resonance for the teller, are what we refer to as identities" (p. 3).

Mishler (2000) moved the identity field into the ways that not only self and our stories shape identity but the ways that our professional lives—the ways we exist in our world of work—shape identity, as well. Moving beyond the relationship of self:story:identity, Mishler (2000) theorized about professional identity and the plurality of sub-identities within identity, using the metaphor of "our selves as a chorus of voices, not just as the tenor or soprano soloist" (Mishler, 2000, p. 8). Among this plurality of identity, conflict and alignment are possible—given situations call for an appropriate sub-identity—and so context enters the mix. Gee (2001) noted a commonality among the

different meanings of identity in the literature: Identity is not a fixed attribute of a person, but a relational phenomenon. Identity development occurs in an intersubjective field and can be best characterized as an ongoing process, a process of interpreting oneself as a certain kind of person and being recognized as such in a given context (Gee, 2001).

The narrative construction of identity. The study of teachers' narratives, of their own recollections and recounting of their own experiences, is critical to understanding teachers' worlds of work, their thinking, and their culture (e.g., Carter, 1993; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, 1998; Connelly & Clandinin, 1987, 1996; Lieberman & Miller, 1992; Miller, 1990). The philosophical notion that our lives are storied, that we know ourselves and that others know us through our stories (Boler, 1997; Bruner, 1986, 1990; McAdams, 1993) provides the foundation for getting at identity through storytelling, while Trinh (1992) encourages us to consider questions beyond *who* one is to questions of *when*, *where*, and *how* one is, to examine the ways context shapes identity. Through teacher narratives, the power of circumstance to shape the ways teachers know themselves, to shape the cultural knowing of teaching (i.e., cultural expectations of teachers and their work), and to shape who teachers *become* in/through their profession lives might be surfaced. And within the current troubled context, attending to the stories of veteran teachers, teachers at the end of their decades-long careers might provide some insight into ways to nurture and retain professionals.

STAYING: TEACHERS AND RESILIENCE

This project, although focused on the lives of veteran teachers through the Standards Era, is not driven by questions of longevity or resilience. However, much as the identity work discussed previously might support sense-making of the data, there is a body of empirical work about teacher resilience that could also be useful. The identity work might ground how veteran teachers name themselves; the resilience work might support the ways they made it all these years.

The Resilience Logic Model: Veteran = Longevity = Resilience = Happiness = Effectiveness

Much work on resilience is aimed at early-career teachers in the hopes of helping them become veteran teachers—relying on a developmental algorithm between Lortie's (1975) notion of teaching as a front-loaded profession (i.e., teachers learn everything they need to know before entering the classroom as fully formed professionals) and on notions of linear career paths (Fessler & Christensen, 1992; M. Huberman, 1989, 1993). This algorithm, based in the efficiency mindset of the neoliberal positioning of the standards movement (as discussed in Taubman, 2009) suggests that the longer teachers stay in the profession, the better they are at their work. Resilience, as a quality that improves teacher longevity, actually improves student achievement outcomes. And of course, improved outcomes improve teachers' senses of efficacy, accomplishment, and satisfaction (e.g., Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011; Malloy & Allen, 2007). The presupposition that a longer career leads to more effective outcomes underscores much of the empirical work on teacher resilience. Additionally, resilience in its very definition presupposes the presence of adversity to be overcome and satisfaction in overcoming it (e.g., Brunetti, 2006; Gu & Day, 2007; Howard & Johnson, 2004).

A generalized definition of resilience can be gleaned from a recurring question: What sustains teachers and enables them to thrive? (Gu & Day, 2007; Kitching, Morgan, & O'Leary, 2009). Resilience is positioned as a socially constructed aspect of individuals—the ability or tendency to psychologically reform oneself, to "bounce back" or recover with few or no attempts to resist or to change the adverse conditions (Day & Leitch, 2001; Gu & Day, 2007; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990). The social construction happens through reciprocal, mutually supportive relationships—personal, peer, and professional (Sammons et al., 2007). Resilience is also positioned as the result of interactions between individual and context over time (Bobek, 2002; Day, 2008; Tait, 2008), while pervasive and long-term adversarial issues in the

context can impede teachers' enthusiasm for work and willingness to continue (Ben-Peretz, McCullock, 2009; Day & Gu, 2009; Gu & Day, 2007; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Tsui, 2009).

Within the cultural and bureaucratic pressures of the Standards Era, and with the additional adversarial presence of "bigger, tighter, harder, flatter" policy directions (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009, p. 89) there are certainly pervasive, long-term adversarial issues. How might the teachers in this knowledge project have bounced back, and how might they have bounced back quickly (i.e., efficiently?) (e.g., Malloy & Allen, 2007). Have they developed coping strategies (Castro, Kelly, & Shih, 2009)? Have they learned resilience (e.g., Brunetti, 2006; Henderson & Milstein, 2003)? Have they protected their own well-being and adapted successfully (Howard & Johnson, 2004)? And how might notions of resilience, generated through empirical study of primarily early-career teachers, manifest differently among these four women with lifelong careers of more than thirty years?

Taking this environment in a broad sweep, it is important to consider the ways these contextual fibers create the sorts of teaching and learning that might/should/can/will fulfill the grand promise of public education in this country. Through these veteran teacher narratives then, we might begin to surface the ways teachers negotiate within/against these pressures; how they enact their relationships to knowledge; and how notions of teaching and of themselves as teachers might be shaped by these tensions.

WRITING TEACHERS: THE PERILS OF INSCRIPTION

This knowledge project is fraught with danger—danger of misrepresentation, of erasure, and of betrayal. If we accept that language inscribes us, that words are what we know, the way we know, and the toll for knowing that we know, we exclude the possibilities of our emotional aura, our physical understandings, our kinetic interactions; we erase great portions of each of us and even greater possibilities of spaces for learning.

"In the space between emotion and cognition, sensation has ontological priority over language and knowledge" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 155). I am grappling here with the impossibility of legitimizing this knowledge project. What we can say about teachers is that they are physically in these places at this time for *this* duration and they do *this* stuff; they tell these stories. We cannot say when, where, and how teaching/learning happens, nor can we make it happen again: being and doing, yes, but teaching/learning, no. As Ellsworth (1997) writes:

> Our lives return us to dreams even—maybe especially—in the fluorescent lights of classroom lessons about and across social and cultural difference. And the strong light of our curriculum can put even our own shadows to flight. But as those shadows flee, they slip and fall and turn back and become ensnared and lose their way and return . . . to be folded back into our conscious daytime lives, transformed by the journey into something unrecognizable yet familiar in an uncanny way—new old material to become curious about again, to subject anew to the strong light of reason—only to be put to flight again in a new and most unexpected direction, only to return to the shadows from a place we never could have predicted or imagined. As I entertain these notions, . . . education, as I've been taught to think about it and practice it, becomes impossible. (p. 53)

Ellsworth's im/possibility is a hopeful notion, suggesting an infinity of possibilities—if nothing is possible, anything is possible.

That, then, is the result of stumbling about in Plato's allegorical cave. Having mustered the nerve to turn away from the shadows on the wall to face the fire (and here, I might say that I called the fire into existence), I suffer "bewilderment of the eyes" and cannot see beyond the blinding light. I wonder, though, as my eyes adjust if I just might make out the chalk-lined petroglyphs on the walls of the cave?

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

One of the intended outcomes of any knowledge project focused on human participants is to better understand human experiences with/in social contexts. In my attempts here to learn about teaching through the stories of my participants, it is critical to contextualize their narratives. Merriam (1998) writes that in interpretive-constructivist research, "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (p. 6), while Crotty (2004) defines constructionism as the stance that "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). As this project is an attempt to surface the ways in which veteran teachers have negotiated their paths through the complex and multiple realities of schooling in the Standards Era, qualitative research methodologies within a deconstructivist paradigm offer the promise of complex and multiple representations.

Teachers practice their craft with/in complex, multiple realities and the spaces among them: Their capacities for wayfinding, for negotiating, for testing the boundaries of those spaces may shape their understandings about teaching, learning, and the social contexts for those endeavors. An attempt to represent the wayfinding, then, requires a conceptual design that is fluid enough to trickle through the complexities: In choosing to focus this knowledge project on the stories of several individual teachers as they negotiate the Standards Era—and in choosing to include my own story with/in the frame—I look to the ethnographic methodology of portraiture that I might craft stories worth reading and from which we might learn. This chapter outlines the study and delineates the components of the methodology: data analysis, site context, participants, project timeline, and limitations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: PORTRAITURE

Portraiture is "a method of qualitative research that blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. xv). This boundary-crossing troubles the line between researcher/researched, author/character, artist/model, subject/object; and portraiture may allow me to trouble the binary of art/science, write toward the spaces between, and perhaps understand the ways teachers are inscribed by/with/in their context. It is this search for understanding and this desire for representation that frames an appropriate methodology for this knowledge project, as I seek to surface—and perhaps understand—the experiences of veteran teachers within the context of the Standards Era.

Like many, I live a complex life with many passions, vocations, and interests. My entire professional life centers on education—on the world of teaching and learning, curriculum and pedagogy, knowledge and knowing. I am also a visual artist: I work in at least two and sometimes three dimensions; I work in a handful of media; I make pictures and objects to please me. I might be self-indulgent and admit that the metaphor of portraiture appeals to my painter self, and even this self-indulgence has a place in this methodology: "With portraiture, the person of the researcher—even when vigorously controlled—is more evident and more visible than in any other research form" (p. 13). As the researcher, then, I have a place within this work, not just as the author, but also as the subject/object.

Portraiture, in addition to its appeal to me as an artist, also reflects (and provides a way to approach documentation of) the complexities of the world of professional educators. Lightfoot-Lawrence writes that the intent of portraiture is "to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, [to convey] the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those

experiences" (p. 3). This approach to research appeals to my postmodernist ontology and epistemology: Reality is a subjective construct and we can only approximate what we find through subjective ways of knowing the world. The transformative outcomes intended through portraiture, not a ". . . complete and full representation, but rather the selection of some aspect of—or angle on—reality that would transform our vision of the whole" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 5), are, in my thinking, certain and certainly unknowable.

The changes in our subjective understandings of reality are certain because the work of portraiture relies on Grumet's notion of intersubjectivity, "a direct passage between persons" (1988, p. 96). Lawrence-Lightfoot's portraits ". . . are shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject, each one participating in the drawing of the image" (1997, p. 3), and it is through this collaborative shaping that transformation is predictable—one cannot experience "a direct passage" and not change in some way—and perhaps beyond our ken to recount or describe. ". . . [I]n the poststructural moment, our textual descriptions fall far short of what the lived experiences of individual researchers and inquiry and disciplinary communities look and feel like" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005, p. 1116). De-centering individual identity—for our identity is changed even as we try to name ourselves—is not to eliminate the subject but rather to multiply the subject, to move toward a plurality of meaning (Lather, 1991b, p. 120).

So, through portraiture, I hope to craft a "multidimensional map of territory traversed, including multiple moments, multiple histories, multiple influences" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005, p. 1115). The job then, is to write multi-voiced, richly contextualized stories of sense-making to approach a deeper understanding of negotiated experience.

One additional aspect of portraiture that sings to me, as someone who has spent more than thirty years in the field of education, is the focus on goodness. As I described in my discussion of the current milieu of public understanding of public education, much

attention is paid to the wrongness of the institution. My ontological stance is that somewhere in the messiness and illogic of the world, there must be bits of goodness. Empiricism at its foundation is a knowledge system designed to identify orderly patterns, regularities, and relationships and then to surface those bits that do not fit, that are irregular, that are out of relation to other bits: In other words, empiricism searches for wrongness. "Portraiture resists this tradition-laden effort to document failure. It is an intentionally generous and eclectic process that begins by searching for what is good and healthy and assumes that the expression of goodness will always be laced with imperfections" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 9).

Portraiture is designed to "deepen the conversation" (Geertz, 1973, p. 29) and to resist the orderliness of empiricism while retaining the rigor. "In fact, the counterpoint and contradictions of strength and vulnerability, virtue and evil (and how people, cultures and organizations negotiate those extremes in an effort to establish the precarious balance between them) are central to the expression of goodness" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 9). My grandfather taught me that the grass is greener where it's watered—so, if I want this knowledge project to benefit the field, then perhaps I want to aim my work at the goodness within the data by surfacing the negotiations to maintain equanimity within a false binary.

To write portraiture through my artist's stance, then, is to attempt in words to represent individuals in an unruly and chaotic reality, through lenses of recollection made hazy by time, and in collaboration with those same individuals, moving toward ". . . postmodern perspectives, the critical turn . . . the narrative or rhetorical turn, and the turn toward a rising tide of *voices*" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005, p. 1115). And all this? Limited by the words on the page—two dimensions and black and white. Language does not represent: It constructs and inscribes. Language is "a discursive approximation of knowing" (Lather, 2007, p. 69), and at the outset, it is important to consider Said's (1985)

notion of "writing turning back on itself to consider, questioningly, its beginning validity and principles" (p. 335). Within those limitations, however, I might experience Derrida's (1995) artistic surprise: "Whatever precautions you take so the photograph will look like this or that, there comes a moment when the photograph surprises you. It is the other's gaze that wins out and decides" (p. 117). So it is through this concept of Other that I move with my questions. Walton (1990) poses that art is a generator of "fictional truths"—that inventiveness invites ontological self-modification via participation in the creative process (p. 11). To *invent*, or to breathe life into, is, again, a power-riven, modernist act: The postmodern response might be *novatio*, to make new. "But it can be argued that there is a difference between *novatio* and innovation, a difference that lies in the degree of determinateness of their results. Whereas innovation has a previously established aim, the avant-garde *novatio* is a play with possibilities without a preconceived outcome" (van de Vall, 2002, p. 366). And what do I move toward? The Deleuzian notion of the broad scan—a non-linear dynamic and conceptual displacement of a view along any axis (or in any direction) in favor of a sweeping process in space/time (Deleuze, 1994). By maintaining a 360° view throughout layers of now/not now, and by continuously shifting the center of that view, the researcher-artist might begin to contextualize the kaleidoscopic fragmentation of knowledge and knowing. The researcher-artist, then, is one who considers Lyotard's (1991, p. 19) aesthetic sublime—the ways I might express the edge of my conceptual powers and reveal the multiplicity and instability of knowing and of knowledge. This aoristic excess with/in the concept of researcher-artist—and within the ontic space of knowledge—moves me beyond Langer's (1957) notion of art as virtual (i.e., truth-making), to a Deleuzian desire for the sublime "depending on whether the thing encountered enters into composition with us, or on the contrary tends to decompose us" (Deleuze, 1984, p. 21). So, as portraiture blurs the boundaries between researcher-artist/subject-artist, it is important to center

decomposition as a way of learning through the portraits, of locating this project "*in transition* and *in motion* toward previous unknown ways of thinking and being in the world" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 16).

Ellsworth's unpredictable and unimaginable places present a hopeful notion, suggesting an avant-garde *novatio*, an infinity of possibilities—if nothing is possible, anything is possible. This Lyotardian aporia is both troubling and encouraging, and much as Deleuze's notion of sublime, it expands my ontology. Where, then, are the/my limits of knowledge? And how might I know them?

DATA COLLECTION

I collected data in the spring and summer of 2013, and the collection process followed procedures outlined by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. I began only after each participant received a detailed explanation of the project's aims and processes and granted her explicit permission. Qualitative research (Crotty, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1989) requires that multiple and varied data sources are employed: These might ensure that the well of data is deep enough to draw out both representation and understanding. The particular data sources utilized in this project include interview, observation, and dialogical interaction, designed to help participants develop new understandings within the governing questions of the work.

Interviews

As an educational consultant—someone who is invited into a school organization to provide professional guidance and advice—I have ongoing and long-term relationships with leaders in sites throughout the country. In this study, I used layers of semi-structured, digitally recorded interviews, starting within these relationships. These interviews with teachers and administrators served multiple purposes: one, to frame my

understanding of the school context; two, to identify possible participants; and three, to leverage my existing trustworthiness into new relationships. (See Initial Interview Protocol, Appendix A). Through these same conversations I gained entrée into the private and individualized worlds of veteran teachers, teachers who began their professional lives before the birth of the Standards Era.

The second layer of interviews, with study participants themselves, served multiple purposes (see Participant Interview Protocol, Appendix A). As a portraitist, it is critical that I own my stance—that I situate my sense-making of participants' experiences within ". . . a particular social, cultural, and historical context—a context where relationships are real, where the actors are familiar with the setting, where activity has purpose, where nothing is contrived (except for the somewhat intrusive presence of the researcher)" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 43). Initially, these interviews framed the spaces within which the work happened—the relationships among participants and researcher began here, as we negotiated the ways we shared information, the ways we surfaced recollection and memory, the ways we documented our work, and the ways we held one another accountable for the outcomes of the project.

The use of interviews offers rich, complex, and asynchronous data—data that is not necessarily evident through observation alone. Patton (1990) notes several aspects of data that are not available through observation, like

> . . . feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. (p. 196)

In a semi-structured interview format, participants engaged in a more naturalistic and conversational give-and-take, rather than the game-show quiz of information-gathering.

Using both structured and semi-structured questions during the course of the interviews, I "respond[ed] to the situation at hand, to the worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). These interviews, then, relied less on a script and more on the organic nature of an information conversation. This purposefully fluid structure offered myriad opportunities both to surface the multiple realities of participants and to engage participants in the work of discovery.

Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim; these transcriptions were offered to participants for member-checking and review. Member-checking is integral to the construction of a trustworthy research design; more than that, it allows for clarification and validation of information transcribed (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Member-checking also serves as a form of triangulation: By asking participants to look over "interview transcripts, analytical thoughts, and/or drafts of the final report" (Creswell, 1998, p. 203), I might more closely approximate a representation of participants' ideas, thoughts, actions, and milieu through "their reactions to our storying of their lives" (Lather, 2007, p. 45).

To supplement verbatim transcriptions of words, I jotted handwritten notes and sketches. These field notes further illuminated the interview settings, context, and participants' physical way of being (facial expressions and movements); they also provided opportunity to note an extending question or a connection among interviews with other participants. Additionally, I maintained a reflective journal, noting my responses (emotional and intellectual) to the interview conversations.

In-Context Observations

Interviews took place in participants' classrooms so that observation of each teacher in her native context might provide additional data for study. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) frame multiple purposes for field observation: By observing—and recording—participants' context, I might represent the physical setting of the work,

drawing a picture (figuratively or literally) of the current places of work for teachers; frame my perspective with/in the classroom; surface central metaphors and symbols that inform and shape participants' narratives; and, possibly, represent the teachers' roles in shaping and defining their own context (p. 44).

There are drawbacks to observation—even observation of the relationship between subject and place—and warnings abound regarding the intrusiveness of this data collection process (Erikson, 1986; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993a; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1989). One of the definitive features of portraiture, however, is the presence of the researcher/portraitist: "The portraitist's voice, then, is everywhere—overarching and undergirding the text, framing the piece, naming the metaphors, and echoing through the central themes" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 85). Even in observation, my voice infiltrates.

DATA ANALYSIS AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Merriam (1998) writes that "data analysis is a process of making sense out of data" (p. 192), as researchers struggle to group together information in categories, taxonomies, or themes; draw conclusions; and gain understandings. Many researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995) suggest that data collection and analysis occur simultaneously and that the chronologic writing process (first, next, finally) might hinder the representation of simultaneity. Ethnography, the umbrella term over portraiture, must be both confessional and interpretivist (van Maanen, 1988) and requires a methodological stance of openness—as Cary (2006a) stated, "Ways of knowing emerge from the data" (p. 142)—because of the interdependence of epistemology and methodology in a postmodern, poststructuralist paradigm. Within portraiture, there exists also an admission that the portraitist is with/in the portrait, that the researcher is both representing and represented, that "the portraitist makes judicious decisions about which contextual details to employ—selections shaped by the central

themes" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 45). Cary's crisis of representation (1999) indicates that whatever the chosen methodology, the researcher must negotiate meaning both within her thinking and emerging from the text. This negotiation must be transparent and self-reflexive, as the researcher attempts "to make sense of . . . interaction with the data and the politics of creating meaning" (Lather, 1991b, p. 79). Featherstone (1989) identifies the political work of portraiture as "between analysis and solidarity" (p. 379), embracing both rigorous analysis of data—sense-making that is distancing, discerning, and skeptical—and the creation of intimate connections with and among those studied. Methodologists like Miles and Huberman (1984), Erlandson and colleagues (1993b), and Erikson (1986) recommend the use of journaling during the research process to facilitate meaning-making and analysis. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) name this process keeping an impressionistic record: "a ruminative, thought piece that identifies emerging hypotheses, suggests interpretations, describes shifts in perspective, points to puzzles and dilemmas (methodological, conceptual, ethical) that need attention, and develops a plan of action for the next visit" (p. 188).

As researcher, I kept impressionistic records throughout the study's duration both as a data collection tool and as a way to inform data analysis—and this journaling added to the dangerous nature of this study: "If we write without thinking critically about our writing, it can be dangerous. Writing can also be dangerous because we reinforce and maintain a style of discourse which is never innocent" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 36). In an effort to own the lack of innocence and to avoid reifying old discourses, the reflexive quality of the researcher's records include consistent questioning to trouble the waters: What might be erased, who might be denied by these words? Who might be limited and reformed by these inscriptions? In what other ways might this data be meaningful?

Additionally, in a push toward rigorous data analysis, the following process—outlined by Huberman and Miles (1983)—aided in organizing and analyzing data:

- coding (to facilitate organizing and theming of data),
- policing (to help detect bias and keep the analysis on track),
- connoisseurship (to support researcher knowledge of the issues occurring in the context of the study and its sites),
- progressive focusing and funneling (to help sift the data as the study unfolds),
- memoing (to note emerging issues during the course of the study), and
- outlining (to better standardize the narrative format).

Several steps of this analysis process (connoisseurship, memoing, and outlining) occurred in the impressionistic record alongside my personal thoughts, details, questions, sketches, and general observations. The coding, policing, and progressive focusing/funneling surfaced in stand-alone documents crafted throughout the data collection and analysis process. As further information emerged throughout the study, I continued coding, policing, and winnowing data. (For further discussion of the coding process, see the introduction to Chapter 4.)

Making sense of the mass of data collected in qualitative research is made more complex by the need to prove trustworthiness of analysis. Subjectivity—those choices and perceptions within the mind of the thinking/writing subject—brings Van Maanen's (1988) warnings of "vanity ethnography" forward: In efforts to reduce the distance between I and Other, it seems impossible not to include the researcher in the telling of the tale. As Crotty (2004) explains further, "[subjective] meaning does not come out of interplay between subject and object but is imposed on the object by the subject" (p. 9). Additionally, Steiner's (1974) caution about analysis figures significantly in this project: "Analytic thought has in it a strange violence. To know analytically is to reduce the object of knowledge, however complex, however vital it may be, to just this: an object" (p. 103). So, within those warnings and constraints, I go cautiously and speculatively into analysis.

Within portraiture, the researcher comes to the field with an intellectual framework and a set of guiding questions (resonant with the researcher's autobiographical journey); these become a template of sorts to inform anticipatory schema. Portraitists Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) are clear that this anticipatory schema is not a set proposition to be proved or disproved, but rather an identification of aspects of the study that are immediately transformed and modified within the study, through an iterative, dynamic process of "receptivity, negotiation, and accommodation that leads to more focused research questions" (p. 186). By listening and observing, by noting what is familiar and what is surprising, the researcher can trace connections to her anticipatory schema and to emerging facets previously unknown.

Making sense of the chaotic, organic mass of data gathered through qualitative methods is made more complex by the need to prove trustworthiness in analysis. The suggestion from Umberto Eco that the mass of data collected through these methodologies are best deconstructed through *bricolage*, the work of doing what is necessary with what is at hand, seems useful (Eco, 2005). It is also important—and troubling—to note that what is omitted is every bit as valuable as what is included: that words should be known and leveraged through both utility and *sous rature* (Crotty, 2004, p. 205). A metaphoric image is that of tossing a handful of pebbles into a pond then attempting to describe, define, and determine each intersection of concentric circles as they move through the water, through one another, and through the researcher's mind. Troublesome, indeed.

Erlandson and his colleagues (1993a) detail the following as techniques to develop trustworthiness in naturalistic inquiry:

- prolonged engagement (to help build trust and offer context during a study),
- persistent observation (to provide depth and guide distinctions between relevant and irrelevant data),

- triangulation (to provide a connective structure among multiple data sources),
- referential adequacy materials (to situate the data collection, analysis, and interpretation in technological representations, such as audio and visual recordings),
- peer debriefing (to help ground the researcher and offer additional, less-invested points of view),
- member-checking (to provide participants the opportunity to test researcher interpretations, to deepen the analysis, to add their voices to the process),
- reflexive journal (to support transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study),
- thick descriptions (to use all of the senses to capture the context and unfolding events of the study),
- purposive sampling (to offer specificity), and
- an audit trail (to support the steps in the research process and provide others with documentation for study dependability and confirmability).

Many of these considerations—coupled with the data analysis methods detailed by Miles and Huberman—played an integral role in generating trustworthiness of the study and assuring quality of the research design. By offering the safeguards of peer debriefing, member-checking, and an audit trail, the emergent themes and findings drawn during analysis might ensure the support structure of triangulation.

It is the responsibility of all researchers to maintain ethical standards throughout the research process—and it is particularly important within the context of this study. As I attempted to draw portraits of veteran teachers, to develop solidarity with them, to represent their negotiations and way-finding throughout their professional lives, and then to pick into those stories to surface themes and connections—I did it with as much sensitivity and humanity as I could bring to the project. And all of this was done while

remaining mindful of the lack of innocence of words and the limitations of the capacity of human as instrument.

Context of Research Sites

The context for this study is located in the memories, recollections, and current state of veteran teachers. Each of the participants in this study is a public school teacher. Each works in classrooms, in districts, in communities. Each taught through the advent of the Standards Era to the current moment, within the particular manifestations of that milieu in a particular state public education bureaucracy. The data, analysis, and portraits crafted through this study reflect the unique qualities of each participant within a singular context.

Research Participants

This study includes the voices, perspectives, and stories of four veteran schoolteachers. Each of these four teachers identify themselves as white middle-class women—reflecting the long-term trend found within national school staffing data. Kelly Stone is an elementary teacher in a large metropolitan area in Texas. She was in her forty-second year of teaching when I interviewed her, and she continues today. Anne Williams was an elementary teacher in a rural district in southeastern New Mexico. She was completing her forty-third year as a teacher, and she retired in June 2013. Hallie McKenzie is a high school science department chair in an affluent suburban district in Texas. She was completing her thirty-third year of teaching during data collection, and she continues today. Ella Rosen is a high school English language arts department chair in an affluent suburban district in Texas, and she was completing her thirty-fifth year of teaching. She continues teaching today. Participants for this study were chosen through snowball sampling, looking for those teachers whose professional lives span the Standards Era. "In its simplest formulation snowball sampling consists of identifying

respondents who are then used to refer researchers on to other respondents" (Atkinson & Flint, 2001).

Snowball sampling allows access to impenetrable or hidden social groups, groups of people who have been marginalized, stigmatized, elided, and isolated—"where they are few in number or where some degree of trust in required to initiate contact" (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). As the purpose of portraiture is to uncover, to represent, to attend to individuals, snowball sampling seems to be a well-suited process for identifying participants, as Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) explain: that the purpose is ". . . not to test a series of predetermined hypotheses on a representative sample which would allow for extrapolation to the whole population," but rather ". . . to explore and analyze" (p. 147). Additionally, Noy (2008) suggests that "when viewed critically, this popular sampling method can generate a unique type of social knowledge—knowledge which is emergent, political and interactional" (Noy, 2008, p. 327). As this purpose of this study was to engender conversations among veteran teachers, and to engage in those conversations during a time of political pressures, this sampling method provided useful and interested participants.

TIMELINE

This study began in the fall semester of 2012 and continued through the spring semester and summer of 2013.

LIMITATIONS

There are limitations inherent to the methodology, as portraiture is looking for the good in participants and in their situations (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). As I described in the introduction, positionality is also a significant limitation, as I like teachers and I am like them in many ways. As English (2000) points out in his critique of the methodology: "Portraiture, while differing from positivism in its methodological

permutations, nonetheless has the same goal in mind, that is, the production of *a grand narrative* that is totalizing, enduring and revelatory" (p. 21). In addition to his challenges of the epistemological placement of this method, he continues his critique of the positionality necessary to the method:

> Portraiture as a "scientific" research method possesses some of the same flaws as a painting in the world of art. . . . The artist does not see what is there. The artist sees only through the images of gender, culture, social mores, and relationships. The imposition of a singular meaning as in a painting or portrait displays a differentiated and hierarchical perspective that is neither neutral, natural, nor egalitarian. . . . It engages in deliberate erasure and ignores certain silences. (English, 2000, p. 26)

Yes. I agree.

It seems that the English's biggest problem with the methodology is the creation of a central Truth. I maintain that, even in portraiture—paint on canvas or words on paper—there is no such outcome. I remind myself regularly of Ellsworth's (1997) question, "What gets erased and denied, and at what cost, when we act as if it's possible to wipe out, through understanding, the space of difference between a speaker's text and a listener's response in dialogue?" (p. 47). As a visual artist, myself, I recognize the distinctions and choices, the erasures and denials, I make in my representations—some consciously, most unconsciously; I also recognize and *cannot know* the distinctions that viewers bring to a painting, the inscriptions and exclusions that come to bear in any interaction between artist/art/audience. So, yes—there are limitations to the representations in this methodology.

Additional limitations emerge with the sampling method, as snowball sampling might represent the bias within a snowball—for example, as I asked for recommendations of or connections with additional participants, the biases of those I asked might not be

evident (Van Meter, 1990). I stress here that I am making no attempt at statistical significance with this sampling method—although there is an algorithm for that (Goodman, 1961); I simply used the connections I have in the field to identify participants.

Chapter 4: Portraits of Participants

ποταμοῖσι τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν, ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρεῖ

. . . potamoisi toisin autoisin embainousin hetera kai hetera hudata epirrei . . .

On those stepping into rivers staying the same other and other waters flow.

— Heraclitus

Scholars have long referenced Heraclitus's river metaphor in the above fragment as an approach to understanding identity within notions of constancy and change. A river is a river because it changes: Should it cease to flow, it would no longer be a river. And while many take this to mean that we cannot step into the same river twice (a Platonic interpretation of Heraclitus), in this fragment, it is people who remain the same in contrast to changing waters, as if the encounter with a flowing environment helped to constitute the perceiving subject as the same (Graham, 2011). And it is this consideration of identity that I take into the analysis of data in this knowledge project.

I chose portraiture as my methodology precisely because of the recognition that research is mutually constitutive: The process of creating knowledge from examining others' lives positions both researcher and researched as both object and subject. And just as Heraclitus notes that each encounter with the flowing river helps constitute the perceiver/researcher *and* the river itself, my analytical processes with the data ensure multiple encounters, multiple opportunities to compose an authentic rendering. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) identifies these multiple encounters as a complex set of expressions:

> Portraiture seeks to combine systematic, empirical description with aesthetic expression, blending art and science, humanistic sensibilities and scientific rigor. The portraits are designed to capture the richness, complexity and dimensionality of the people who are negotiating those experiences. The portraits are shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject. The encounter between

> the two is rich with meaning and resonance and is crucial to the success and authenticity of the rendered piece. (p. 3)

Still, with the uncertainty of representing as constant something that by its very nature is in flux, like a river, I must recognize the impossibilities that Britzman (2003) identified in her studies of new teachers: "And yet, within the narrative tropes I chose to employ, there is a contradictory point of no return, of having to abandon the impossible desire to portray the study's subjects as they would portray themselves" (p. 248). As novelist Arthur Golden (1997) describes the work of crafting autobiographical narrative: "Autobiography, if there is such a thing, is like asking a rabbit to tell us what he looks like hopping through the grasses of the field. How would he know? If we want to hear about the field, on the other hand, no one is in a better circumstance to tell us—so long as we keep in mind that we are missing all those things the rabbit is in no position to observe" (1997, pp. 1-2). Once I documented the stories of my participants, within the bounds of this study, those rivers might cease to flow, or the rabbit might scamper away—unless I, as researcher, embed notions of sameness and change as a critical binary, the reminders of the limitations of the rabbit's observations into my analysis of the data—the audio recordings and transcriptions, my field notes.

An additional consideration is the positioning of oral histories as a post-colonial methodology, one that frames personal narrative as the articulation of identity, of voice (Errante, 2000). Bhabha (1990) and Said (1993) locate human dignity within personal narrative and caution against denying the possibility to narrate one's own experience. So having abandoned Ellsworth's representational desire and having accepted the constative nature of personal narrative, researchers are also cautioned against subsuming

themselves within the narrative Other: Long-term participant observation and fieldwork can make researchers vulnerable (Behar, 1996) to shared and vicarious memory (Errante, 2000). With these cautionary boundaries in mind—even while naming the permeability of them—I proceed. My methodological process flows within/through the data, constituting the perceived subjects more robustly with every pass.

For my first step into the river, I chose what Lawrence-Lightfoot calls "voice as witness" a distancing, third-person register: "This use of voice underscores the researcher's stance as discerning observer, as sufficiently distanced from the action to be able to see the whole, as far enough away to depict patterns that actors in the setting might not notice because of their involvement in the scene" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 87). It is with this distant voice that I can first show respect for the complexities of the participants, and it is with this voice that I can maintain a stance of humility. As Wambura Ngunjiri (2007) highlights in her reflections on her first use of portraiture: ". . . (P)ortraiture enabled me to take the stance of a *supplicant learner* as necessitated by the cultural context of the study. A supplicant learner is one who is willing to put aside, at least for the moment of interaction with the participant, her 'expert' stance, and instead put on a humble, child-like persona in the researcher-participant relationship" (2007). Within the cultural context of this knowledge project, I am not one of these seasoned veteran teachers: I spent only seventeen years in the classroom, before stepping first into school administration then into the university. I carry deep respect for my participants, each with more than thirty years of experience—they are living the life I imagined for myself when I began teaching in 1981, and I am supplicant to their expertise and knowledge.

ANNE WILLIAMS: MY. WHOLE. LIFE.

Since I can remember, I wanted to be a teacher.

Anne Williams is almost sixty-five years old, and her hands flutter around her face, managing her glasses and her hair— a silver-gold chin-length bob—as she talks. She adjusts her glasses over green eyes, applies and reapplies lipgloss, and fidgets with items on her desk (pencils, pens, stapler, papers, spiral notebooks, and markers) as she arranges her thoughts during our conversations. Her face is suntanned and animated, smiles burst into light, and anger as quickly as tears fills her eyes: The lines document decades of living in the arid, sun-drenched desert. She has been an elementary school teacher for forty-two years and in three different states. Her entire career has been in small town schools in western Tennessee and in southeastern New Mexico.

Miss Anne is her preferred moniker in schools and professional relationships: "That's how I learned to honor my teachers, and that's how I want to be respected—although most call me Mrs. Williams." She knits her brows together as she says it, "Mrs. Williams." Anne remembers many changes in education throughout her life, and, she says, "It's important I start at the beginning." In her earliest memories, her parents pushed her learning and stressed the importance of an education: Schooling was a non-negotiable in her young life, and she credits her father's childhood poverty for that stance. During the Depression, Anne's grandmother—her daddy's mother—was suddenly a widow in Oklahoma "with five children and a paid-up and paid-out Woodsmen of the World Insurance Policy." She took that money, moved to Tennessee, and bought a little farm in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, where she and her five children raised their own food and made their lives together.

Those children grew into adults, married, and had families of their own, most making their homes in the area of western Tennessee where Anne was born and reared.

"I started thinking of myself as a teacher when I was still a child in the Old Friendship School in Chester County." The two-room school housed all K–8 students in one room and high school students in the other. Mrs. Georgia Hill was the principal and

one of the teachers, and there was no hiding from her watchful eyes. “My mother went to grade school and high school with Georgia Hill; we went to church together.” And the lives of their families—and the other families in this rural community—were intricately connected and related. This connectedness, this interdependence among extended family and members of the community, emanated from two central hubs: church and school. Connectors between the two—like Mrs. Hill and the cousins, aunts, and grandparents seated in pews and desks—created the context for a pervasive and reverential respect for the school, the work of the school, the teacher and her work, and the work of the children.

Opportunities to learn content, to acquire skills, to develop a deep understanding were built into this two-room system: When children might spend nine years of their education within the same two rooms, with the same teacher, it was possible for students to hear and watch the other grades’ lessons and move more quickly through the curriculum as they were ready or to linger for an extended time as they needed. And listening was an important part of learning in this school: Mrs. Hill talked and students listened. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing were the tools of both teaching and learning, both pedagogical choice and student action. The teacher wrote sentences, poems, facts, and problems on the blackboard. Students copied them. Students read silently and aloud. Students memorized and recited and listened to others’ recitations; they wrote and figured, both to learn and to show what they knew.

By the time Anne was eleven years old, she had completed the eighth grade and was working with Mrs. Hill to teach kindergarten, and first and second grades—after all, she had heard and lived through those curricula for more than six years. She wrote lessons on the board, she checked work and entered grades in the gradebook, and she sat with those younger children as they learned their letters and sounds with the same flash cards and books she had used six years earlier. “It’s just like yesterday when we got our first mimeographed handout—in ninth grade! It was a blank calendar that Mrs. Hill ran

off in the office, cranking that [mimeograph] handle and asking one of the kindergartners to count each page. They were damp and cool and smelled like something mom uses to get grease stains out of daddy's shirts."

And now? She waves both hands in a broad sweep, indicating her classroom full of resources—shelves with dozens of copies of dozens of books; primary-colored plastic crates filled with algebra tiles and base-ten blocks, counted out into plastic baggies; plastic shoe boxes, one for each group of student desks, with markers, highlighters, scissors, tape, and glue sticks; two sinks and a student restroom; a doc-cam; a projector; a smart board; a rack with rolls of colored butcher paper. She learned through Mrs. Hill how to teach with just a blackboard, a handful of books, a hand lens, a globe, and a pull-down map of the United States of America before and after the Civil War. "I can't even imagine teaching without all these materials and resources—we have so much to do, so many expectations put on us." The push for excellence is so strong that it takes all of this and more to do what is expected of her and her colleagues these days. "They just expect too much," she sighs.

"You'll work the cotton patch if you come home."

There was never a question about whether Anne would continue her education past high school; again, she credits her father's own childhood experiences for the motivation and the fact that she was her parents' only child for the financial capacity. She is from an old-time Baptist family, so she attended Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tennessee. And when she wanted to quit and return home after a week—to succumb to the desperate homesickness of an only child suddenly living in a room with seven other girls—her daddy told her she would work the cotton patch if she came home. So Anne stayed for two-and-a-half years. In 1970, she earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and became a certified teacher in Tennessee.

She taught Physical Education for three years, got pregnant and had that baby in November. A November baby in the early 1970s meant that Anne needed to find a new job in January; teaching PE was strenuous for a new mother, and when her principal offered her a brand-new position she took it—and became a remedial, Title I reading teacher. "I was lucky to be a Title I teacher at this time: Tons of money was pumped into these programs, I had all the instructional materials I wanted and all these opportunities to learn new strategies, new ways of doing things." During the nine-and-a-half years she taught in this reading lab, she earned a master's degree in reading from Memphis State and took 45 hours of coursework beyond that degree—there is much pride in her voice, "I don't understand how anyone now can become a teacher without any training! I haven't gone a day without using what I learned in my master's program."

In the early 1980s, a severe recession ravaged the economy across the United States, and Miss Anne and her husband felt it bad in Tennessee: Her husband couldn't find work anywhere. They worried about how they were going to keep their family and their home without his income—a teacher's salary back then was meant to be a supplemental paycheck, not the sole income. Anne shared her financial worries with her cousin, who lived in southeastern New Mexico where the oil business was booming; her cousin invited them to come to the Land of Enchantment—her husband could certainly find work and the schools needed teachers for the growing number of children in the oil patch. Anne and her husband decided to take the offer and move in with her cousin's family—two or three years and they could be back on their feet again and home in Tennessee.

That was thirty-one years ago.

Miss Anne keeps a folder filled with drawings, greeting cards, and notes from students: She calls it her Joy Folder, and she turns to it often as a reminder of why she has spent more than two-thirds of her life in classrooms. One note in particular, scribed on a

ruled sheet of coarse and unbleached paper from a student writing tablet, is a favorite: "Mrs. Williams is like god—no matter what we do, she forgives us and still loves us." The edges are foxed and frayed from years of handling, and accompanying the words written in a child's off-kilter print is a drawing of Miss Anne as god, replete with a staff, a crown of stars, and a flowing white robe. There are also notes from parents, thanking her for the successes of their children, for the care she showed their babies; there are notes from former students, now parents expressing joy and thanks for the continuity of her teaching across the generations. As she sorts through her folder, she identifies the family connections: cousins, in-laws, grandchildren, sisters, brothers, sons, aunts, and uncles. She names students she taught in Sunday school and regular school: Among those are several who are now teachers in their own classrooms down the hall or across town. "In fact, my first teacher's aide was Debbie Cooper and now she's the assistant superintendent!" she says, with pride in her voice and a bit of surprise on her face.

It's about respect. People just don't respect school anymore.

Within the minutes she spends loving the joys and memories contained in her folder, Miss Anne returns to her Tennessee childhood: "I used to line up . . . teddy bears and little dollies for their lessons, and my momma bought me a chalkboard to use." Her bears and dolls memorized and recited, acted up and got punished, passed or failed assignments depending on her judgment. Was there ever a time when she didn't want to teach? Did she ever want to do anything else? "No. For my whole life I wanted to teach and now I'm leaving the classroom." She talks about a social breakdown—the dissolution of homes and families and a shift from respecting public education and public educators to blaming the institution and the professionals within it. She describes her own education: "If I got in trouble at school, Mrs. Hill, who was the principal and my teacher, called Momma and I was in trouble again when I got home." Miss Anne is unable to identify a specific moment of change; rather, she considers four decades of subtle change

to the current generation of parents who prefer to discipline the school and schoolteachers instead of shaping their own children into responsible people.

Compounding—and perhaps driving—the subtle and substantive shifts in cultural respect for public education is the thirty years of constant pressure from education policy to increase student accomplishment, to design and achieve more rigorous academic standards, and to ensure that every child has the same level of success in a more challenging system. She tells of such a big change in the amount of data she collects and receives about her students over the past four years. (Because of some rules for teacher retirement in New Mexico, she retired five years ago and was rehired, effectively increasing her salary by almost half. So her first retirement is a signpost in her recollections.) She whispers, "Yes, there was testing before these past couple of years, but Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) didn't mean squat to anyone here. Now, we get these grades on our schools . . .." Her voice is thick with held-back tears. Within the current New Mexico educational accountability system, each school in the state is given a letter grade (A, B, C, D, or F) that reflects their AYP and other indicators of student success. "When I got my test results last summer, I brought them to my room and cried. I was devastated." Anne leans over and asks through gritted teeth, "Does this [her school] feel like a D school? With 96% parent approval and the school is still a D?" The insult she feels—her disappointment and her wounded pride—is palpable.

Additionally, Miss Anne feels a responsibility to counsel students and their families, to tutor struggling learners (children and adults), to nurse them through injuries and illnesses, and to keep them safe while in her charge. She jokingly tells her husband and friends, "When I have to carry a gun and dodge bullets, that's my cue to get out of here." There is a threat in schools more subtle and insidious than gun violence, however; with tears in her whispered voice, Miss Anne explains that the current push of assessment and curricular rigor and the many, many tasks now accepted as part of a teacher's

world—"and the loss of respect for this job"—are just too much for her to continue. She is retiring from a profession she has loved her whole life, and it is breaking her heart.

She takes a moment to dab at the corners of her eyes with a tissue, clear her head, gather her thoughts, and get back to her story. She describes her first year teaching in what she calls a real classroom, and explains that is was very different than her experiences in Tennessee, where she taught PE in the gym and playground and worked one-on-one with students in the Title I reading lab. "Nope. This first real classroom was a tough group of kids: One little boy stood with a bottle of Elmer's Glue right here (indicating her waistline) and squeezed it out onto his desk—being nasty with it," she says. The students fed off of each other's bad behavior, escalating like a wild fire in a breeze. And the advice from another teacher about the behavioral issues in her class? "She said, 'You gotta tough it out. Surviving this is what makes or breaks a teacher.' So I toughed it out, and I learned."

The following year, Miss Anne was reassigned to an overcrowded fifth grade at another school in the district. Her classroom was a repurposed computer lab—a horseshoe-shaped space with three separate areas for students—and she used this to her advantage. She put a problem child or two in each of the three areas, so they couldn't see each other and she could see each of them from a central spot. It was her first year in a "tested grade"—at that time, students at grades 3, 5, and 8 were assessed statewide, and she had never before been under the testing gun. So she got everything she could find about testing and she "grilled those kids . . . grilled them." And guess what? As fifth-graders, their scores ranked in the eighth grade, sixth month.

The D-Bomb. Data.

But Miss Anne explains that after years of teaching tested grades, she no longer needs the test scores. "I know within three class days what math level each student is on, whether they'll finish high school, go to college, or make a career for themselves. After

forty-two years of teaching, I pretty much can tell. I really can," she insists, as she pulls out a three-ring binder filled with loose-leaf notebook paper. With a shrug toward her desktop computer, she says, "I enter the information into that system because she I'm expected to, but I keep my notes by hand—after all, those things crash."

She flips through her binder: These are her kids. Some pages are covered with handwritten notes that document her plans and her in-the-moment changes. Some pages are lists of students with columns of colored hand-marked dots—purple, blue, green, orange. She indicates the headers for the columns: Each corresponds to a particular strand within the standards and weekly calendar dates, starting in August 2012. This system is her way of documenting the content her students need to know, how well each student is doing, and whether a student might need additional work to master the standards. The initial dots for each student are the results from the previous year's state assessment: Miss Anne, with a slight nod, indicates, "Some of these students should not have been promoted to fifth grade," and with another nod and raised eyebrow, she hints, "And maybe some fourth-grade teachers might work a little harder, too." There was a time in her career that she could just decide that some of these kids might need to spend more time in a grade or on a certain portion of the curriculum and she could make that change, but not now. "The students get promoted from grade to grade whether they are prepared or not," and mathematics, according to Miss Anne, is the subject that students must get.

Behind the pages of students and colored dots are the actual assignments she has given to her students, coded to the strands for fifth-grade mathematics and science. (She and the other fifth-grade teacher on this campus have chosen to departmentalize around the core content areas: Miss Anne teaches Math and Science while the other teacher handles English Language Arts and Social Studies.) Pages of handouts, worksheets, guided practice, quizzes, and writing assignments—"I work each problem, complete each

assignment before I give them to students just to make sure I can answer their questions when they have them."

And now, when she gets data back from her district's quarterly standards-based assessments, her predictions sometimes match that data set, sometimes not. She is suspicious of data and suggests that people can make data mean anything they want. "Back in 1977, the principal had all the teachers read '*Why Johnny Can't Read*. We talked about it afterward and couldn't come to agreement on what it meant, even though it was filled with data—half of us believed it, half did not. Same article, same data." With a big sigh, she states, "Data is great, but it is not the almighty answer to all this work. And our current testing program? These short-cycle assessments [referring to a district formative assessment program] are the worst I've seen in my long, long career." She leans across her desk and whispers, "It's too difficult for most of my students—the whole process hurts my slower students, scares my grade-level kids, and bores the smart ones into misbehaving." She shakes her head in disapproval, pushes her glasses up her nose, and folds her hair behind her ears.

Large-scale testing has been a facet of teachers' work throughout her career and her life, even in her time as a student. She recalls taking some sort of achievement test in that little two-room schoolhouse. "I raced through the problems and questions and reading passages on my test, I checked each answer, checked where I erased and made sure the circles were filled to the edges." There was something orderly about this sort of test: Her bubbled-in dots made occasional patterns on her answer key, and she was satisfied at the completeness of her work. "And when all the students were through—I can still see this like it was yesterday—our teacher had this answer key with holes punched for the correct answers and she went through each test with a red colored pencil," swiping a streak of blood across the answer keys when a dot and a hole didn't match. "It was tidy."

These tests of academic achievement were not worrisome to Anne, the student, nor were they worrisome to Anne, the teacher—at least for the first decade of her professional life. In the mid-1980s, her district gave the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), then shifted to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), then to Terra Nova (which Miss Anne called "Dirt and Stars"). Three different tests within a handful of years. Next, the state department created the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA). "In fact, I was invited to Santa Fe to be a part of the creation of the test. I was on the team that tested for bias in the sixth-grade test. I signed a non-disclosure agreement and everything—signed my life away—but I knew that what I went through in that room around those test items was sticking in my mind." In the room with her were a variety of education professionals: a mathematics specialist, a high school math teacher, a junior high math teacher, and two sixth-grade teachers. As they worked through each item with no answer key, even these teachers could not agree on the answer to each item and they grappled mightily to come to consensus. The experience influenced her: She felt comfortable during the following assessment cycle because her instruction was informed by the deep thinking she did in that room, because she learned with those other professionals.

"And now?" She clicks her tongue against her teeth and shrugs, "Now teachers can't even see the test: They can only monitor to ensure that students are in the correct section of the test booklet." Anything more is called cheating, and teachers have been threatened with losing their license. That threat is meaningless to Miss Anne: "I answer to a higher power; my conscience would eat me alive!" No, it is not about cheating, but about learning: She learned, working through that test with those other teachers, and she's not even allowed to see the thing now—it just doesn't make sense. "And that people would even think that teachers might cheat (although I'm certain some do!) is disrespectful. Insulting."

The pendulum swings.

Anne lowers her voice again and whispers, "This test is awful; the education department and the government have gone too far, made too much of these tests and made a mess of the whole system." And she thinks that the push will continue for a few more years—she has noticed a cycle of change across her years in the field and she likens it to a swinging pendulum: "It's going to swing too far and more parents will choose charter or private schools for their children. Eventually, it will swing back but it will take time. These national standards [referring to the Common Core State Standards] are needed to establish some equity among states—why should one state give students this test that is so easy and fifty miles across the border, the next state test has a test that is so difficult? What's fair about that? And why so many tests?" This year, Anne has lost two weeks in each quarter for tests—short-cycle curriculum-based assessments (CBAs) that take ten class days to administer and score. "Then we shut down in the spring for the two-week state testing—it is too much. One test as a diagnostic tool—common across the states—that would be important and useful to teachers and to the system." To Anne, the shameful aspect of the current assessment program in New Mexico and across the country is that test makers are the ones getting rich, moving up, improving their lifestyle—"And it ought to be our students. Money that could be going to improve the conditions of schooling—reduced student/teacher ratios and better resources—are going to some big company somewhere."

Miss Anne sighs and glances across her classroom. Something catches her eye and she goes to a student desk to retrieve a class ruler—it has Williams printed on it in block letters with black Magic Marker—and return it to the appropriate basket on the bookshelf by the windows. She shakes her head a bit at the student who did not return the ruler, and she looks out the windows to the broad New Mexican horizon dotted with old windmills, new windmills, and bobbing oil wells. When her gaze returns to the

classroom, her eyes brighten and she tells me about a visit she had the weekend before. Several of her former students had returned to town for their class reunion. The two women and one man had been in a mixed class—fifth and sixth grade—that Miss Anne taught in 1986–1987. The three adults had been in touch about their 25th class reunion and had decided to get in touch with their favorite teacher. The three of them met Miss Anne at McDonald's for a coke and a visit; Miss Anne found her class binder from that year and brought the notes these students wrote and the class picture. (The four of them named every kid in the picture except one—and they're working on him.) The two women are both teachers and the man is a successful business owner who is married to a teacher. They told Miss Anne that she changed their lives; one of the teachers thinks about her former teacher every day as she is planning to teach. They all laughed and told stories and wept for a couple of hours, and Miss Anne has no words to describe the feeling of that communion with those babies she taught and kept safe twenty-five years ago.

She offers advice she might give young people now who ask about teaching as a profession. "It is the greatest profession in the world—where else can you stand in the hall in the mornings and get ten hugs before you start your day? Sure, things have changed since I started. I've seen lots of new ideas come and go: In the 1970s they were going to knock down all the walls and have open-concept classrooms, and it took us teachers about two years to rebuild those walls out of bookshelves, shower curtains, and chart tablets. Next, they were going to get rid of grades and use S, I, and U—that lasted about two years. Technology is here to stay, and that's not a change for these young people—they have been taught their whole lives how to use it. And testing is here to stay, as well, and this generation has used data and analyzed data and they are familiar with it." And she shares her five critical points, Mrs. Williams' fundamentals of teaching:

1. Give immediate feedback. Grade the papers and get them back to students. They need to know where they are.
2. Hit the basics. Kids need to have a handle on the fundamental facts.
3. Be positive. Be positive. Be positive.
4. Keep good records. Document, document, document because you might need to defend yourself, your colleagues, or one of your students one day.
5. Meet those kids where they are and take them. You have to give them something to hang onto, to know they know.

I'm going to miss the kids.

She sighs again, turns to gather her purse and cell phone, her binder and a stack of papers to grade tonight, turns out the lights and locks her classroom door.

ELLA ROSEN: EITHER WE KILLED EACH OTHER, OR I HAD TO LEAVE.

Ella Rosen settles into her chair, meeting me at a table in the library of the northeast Texas high school where she has worked for the past nine years. She is an imposing woman: Ash-blonde hair frames her face and cascades down her shoulders; eyes flash with emotion as she recalls her professional life; bejeweled hands dance through her stories, indicating places and faces in her recollections and punctuating the importance of her words. She is a high school English teacher, and I am a bit apprehensive—eighteen years old again and talking with my teacher.

Ella Rosen came to teaching from a shared business venture with her husband. "We had a successful business—my husband is very sharp and accomplished, and we worked well together. [Pause.] For awhile. [Pause.] But I knew that our marriage wouldn't survive the work—either we killed each other or I had to leave—so I went back to teaching." This brief vignette sounds like something said over the loud buzz of a

cocktail party; it is glib and offhand and practiced. Ella is careful with her words and always considering the impact of what she says.

"I attribute my personal integrity to my father: He was CEO of a big corporation, and he taught me about work ethic and integrity." And her desire to teach? She explains the desire with a clenched fist beating a rhythm on her heart: "I like children and I care—deeply. I cannot imagine my life without teaching—without my work with my kids in my classroom. This work is my life's blood." She understands why some people might not like teenagers: She understands it, but that is not her stance. She believes that perhaps good teachers are innately gifted, born that way. She was.

She studied education in college: Mancato State University in Minnesota, like many state universities was originally a teaching college, and Ella describes the exemplary education she had there. "Boy, was I prepared: methods classes and classroom management classes. And not a lot of teachers get this now—I just don't see it in any of the interviews, dozens of them, and I don't see it now." She describes asking young professionals about their classroom management strategies, about their instructional strategies, about the ways they plan lessons or manage conflict: "And I just don't see many who have any idea how to respond. Not with all of these alternative certificates now. Not many at all." She shakes her head and turns to straighten and examine the charm bracelet on her wrist, dismissing her thoughts about the quality of alternative certification programs.

Ella taught elementary school for a couple of years before having her own children, joining her husband in business, and fostering others' children. "One of my fosters needed extreme psychoanalysis on a monthly basis, so I enrolled in graduate school to learn more about this child's needs." These courses in special education and psychology were Ella's passport into a high school teaching job. During an interview for an elementary grades teaching position, she described her fascination with emotionally

troubled children: the superintendent wheeled around in his chair, grabbed the phone, and called the director of special education programs for the district, "I've got a candidate for your ED classroom." And that is how Ella Rosen returned to teaching as a career.

High school. ED. You name it, we had it.

"This teaching assignment, a high school classroom for emotionally disturbed students, was one of the best things—and one of the most difficult—I had ever undertaken. I had sixteen to twenty students in this unit with every diagnosis imaginable," she declares. Here Ella built her understanding of working with young people. Of understanding their issues. Of helping them understand themselves. And it was through her seven years in this position that she began to understand the simplicity of working with children.

Here she learned about building relationships with students and their parents. "My success as a teacher is not based on anything profound or some big epiphany. It is not difficult," she reiterates throughout her stories. "It is about building respectful, honest, and caring relationships with students. If I find a student who's challenging, or resistant, or under-performing, I get to work strengthening connections with that student. That piece cannot be faked, and once these students understand that I care about them, really care about them, and their learning, and their accomplishments, then life in my classroom is like magic." It is simple to her: love the kids. Even in an affluent district, in a beautiful new campus with everything she needs to do her job well, Ella knows her students are still children with many needs. And she knows how to fulfill those needs: She has a way of building their self-confidence, of guiding their emotional development, of helping them in their struggles toward adulthood.

This is Ella's fourth high school placement, and her twelfth year of teaching Advanced Placement English Language and Composition (AP Language) to juniors. "Am I a challenging teacher? You bet! Now the curriculum for this course has needed a lot of

work," her eyebrows raised, she shrugs her shoulders and tips her head, dismissing the framework with a wave of her hand. "I'm part of the district curriculum writing team, and we have worked for five years on these frameworks: We literally create lessons, and in the process, we talk about our pedagogical philosophy, the ways we might teach a particular topic or a certain skill. And the end product feels sort of piecemeal to me because it is multiple years' of work among different teachers." In response, she has chunked and modeled and segmented the learning for her students, reworking the curriculum documents to meet their needs and to reflect her best thinking about good instruction.

And now that the state has changed to a more difficult assessment (in Texas, the state assessment underwent a recent redesign to ramp up the expectations for students and teachers), the district curriculum department is implementing SpringBoard (a College Board curriculum resource), so the writing teams are now working to integrate more of that resource into their documents. "Of course, it is a prescribed method for getting students where they need to be, and a big push from the district is to get all teachers trained and using SpringBoard resources. Students get a workbook—," Ella hesitates around that word— "A consumable," she says with a grimace. And she is on the fence about the prescriptive nature of the product. "Students start with close reading of small chunks of literature; writing responses might be as limited as three sentences for ninth-graders! And it just keeps moving forward to longer and longer pieces, pieces of a novel, sometimes the full novel, and always the workbook. Always." She sighs. In a district this large, with this much growth—from one high school a decade ago to four now, with all the additional feeder campuses—and with the diversity of learners, a prescriptive resource like SpringBoard seems necessary. With the rapid growth of the district, it has been necessary to hire so many inexperienced teachers that Ella is worried: "How do we get all these teachers on board, hired, and able to teach? It seems that prescription is the

answer. But the real challenge is to make sure that teachers follow SpringBoard," and here, she whispers cautiously, "Without losing opportunities for creativity. Allegedly, the resource is magic. I'll reserve my judgment."

She is quick to point out that as an Advanced Placement teacher, she is not expected to implement SpringBoard. As she turns her attention to describing her teaching and her classroom, she straightens in her chair and lifts her chin: She is proud of her work. "The AP Language course is extremely challenging—students have to think on their feet, think quickly, analyze and write about their thinking, all within a limited time frame." It took Ella a long time to realize the difficulty of the course: "During my first few years with this content, I just started my students on writing those essays, showing them how to format and build an argument, telling them how to craft a paragraph." Her response now is to create small segments of learning that her students can master before attempting the next step and the next step and the next one. She often thinks that as people observe her class, especially in the first months of a school year, they might think, "Oh my gosh, this isn't very sophisticated!" The small segments of learning—students mastering piece by piece how to analyze language through close reading, how to query a text—these small steps are how students get to the depth of it all. Ella finds beauty in a group of sixteen- and seventeen-year-old students rising to her challenges: "They come in raw and green, and by the time the AP Language test arrives in the spring, they are saturated, full up. I walk the aisles among them, whispering, 'You're ready. You're ready. You're ready.'"

For Ella, teaching is not complicated: It is the result of good teacher preparation. She remembers her education courses at Mancato State: content courses, classroom management courses, methods courses, even courses on how to write on the blackboard, make transparencies, and run the ditto machine. As head of the English Language Arts department, however, she encounters many early-career teachers who do not recognize

the word *methods*—"How can that be?" she queries. Her eyebrows worry her forehead in disbelief and she shakes her head: 'These young people come here with their degree in literature or creative writing and their alternative certification. Sure they know their content, although I've seen reason to doubt that in recent years." She also finds it challenging to identify in a new or potential colleague her/his true thinking about being with children, particularly high school children. She leans in and whispers, "Honestly, not one in my department has said, 'I love my kids.'" It seems to Ella that many of her colleagues keep the job for the child-friendly hours, not because they have any passion for the profession.

In her role as department head and instructional coach, she sees teachers who just do not understand how to teach, how to break things down for students. "If a teacher cannot figure out how to get students from Point A to Point B—to create segments and building blocks, no matter what subject—then that teacher makes mastery a difficult accomplishment for students," she asserts, punctuating with a fingertip on the table. And Ella does not tolerate her struggling colleagues: "I have learned in my role as an instructional coach that I am not good with adults. I get ugly inside and very firm." She is pretty clear that teachers in her department know that she is an outstanding teacher: She has a reputation that precedes her with students, parents, and other teachers. In her role as a leader, however, she is also pretty clear that she would not be rated very highly: Adults do not take accountability very well, and she holds her colleagues to her own high standards of professionalism. She is quick to point out again the strength of her own teacher preparation coursework and the opportunities she has taken throughout three decades of her career to increase her pedagogical skills and deepen her understanding of her content. Even through the process of teaching her AP Language course, she has honed her writing craft and refined her skill as a writer, "I see some of the writing of

other teachers in my department—English Language Arts teachers, for goodness' sake—and it is not good. Not good at all." She shakes her head. "Shocking really."

Teaching is a difficult and demanding job, and in some ways it gets more demanding every year. Ella cannot lie about her frustration with some aspects of the job. The increased demands are mostly administrative—*administrivia*, she calls it: those time-sucking tasks of working in a system that demands documentation. Everything is on computer and that requires a certain skillset for teachers—she is quick to point out her struggles as a technological immigrant.

What makes so many teachers burn out? Ella places the fingers of her right hand gently over her mouth, as if to hold critical words at bay. Some teachers complain about the testing. Here she is careful to note that her students are different from students in on-level classrooms. She recites quickly the numbers for her students challenging the AP Language test: "My kids are well over 90% passing when the national average is 58%, so I don't feel pressured by a test. Obviously, my teaching works for preparing my students," she says, with an arched eyebrow. "An on-level teacher might worry about the state assessment, and the district content directors are definitely worried. But not me," she crows.

> At the end of last school year, we started our summer work on curriculum writing, surrounded by charts and charts and graphs identifying where students were not thriving. School by school, grade by grade, and teacher by teacher, these charts filled the walls of the school library where we met to revise curriculum. The angst was palpable, and the panic from the top was underscored with words like, 'We need to shine! We must be the best!' And I wanted to ask, 'But what if we already shine? What are you learning from us?'

Ella sighs, straightens up in her chair and arranges her jewelry again, the fussy behavior a tell, a sign that she is no longer willing to engage.

Ella Rosen has a reputation in the community as a teacher who is fair, a teacher who loves her kids, and a teacher who will get kids ready for successful college writing. "I know I'm intimidating, but I warn my students not to misconstrue a solid knowledge base, good organizational skills, and high expectations with intimidation," she recites, with the precision and timing of a stand-up comic on late night television. She is business-like and respectful, and she recognizes that her edgy students—the ones who are less than compliant, the ones who balk at her instruction—are edgy with fear. "Perhaps it is fear of failure. Perhaps it is fear of an unknown," Ella speculates. "All I know is that once they get to know me, once they understand the respect I offer and the respect I demand, then they take me seriously."

Here, she indicates her tutoring notebook. She explains at open house to parents and students that it is not possible to pass her course without tutoring. The notebook is spiral-bound, with most of the pages scrawled line-by-line with requests for fifteen-minute tutoring sessions, students' names, and specific issues for the requested time. Ella starts her tutoring in the early morning hours before the school opens. "Students arrive in the dark before school—you know, these kids are involved in everything and taking all AP classes, so their days are long and full. They come here to the side of the building and tap on the window, then I'll let them into the building," she pauses, remembering their faces through the glass, peering out of the darkness behind them. She goes on, "And each student who signs up and shows up gets fifteen minutes of uninterrupted time while other students wait their turn in the hallway." The challenges that lead to a tutoring request might be fixing a troublesome sentence in an analytical essay; sometimes, working meaning from a difficult reading passage; sometimes, a nagging worry about college choices and career decisions. For Ella, the point of each tutoring session is to strengthen her relationship with each student, to build resilience, and to bolster confidence.

Ella whispers furtively, "Some people are just born to teach. I am. It is so natural and so easy—like being a mother. So simple. Love the kids. Care about the kids. Respect the kids. Trust the kids. They are human beings."

Ella is not a complicated person. Her curriculum is complicated. The content she teaches is complicated. But teaching? She has it figured out.

HALLIE MCKENZIE: I DID NOT START OUT TO BE A TEACHER.

Hallie McKenzie was a research scientist for Washington University Medical School after she graduated from college. When she and her husband started their family, Hallie stayed home with her kids until they headed off to the Lutheran school nested within the Lutheran church her husband pastored. "At that point," she says, "I had no clue what I wanted to do with my life."

As she tells it, Hallie was waiting in the Parent Pick-Up Lane to collect her children from school one afternoon when the principal approached her. "The principal—he and his wife were neighbors and friends of ours—said that something was wrong with his car and asked if he could hitch a ride home." Their conversation during that ride turned to what Hallie might want to do now that her kids were in school. "'What did you study in school?' 'Biology.' 'Do you still love it?' 'Yeah.' 'Don't you work with the youth group at the church?' 'Yes, I really enjoy the teenagers.' 'You should be a teacher, Hallie—you can still have time with your children, summer, Christmas, spring break. You should think about it,' he said." And think about it she did.

Me? A teacher?

The idea had never crossed her mind. She took her transcripts to an advisor at the local university, discussed the requirements for teacher certification, and thought about it overnight. "I love the kids," she thought, "And this just might be something I love doing." She did, and she does.

Hallie is elegant, with shoulder-length brown hair and a matching mani/pedi; she presses her palms together, each fingertip with a bright dot of fresh salmon-colored polish, and says, "I am blessed: blessed with the students I teach—the kids in this area are nice, respectful kids, and you don't get that everywhere," she whispers in a confidential aside. "I'm blessed with AP and Pre-AP Biology because these kids want to be doctors and want to be in this class, learning as much as they can." She is also blessed with a creative and collaborative partnership with another pre-AP Biology teacher: They both like trying new things, and they recognize that their differences make their teaching stronger. Hallie is such a Capricorn, she admits: "I make lists, prioritize the lists, and I work from the lists every day." Her partner teacher, however, sees the world holistically and imagines units of study that overarch all of Hallie's lists—"And she works from the lists, too, on occasion," Hallie triumphs. "I have not always collaborated, and I did not start my career teaching Pre-AP and AP classes," she says, and her eyes focus in that middle space of recollection, not fully in the present and not fully in the past.

"My first job was at the Gucci School—that's what folks in the community called it, and that's what we thought it was." At the time, it was the newest, most sophisticated high school among the dozens of high schools in the large metropolitan collection of independent school districts in and around San Antonio, Texas. She started out with the teachers' edition of her textbook and nothing else to support her decisions about curriculum. "No guidelines from the district, no curriculum, no lesson plans," she ticked off each on the fingers of one hand. "No collaborative planning, no lab—I was supposed to get into other teachers' labs when I needed to, but I never could. No tables, and no water." After dissecting labs performed on arrangements of desktops, students would haul clean-up water in buckets from the restrooms down the hall. "No lab safety—no goggles, nothing," she laughs about the limitations she lived with at the start of her career.

And here, without the support of colleagues, Hallie found her niche teaching on-level Biology and Intro to Biology (a low-level class). She liked her students and her students liked her class. "In on-level and low-level classes, there are lots of kids who don't like school; in class, they would come in excited," she smiles broadly. "Their excitement proved to me that I was making a difference."

She recalls one student in particular: Christian, a ninth-grade special education student. "Christian hated school. Didn't want to be there. Didn't want to do anything," she says, with her hands open with hope and empty with helplessness. During their time studying DNA, Hallie's students were building DNA models, and Christian was not going to build a model. "'Mrs. McKenzie,' he said, 'I'm not going to do that model thing. Can I do a painting instead?'" she recalls. After negotiating the criteria and parameters for his painting ("It must show understanding of DNA and it must be large enough to post on a bulletin board"), Christian completed his painting. "It was beautiful and incredible—covering the bulletin board at the end of the hallway," Hallie's eyes shone with the memory. "It looked very three-dimensional, with DNA spiraled all around." And Hallie knew she had found her niche because she found her connection with the kids, kids like Christian.

In the ensuing years, as her husband was assigned from church to church, Hallie McKenzie changed school districts. She continued teaching on-level Biology for several years, and when she became Science Department chair at a new high school, she reluctantly began to teach Pre-AP Biology—the other teachers in her department were not certified or trained for Pre-AP, so she left her first niche.

And now? "Now, I'm in my third niche: After seventeen years of teaching Pre-AP, when this department chair position opened, I went for it!" she says proudly. In a small, affluent community outside of Dallas, Texas, Hallie McKenzie applied for and was hired for the job of Science Department chair, making a lateral move from one district to

another. As department chair and as AP Biology teacher, she gets the students who want to be in class, who want to learn the content, and this job also affords Hallie some autonomy—something she noticed dwindling across the course of her career. "Teaching has really changed since I started. All of those decisions I made on my own at the beginning—like what to teach and in what order, how to teach it—are all prescribed for them now," Hallie says, referring to her colleagues who teach grade-level classes. "There's not a specific calendar of day-to-day lesson plans like in some districts I hear about," she explains; there is, however, a testing calendar for curriculum-based assessments that dictates what her students need to know by when, and if they're not there, tough. To be exact, though, Hallie does not have a prescription for her AP classes: She has to submit an audit to describe her curriculum framework and to assert that she and her students can accomplish her plan in a school year.

She still teaches Pre-AP Bio, too, and here she collaborates with the other Pre-AP Bio teacher. Collaboration is a challenge for Hallie: "We sit and plan together, test together, quiz together, and assign homework together. It is a lot of collaboration, and it is a lot of compromise." That notion of compromise does not sit well with Hallie: Her face frowns with a look bordering on disgust. "I didn't have to compromise when I started—it was my classroom and there was no one to tell me what to do." And it was not an expectation that teachers collaborate twenty years ago, in a different district. In her current position, however, collaboration is the norm—it is expected and monitored as part of her evaluation. "I think some teachers are afraid to collaborate because they might lose their style, their individuality—I don't think I'm as good a teacher as I was ten years ago," she says quietly, saddened by the notion. As Hallie describes collaboration, her gestures tell the story: "Collaboration takes some teachers who are here"—her left hand indicates a line below the seat of her chair—"and some teachers who are here"—her right hand indicates a line above her head, "And brings them together in the middle." She sees

the benefit of collaboration for teachers who need the help, and she sees a shift from excellent to average for the best teachers. Expertise is a zero-sum game, and collaborative endeavors simply redistribute the expertise and skills. Collaboration—even in her current partnership with a teacher she learns from daily—is a lot of compromise. "A luxury and an obligation and a huge compromise."

Hallie, reared by a military dad, calls herself a rule-follower. "I understand the chain of command, and even though I might not agree with something my boss tells me to do, I am committed to doing it to the best of my ability." She uses this trait—and has used it throughout her career—to build respectful and honest relationships with principals. "Do what you're supposed to do, and you increase your chances of talking with your principal and having your say-so," she explains. "Principals aren't stupid: If teachers are doing well, if students are thriving, then principals leave those teachers alone," she says, eyes bright with pride and flashing to anger. "And the teachers who aren't following the rules, whose students are struggling? The principals are all over those teachers, and they should be."

Through the long view of her career and her changing world of work, Hallie has watched testing—both high-stakes testing and district assessment plans to monitor instructional programs—encroach on her work in her classroom. "Now, the testing cycle is ridiculous. I have to crunch an entire school year of Biology into four fewer weeks—what a disservice to the students!" Additionally, her district leaders require curriculum-based assessments throughout the year: still more teaching time lost. And as a Science teacher, the choice is particularly difficult for Hallie: "Do we have time to do this lab well, or do we just move on? I used to spend half of my time, half of our time, in labs. Now, it's nowhere near that," she shakes her head, lips pressed together, and eyes downcast. She used to have fun with the kids, too. "Every now and then, we'd do a fun activity. Like when we studied the characteristics of life, and they would sketch an

extraterrestrial alien, an ET. They labeled all the characteristics of life, even reproduction, but they had to keep it clean. And they loved doing that. And it was a relaxed thirty minutes," Hallie explains, even in an AP class. "Now, it is push, push, shove, shove, shove." She drums with her hand on the table, "With never a down day, never a day to just enjoy being in class and learning something together. There's no time." It's another disservice to students, in Hallie's thinking, and as she thinks back across her own career and her own time as a student she believes that the pressures to perform and to conform are greater than ever, for both students and teachers.

District and school leaders have made their expectations for teacher work very clear: They want to see and hear people (teachers and students) talking with one another, wrestling with problems, working together to solve them. Teachers are supposed to collaborate to design and teach lessons that engage students—another conformity that Hallie struggles to meet. As she thinks about her own learning, her own experiences in public school and university, Hallie recalls lectures, "I still like lecture as an instructional practice, and I'll admit it: I'm a closet lecturer!" In her current district, if a teacher lectures during a performance appraisal, that appraisal would be low. "So how do I not lecture about photosynthesis? How can they discover that long list of chemical reactions in a high school lab? And reading about it? Pfft." She dismisses the textbook with a wave of her hand.

Hallie believes in her interactive and engaging lectures: students who struggle with the assigned reading in the college-level textbook need her lectures. It's her way of going through the dense chapters with them. So what has allowed her to come out of her lecture closet? "My students have the highest scores on their curriculum-based assessments (CBAs) and the highest AP Biology scores of all four high [schools in the district]. I also researched—I am a scientist!!—and found studies of instructional practices and found evidence that lectures improved student learning." Armed with her

students' test scores and her research-based evidence, Hallie told her performance evaluator, "Here's my outcomes, and here's some research about lecture, so stop talking to me about what I do in my classroom." Her scores did all the talking.

She and her collaborative partner also plan for student engagement, a large part of their district teacher evaluation. They plan group activities for Pre-AP and AP classes; they plan where Hallie will stop in her lecture and ask for Student A to turn to Student B to explain what s/he understands from the lecture. "I learned from her to walk around and listen to students' conversations—I can find gaps in their understanding, I listen for questions to come up more than once, and I can correct thinking mistakes in the moment." She and her colleague know they are doing curriculum work when they plan, and not everyone in their department works like they do. They are the only teachers for their Pre-AP Biology, and they are friends. As Hallie sees it, there are some benefits to collaboration and the benefits are grounded in the relationship among the collaborators. "Strong relationship equals strong team equals strong collaboration. We know we are the exact opposite"—Hallie plans step-by-step while her partner has a holistic vision—"and our close work means we both teach both ways now," she explains in a bit of wonderment and perhaps a bit of longing for her early days of independence.

In addition to her district's expectations around collaboration among teachers, Hallie identifies the push for a district curriculum as another move toward the middle. Teachers who are chosen to be curriculum writers get paid during the summer months to come in and work a calendar for the whole year—not a day-by-day plan, but window weeks and broad topics. Curriculum writers also shape some suggested lessons, "Units where they post all these activities and worksheets, lesson plans, and project designs to go each topic—it's a rummage sale, really, only people can find things and leave things." Because of that open access, Hallie describes a need to sift carefully through the information there: "I see new teachers relying on that database for their entire curriculum:

CBA question banks, scope and sequence, too, all that and lessons in the database. It is good for new teachers," and—Hallie leans in and whispers—"It is good for teachers who are just here for a job."

She isn't sure, though, how helpful the curriculum framework is for teachers who want to go above and beyond. In fact, she joined the curriculum writing team because she challenged the curriculum frameworks: "How could I possibly teach an eight-week unit on phylum—something that isn't even a standard, and something that might push an actual standard off of the calendar? And the CBA will test over the eight-week phylum unit but the [state assessment] only tests the standards? That's crazy!" As a teacher who wants to go above and beyond, Hallie struggled with taking a hit on CBA scores or on the state test scores, and the curriculum framework was causing the struggle. So she began to write curriculum.

Hallie McKenzie, like many AP teachers, has a reputation among students. She is a hard teacher, they say, and she knows they are a bit afraid of her at the beginning of each year. She doesn't want that and works to disarm their fear. "I stand at the door, I smile, I shake their hands, I greet them warmly—and kids are still afraid when they come in here for the first time." Hallie admits to being blunt, and she has tried to temper her brutal honesty about her expectations for the students in her classes. And when one of her two pre-AP classes came in talking, talking, talking—"This group is so social!" she whispered—she pulled up a chair for what she called a come-to-Jesus talk, and she was blunt. "I have never learned to take the honest truth and put all this flowery language around it—I'm too honest, too truthful. I show the respect my students deserve by telling them the truth." She knows her students and she gets along well with them. As a pastor's wife, she has always been involved in her husband's work, and when he was the youth minister for a group of 300 kids, Hallie went along. "We did fun stuff, and since it was his job to plan and organize, I would go just to have fun and talk with the kids. That is

when I realized that I liked teenagers and might like teaching." She sees herself in them: She proudly calls herself a grade-grubber, and she is proud that she graduated among the top students of her class. So when one of her students wants to argue from 96 to 98 on a test, Hallie is OK with that.

Perhaps because Hallie feels such resonance with her students, she is concerned about the ways her school leaders design a student-supportive environment: "Teachers spend so much time with the kids *down here* that we've forgotten the kids *up here*" (again, Hallie indicates the gap between groups of kids with her hands). She teaches the kids up here, and she is frustrated at the assumptions about their success. The prom is scheduled on the weekend between two weeks of AP tests. Really? It seems obvious to Hallie that her kids, the good kids, are not regular blips on the school leadership radar. And she and her students joke that she'll set up a table at prom so they can review between dances. This sort of disregard for her kids, the best and brightest, bumps up against the district push for all students to go to college. Hallie thinks there are still places for kids who don't go to college: "We need plumbers and mechanics and carpenters. And we have kids who could do those jobs, do them well, and make a good living. Instead, the school system expects teachers to do what it takes to get all students college ready. Teachers tutor constantly, before and after school; they call parents about not-turned-in assignments; they review for tests; they offer retests. And what we see are kids who are beaten, beaten by failing tests over and over again, beaten by classwork that makes no sense to them, beaten by the expectation that they will go to college. Teachers are doing all of this extra work for kids who don't care about this sort of learning."

Hallie McKenzie is not ready to retire. "When I reach that point that I've seen with so many other teachers, that point where I'm willing to do the exact same thing I did last year, every year, every year, every year—that's when I'll quit. I feel sorry for teachers who hate their jobs; why don't they just move on with their lives?" For her,

though, teaching is still fun. She is working on next year and can't wait to try out her plans.

Hallie McKenzie did not start out to be a teacher.

KELLY STONE: I REMEMBER IT LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY.

"I'm not sure it really happened this way. The teacher said, 'Open the book to page seven, OK, Kelly, read.'"

Kelly Stone remembers first grade this way. No reading instruction, just an expectation that students—including Kelly—could read. All grown up, Kelly Stone is now a third-grade teacher, and she is packing her classroom at the end of her thirty-ninth year in the profession. "At this point," she explains, "I'm not putting things where they belong, I'm just putting them where I have space." Her classroom is messy with crates and boxes, piles of student work, manipulatives, and a collection of live crayfish that will go home with Kelly over the summer: "My grandson, Parker, will love these guys." The student tables are arranged into groups of four or five, several computer stations line the walls, and it is difficult to find the teacher desk, until Kelly waves at it during one point in her storytelling. As she wedges a folder in-between color-coded boxes on a shelf, she returns to her earliest school memory.

When Kelly's parents realized that her first-grade teacher was not teaching reading, that their daughter was expected to read without any reading instruction, they took her out of school in San Antonio, Texas, and sent her to live with her grandparents for the rest of the year: " My mother's mother was a first-grade teacher, so I went to live with her, go to school with her every day so I could get reading instruction." Here, in her grandmother's classroom, Kelly pretended to sleep through Music class: Music came right after rest time, so since Kelly didn't like to sing and didn't think she could sing, she simply faked a long nap. Here, her teacher-grandmother asked Jennifer to show Kelly the chart with letters, pictures, and words. A. Apple. A picture of a bright red apple with a

green stem and one leaf. Kelly remembers vividly, "Oh, that's an apple and that letter makes that sound. Something clicked then and it made sense to me that I should be able to figure out words because these letters made these sounds. Simple."

Kelly's memories of her earliest formal education experiences are part of her family mythology: She is uncertain of the reality of her recollections, as she heard those stories from parents and grandparents, so the stories are *real*. And maybe those stories have something to do with her decision to become a teacher. Her grandmother and both her mother and father were teachers. In some ways, she knew the job through her parents, who worked in small towns, where school was the center of the community. She knew the time they put in. She knew the ways people responded to her parents and the public face of teaching. She saw the bigger picture of the profession and was happy with that picture. "I played school some when I was little, but I had three younger brothers, and they weren't good pupils. I just always knew that that's what I was going to do. My parents never told me I ought to be a teacher. I never felt this big weight of having to make a decision. I just knew that that's what I was going to do."

And she feels lucky about it, about her professional life. "My first job was in a private school in San Antonio that just started including Kindergarten, and the teacher who had this class had been the first-grade teacher—she took the Kindergarten class because she was pregnant and was going to quit as soon as she earned a year's credit, and she and the principal thought it would be less disruptive to the younger kids." So Kelly—right out of college with these notions of developmentally appropriate learning, hands-on centers, and experiential learning—came into this Kindergarten classroom mid-year, a classroom where "everybody sat at desks and everybody did their little worksheets." She describes her pre-service learning in college at Stephen F. Austin State University as innovative and student-centered: "On campus, they had a Kindergarten where I volunteered and did some internships. They had this early childhood lab school in the

department—with one-way glass observation rooms—and we'd get to do things with kids all the time. A lot of people don't get that experience anymore." And Kelly was lucky to work for a principal who supported her, who said OK to the puppet stage, who said OK to replacing desks with tables, who said OK to kids taking nature walks—who said OK to Kelly doing things the way she knew they should be done. And she felt successful: "I was brand new and not smart enough to realize if [my teaching] was successful for kids, but I felt successful."

Kelly continues to pack and reminisce when her cell phone sounds an alarm. "Time passes by and I get involved, so I have to set alarms. This one is for afternoon meds—student meds! I'm so bad about remembering."

After the private school changed hands, Kelly's principal was no longer her principal. The new owners cut hours, paid fewer benefits, and brought TVs into every classroom. "We were really just not on the same page about how things should be, so it was time for me to move on," Kelly explains. She moved to Austin and applied with the district—even though there was a hiring freeze—and signed onto the substitute teacher list, thinking subbing might be a way around the freeze into the system. And she was called the first day to work in a third-grade classroom. "So I head over to the school, and the principal—Mr. Efficient—said, 'I didn't call a third-grade teacher, I called a Kindergarten teacher.' It turned out he had a whole classroom of students without a teacher. So I ended up doing long-term subbing and getting the class and the job." And because Kelly was a long-term sub, the principal visited her classroom often: He watched her practice. "He was a real stickler—taught teachers how to walk backwards so they could keep an eye on their students." Kelly explained that she felt lucky here, since she didn't have to go through a grilling panel interview with a group of teachers.

And Kelly Stone worked at that school for twenty years. Four different principals turned the place into four completely different schools, and Kelly managed to stay

through all the changes. “I’m pretty much a get-in-my-rut-and-stay-there kinda person. As long as I’m feeling good about it, I’m staying,” she shrugs, and with an arched eyebrow she glances around her classroom at all the stuff she would have to move if she were the get-out-of-her-rut-and-leave-there kind. And she continues sorting through piles of materials: Some items go into plastic packing crates, some go in the trash can, and some are moved to another pile for later consideration. “I’m not sure how I learned to teach like I do—it seems like I’ve always thought about teaching and ways to build connections. And I’ve taught with a few really great folks,” she muses.

Kelly credits Pam with shaping her practice. Luck. Kelly lucked into her best teaching friend, Pam, about fifteen years ago. “We connected. We shared kids before it was something that schools did: We built our ocean science curriculum and talked with teachers down in Port Aransas and that kind of stuff.” Pam encouraged Kelly to facilitate professional development sessions with other teachers—they worked together throughout the district for several years, sharing content knowledge, integration strategies, and planning processes with elementary Science and Math teachers. “I’d never have done that without Pam taking me by the arm and pulling me into it, and I haven’t done much of it since she left,” she laughs. “Teachers are the worst audience—chatting over in this corner, looking at laptops over here, grading papers there. How can we expect our kids to behave any differently?”

“That’s one of those things that has been going on forever. Who is the worst? Teachers at a workshop or faculty meeting. It’s like a class. There are the clowns. There are the ones who are listening. There are the ones who are talking and then ask a question that was just answered but they didn’t hear it because they were talking. It’s all there in a faculty, no matter how well your faculty is picked. Humans are humans.” She shakes her head and clicks her tongue against her teeth: the look and sound of disappointment.

"[Pam] really made me think of Science as the best focus for teaching all the content. Number one, then and now, school should be fun. And science is a place you can always have fun!" The fun is not just for students, either: Kelly recognizes her own need for fun, for innovation, and for creativity, which is why, she explains, she is not one of those teachers who does the same thing as last year. "Part of what I love is taking new ideas, making it my own and making it right for kids. I enjoy writing words to a song that I want to use to teach some Science concept. I enjoy figuring out what I'm going to do to make learning more engaging, more fun, more rigorous—all those buzz words! And I think about what I'm going to do to make my lesson better next year!" As she speaks these words, she points to various places in her classroom—the crayfish, scuttling around in their watery world; the reading center with both large-scale and chapter books; the "testing" center, where students test their speed at spelling or addition facts, or test their sight recall of words, or test their accuracy at getting a ball of paper into the trashcan from various distances. "The 'testing' center," Kelly explains with air quotes, "is where I wanted to give my students some power back over the word 'test.' We are so test-focused now that we make our kids nervous about even the word, and that word is so important in Science content. So I thought if I could figure out some fun tests that help students remember that scientists test all the time, then the big test would be nothing scary—something to learn from. And I could make the center fit into our curriculum, so . . . " she waves her hands and her words drift away into concern about high-stakes assessment. "There's a big leap between second and third grade—in the curriculum, in testing, in grading, in taking ownership of their own learning. For some of them that's hard."

As Kelly is going through another stack of papers—trashing some, packing some, putting some in a special pile to be filed in students' cumulative record folders in the office—she pulls her reading glasses from her nose to the top of her head, her shoulder-length brunette hair hanging straight from a center part. "What is curriculum?" she

repeats my question, then responds, "I think I have a different vision sometimes that what some other people do. When I say 'curriculum' I'm usually talking about, in a general sense, what I'm going to teach and how I can make it all connect. I do like to make things connect." She owns that while she is good at developing a coherent and connected plan for the school year—"I hate to say I've always been good at making connections, but I think I have. I don't think it's something I had to conscientiously plan to tie everything together. I just think everything should go together. I like to have a whole year connection"—she can also see that new teachers might benefit from the curriculum support (guidance about the standards, the essential questions students must answer, the ways content can be scaffolded). The bottom line for Kelly? "I don't believe in cookie cutter teaching. I think kids need to have a variety of experiences with a variety of teachers. I don't reach every kid, but the next teacher reaches that one because she has a different personality and a different style. If we were all the same, it would be like watching school on the TV."

She describes the expectations for curriculum from her district leaders and the ways she works within and around those expectations: "Now the district has these curriculum guides, like, 'You're going to teach the structures of life and you're going to use crayfish and this and this.' So, I think I have this freedom to change their curriculum, some freedom to teach all of [the district expectations] and still take my kids to this website with a camera on an eagle's aerie—we learned about food chains, how birds grow, adaptation, mutation, whatever I could tie in. We watched a real-time egg hatch. We watched eagles feeding their babies. And we were writing about it and talking about it and doing Math problems about it—and it was so neat. Now was that in our curriculum? No." The district provides curriculum roadmaps, and Kelly relies on those roadmaps—in particular, the learning goals outlined daily—and then she thinks, "What can I do to make this more engaging? Because it's boring to me! I don't want to be bored

at school. Listening to kids read out of a book is boring. Watching them act out digestion? That's fun! We can look at a picture of the digestive system in a book, or we can act it out. Which one is fun for me? Acting it out! Which one is fun for them? Acting it out!"

For several years, Kelly helped write district curriculum documents—Instructional Planning Guides (IPGs). And in that process, she was frustrated by the hierarchy of content: Language Arts IPGs were the first documents created, so Science writers had to match their Science lessons to Language Arts skills. "I think Language Arts is about the art of using language around real content," she explains, "and to me, Science is the motivator for using the language. Every kid likes Science, and every kid can do Science. They can all be successful—maybe not the recording of everything or remembering each piece, but the dong of it and the being involved in it in an equal way. Math comes off the hub of Science, Reading comes off of Science ideas, everything is connected through this central hub. Science is the place to stretch their learning." And Kelly uses her understanding of the ways Science connects to all other content as a foundation for the ways she works with other teachers—"I just don't do that as much as I should."

In her current position, Kelly shares her students with another teacher: Her partner teaches English Language Arts/Reading and Social Studies, while Kelly teaches Math and Science. Earlier in her career, Kelly was a self-contained teacher, responsible for all content, and when pressed, she admits to an affinity for teaching Science, "A lot of people love being self-contained, and there are a lot of good reasons to be self-contained, and I guess the thing that's a negative for me [about sharing students] is that I can't control what she's doing. I do suggest things, but I don't plan ahead far enough to say, 'Can you make this work? We're in Earth Science and we're studying volcanoes, so can

you read these FOSS books as part of your centers?' When I do make suggestions, she is willing to do it, I just don't ask enough."

In the conversational pause of a long, slow breath, Kelly's eyes brighten and she smiles—"Another big influence for me is my friend, Donna. She's a principal now and really missing the classroom." Donna, like Pam, helped Kelly out of a rut: After one year with a new principal, Kelly and Donna felt some frustration about the tone of their school, the relationships among adults and children, the "focus on counting, not knowing—you know, more assessment, more scheduling by minutes, more managing numbers, not people." So Donna found out about a brand new school opening, scheduled an interview appointment with the principal for herself and Kelly—a team interview—and they got new jobs together.

Kelly's long work history includes relationships with almost a dozen different principals, some good and some not so good. Twice in her career, she left her job because of a principal. More often, she maintained honest relationships with her school principals:

> I'm going to do what you tell me to do because you're my boss. Ultimately, yes, I am going to toe the line. Because that is expected of me. And I'm still going to let you know what I think about it and why I think that way, and if you can convince me, then I'm on board with you. Of course, I'm on board with you because I work for you, but I'd rather be on board because we agree.

One of Kelly's personal sticking points, one of the places where she is firm in her stance, is about protecting her students from arcane policy decisions, and her dark eyes flash with intensity at the memory of such decisions: "If I have a problem that directly affects me or my kids, then I go talk to the principal about it. Not complaining or griping, but explaining how I see it, making my opinion clear. I'm not afraid to go in and talk about my concerns. So I do think that principals have respected me." And her colleagues have come to rely on Kelly's willingness to stand her ground with principals: "I have had

fellow teachers, particularly at the other school when we were having some principal changes, who sent me to go talk to the principal about things. They were afraid to say anything, to stand up for their thinking." Kelly is certain that principals are willing to listen to her, not necessarily because she is a well-spoken advocate, but because they know her work with students. "Principals are in my classroom. They see what I'm doing. They see my results. And they trust me to do a good job and respect my opinion."

As she says this, her eyebrows knit with worry and doubt—she questions her capacity to meet the needs of every student. "Every year I have kids who don't pass in my room, and I feel like I've failed them. Yes, they grew. Yes, they learned. Some learned more than others--that's the hard part, too, to know what works and what doesn't with each one." As she describes another aspect of her instructional approach—ensuring a variety of approaches and strategies for each child, her hands are shaping the air with remembered students:

> This is one way to do it, this is another. You have to try them both and then pick the one that's best for you. Strategies are like a buffet. If you never taste this food, you're not going to know if you like it or not, so you gotta try different things. When you go to a buffet, you never pick food you don't like, so we're building your buffet of choices. You try everything, then pick the ones that work for you. Over time, your tastes change and you'll use different strategies—then you'll pick different ones.

As the students dissolve back into her memories, Kelly turns back to our conversation and her packing. She waves one document around and I can hear the paper crinkling in response—this year's performance review! She finds the appropriate folder in her file cabinet: It's over three inches thick with the paper trail of her career, spanning four decades. "I've always felt supported. I teach what needs to be taught, and I do a good job of it. My kids learn. The last time my principal visited my room this year, it's a

good thing I wasn't on my eagle tangent because I was supposed to be focusing on the—acccckkk!—TEST! This year I do struggle with thinking maybe that fun activity isn't really helping anybody. Is anybody learning from it? I don't know. Sometimes I don't know." She pauses to think with two fingers of her right hand touching her lips. It seems she is holding words in, and she begins reflecting slowly,

> All teachers probably fall into this trap: Maybe I've taught something for twelve years, and maybe I'm not teaching it the same way every time, but for the kids, it's their first time. It's brand new for them. And I have to check myself from telling too much and letting them discover what's going to happen next. And I know that I've had to cut things short—by mistake, sometimes, or by design sometimes, or because we've got to stay on schedule because of the test!

"I have this vision of myself as a teacher," she outlines herself head to toe and ends with a flourish of both hands to her sides. "And I need a second set of eyes to tell me if I'm living up to my vision or not. I need other teachers, principals to come watch me at work and talk with me about what I do so that I am sure to live up to my vision. Once I don't meet that vision anymore, then that's when I'll need to stop."

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

Even before I began data collection, I saw a commonality emerging through conversations with potential participants: As I informed each veteran teacher about this project, about what I was asking of them, about what I was planning to do with their information, each participant expressed surprise . . . surprise at being asked to tell their stories: "I don't think I have anything interesting to say" (field notes, October 12, 2012); "I can't believe you want to talk with me. I'm just a teacher—an old teacher" (field notes, November 1, 2012); "I'll have to make up something interesting to say" (field notes, November 1, 2012); "No one has ever asked—not in 42 years!" (field notes, August 28, 2012). And once I secured their agreement, once I opened the conversational gates with the first question—"Roll back into your memories and tell me, if you can, what you thought teaching was going to be before you entered the profession"—the stories flooded out. They told stories about their families, about their own schooling, about teachers they admired, about principals they respected, about colleagues they missed, and about students who changed their practice. I also heard stories that echoed with the cultural discourse about teaching: whispered intimations of less-than-stellar teachers, of troubled or failed assessment programs, of questionable leadership, of writ-large changes to education, and of the loss of societal respect for their profession.

I had asked for about an hour of each participant's time for the initial interview, and in each instance, the first session pushed into at least two hours; I asked for several hours of their time altogether, and what I got was dozens of years of experiences distilled into a handful of robust conversations.

So I listened and transcribed and noted themes I heard. I worked the transcriptions into a third-person retelling of each narrative and noted themes. I member-checked, gathered more data, and noted themes. I then crafted the narrative portraits, including direct quotes and descriptions from my field notes (see Chapter 4 of this study). And

again, I noted themes. Finally, I returned to the original audio recordings and transcripts to code the themes I noted.

Careful and repeated analytical coding of this collection of portraits surfaced several themes, highlighting the fluid, multiple, and contextual notions of identity

- the socially constructed identity (*others shaped how I see myself as a teacher*);
- the bureaucratically shaped identity (*the organization of school shapes my work, my conception of teacher, and me*); and
- the emotionally bound, visionary identity of desire and pleasure (*I like this work, I like these people, it's fun to do this, I enjoy thinking of myself in this way*).

Of course, since each of these themes is tied to identity, there are permeable boundaries among them, and while the discussion here represents the themes as neatly independent of one another, they are an amplecta—a tightly woven and twisted knot of connections and dependencies.

Of importance here is the framing work of Beijaard, et al. (2004), who added the context of specific place and time to notions of identity, so ". . . identity can be seen as an answer to the recurrent question: 'Who am I at this moment?'" (p. 108). This understanding situates identity within a chronology, within the notion that identity shifts with changing times, in different places, among different people, and for different purposes. Sfard and Prusak (2005) position identity as a response to both relational and contextual influences and as a way to negotiate within that fluidity:

> Our relations with the world and with other people change continually, sensitive to our every action. Metaphorically speaking, identifying is an attempt to overcome the fluidity of change by collapsing a video clip into a snapshot. . . . [t]urning properties of actions into properties of actors is grounded in the experience-engendered expectation—indeed, hope—that despite the process of change, much of what we see now will repeat itself in a similar situation

> tomorrow. Based on this assumption, identity talk *makes us able to cope with new situations in terms of our past experience and gives us tools to plan for the future*. (p. 16)

It is within this fluid and responsive notion of identity as storytelling that I situate the findings in this knowledge project: "Narratives that constitute one's identity, being an important factor in shaping this person's actions, will be useful in research even if they communicate one's experiences only as well as human words can tell" (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 17).

While this is not a semiotic study, some notions from that field are of interest here, particularly notions of truth, the speaking subject, the desire for truth in language and discursive power: "In short, the problem of truth, truth of language but also of the discourse that attempts to account for it, makes up the fundamental epistemological concern" (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 125). As research approaches inherently reflect our beliefs about the world we live in and want to live in (Kristeva, 1980, p. xi), it is important for me to question the authority of empiricism, the authority of language, the authority of reading (Fay, 1987; Habermas, 1971; Lather, 1991b). And in the co-creative space of portraiture, it is necessary to note that the acts of storytelling and re-telling are to confirm and complicate received codes and to "reinscribe otherwise" (Britzman, 1995), and "to recognize the stereotype as an ambivalent mode of knowledge and power" (Lather, 1991b, p. 89).

I am cautious here in my analysis to acknowledge the knottiness of the researcher/researched relationships, as well. Merleau-Ponty's (2004) chiasmic ontology ensures that in some sense the Other is always already intertwined within the subject: Self and non-self are only the obverse and reverse of each other and the recognition of self and Other makes meaning as it occurs—"the body sensed and the body sentient" (p. 251). Neuman (1996) also pushes for great care in analysis of the sorts of data collected within

this study: ". . . [m]emoirs and texts that identify zones of contact, conquest, and the contested meanings of self and culture that accompanies the exercise of representational authority" (p. 191). And while Geertz (1988) discusses the necessary attention to oneself as "an unhealthy self-absorption—time-wasting at best, hypochondriacal at worst" (p. 1), it is important to concentrate on the ways knowledge claims are advanced in portraiture: The artist is ever present in the meaning-making. And as these are portraits in recollection, Geertz's notions of being "there" versus being "here" are particularly meaningful, as the "there" in this study is in the minds, memories, and fictions of both the participants and the researcher—highly situated narrative portraits.

It makes sense to start with the broadest theme—the socially constructed identity—and follow it with the other two—the bureaucratically shaped identity and the emotionally bound, visionary identity of desire and pleasure. In addition to Gee's (2001) definition of identity as a person within a particular context, socially constructed identity can be viewed discursively as both the outcome of others' influences on the teacher and as a form of ongoing interaction throughout a teacher's career. Two sub-themes lie within this broad theme—the ways that other educators helped these four veteran teachers to shape their practical identities and the ways others suggested from the beginnings that these people might be good teachers.

THEME 1: SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED IDENTITY

It is quite clear from a quick overview of the field through the past several decades that relationships are key influences in the world of teachers' work, the ways teachers approach their work, the ways teachers refine their practice and develop efficacy, and in teachers' willingness and capacity to continue in their educational careers. These relationships—both vertical (hierarchical) and horizontal (collegial)—are founded in trust (Olsen, 2008; Sfard & Prusak, 2005); influenced by formal and informal leadership (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-

Gordon, 2001; Hargreaves, 2001; Little, 1982; Printy & Marks, 2003; Reeves, 2004); and reflective in nature (Leithwood & Prestine, 2002; Little, 2003; Printy & Marks, 2003; Sykes, 1990). And, considering the Foucauldian notion of binaries (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hall & Hord, 2001; Hargreaves, 1998b; Marks, Louis, & Printy, 2000; Schon, 1983; York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere, & Montie, 2006), these same relationships might also be defined by a lack of trust or respect, undermined by errant formal or informal leadership, and perhaps limited to reactionary, rather than reflective, consideration.

Within the data aggregated for this study, analysis surfaced related sub-themes around the multiple and layered relationships among professionals—obedient and respectful relationships with principals, and collaborative, supervisory, affectionate, and care-filled relationships with other teachers—and the ways these relationships were the narrative vehicle for the teachers in this project.

Sub-Theme 1.1: Hierarchical Relationships

Each of the four participants in this study reported on the importance of their principals, and more specifically, the importance of their individual relationships with their principals. These relationships varied throughout the dozens of years of each participant's career: some good, some not-so-good, some unbearable. In some instances, they reported out about the qualities of their principals, albeit indirectly and *sotto voce*: Kelly Stone (personal communication, July 17, 2013) stated quietly: ". . . there were some principal changes going on, so I decided to move on," while Anne Williams (personal communication, May 12, 2013) whispered her fealty to her current principal: "I will not stay at this school without Ms. B." (Anne retired in June 2013, on the same day that her principal, Ms. B, did.)

I do what I'm supposed to do. Kelly and Hallie both attribute their longevity to their understanding of their organizational relationship with their principals—to being

responsible and following the rules. Kelly first noted this sense of responsibility when she told the story of getting her first full-time public school job, moving out of the role of long-term substitute: Her principal offered her a job because, as a substitute, "I was doing what I was supposed to be doing and I was doing a good job at it" (personal communication, June 11, 2013). In a follow-up conversation, she was more direct: "I'm going to do what you tell me to do because you're my boss. Ultimately, yes, I am going to toe the line because that is what is expected of me" (personal communication, June 17, 2013). Hallie was equally direct, and she attributed her positive relationships with principals to the fact that her father was in the military: "I understand the chain of command because of how I was raised: I don't have to agree with what my boss tells me to do, but I have to do it to the best of my ability. That is just who I am" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

There is a flipside, of course, a binary to following rules: NOT following rules. While this aspect of the data did not emerge in multiple interviews, I think it is an important theme to note. Anne Williams wept as she told the story of a changing relationship with her principal:

> After I get my kids for about three days, I'd level them, discuss it with their last year teachers, and I'd go to Lubbock and get them their Minute Math—it's a book that's got all the strands in real easy access. I'd get the books and that would be their Math. Their parents knew and were thrilled. *My principal knew I was doing it*. She said just inform the parents. Last year I was told that I couldn't do that because it gave false grades. I left that meeting crying. . . . And my little girl who can't add 17 and 17 and 17? I'm pulling some Minute Math books that I bought myself. It's better to me to get her to do ten problems where she knows what she's doing than do nothing in this (indicating district adopted Mathematics

instructional program). She's lost. Lost. *I've always made decisions like that and never got in trouble 'til last year*. (personal communication, February 25, 2013)

For Anne, continuing with/in the tensions among her beliefs about the job of a teacher—doing what is right for her students, fulfilling the expectations of her principal, and following the rules outlined by state and local policy—was unbearable. Although her principal had protected her in the past, the rules of the game had changed over the past year, the protection was no longer there, and she and her principal both left the profession.

My principal understands me and respects me. Of course, intertwined with notions of hierarchical authority, of positioning within an organization, of recognizing the boss/employee nature of the relationship between principal and teacher, are the more personal aspects of relationship—aspects of trust, of collegial respect, and of friendship. As participants narrated these personal recollections, it became clear that personal regard—the ways they were valued as individuals and respected by their principals, the ways trust was built or undermined, and the strength of friendship—was a key aspect to efficacy and longevity.

As Ella Rosen answered when I asked how she negotiated a shift out of a difficult teaching situation, "It's predicated on the fact that I had a principal who understood when I said that I needed a change. Valued me as a teacher, so he was going to do what was best for me" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). Anne reported a similar negotiation, describing an after-hours, in-the-dark visit to a principal's office: "I taught 5th grade for 15 years, then I was reading specialist in three schools—that was a terrible, one-and-a-half years. I knocked on the principal's window one evening . . . and I said, 'I've got to come back. I want to come home'" (personal communication, February 25, 2013).

In addition to this personal regard and valuing of the individual, respect and mutual accountability were evident in the data. Kelly, describing her first principal, explained, "She could bring you into the office, chew you out, criticize you, in a way that when you walked out, you were thinking, 'I need to change some things, but golly, I'm good.' Just had a way of getting her point across without hurting anybody's feelings, still having your dignity and your worth and all of that kind of stuff" (personal communication, June 11, 2013). Hallie described a similar aspect of the teacher/principal relationship, ". . . [P]rincipals aren't stupid people: If you're doing well in your classroom, they give you a bit of leeway; if you're not doing well in your classroom, they're all over you and should be" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Hallie and Kelly also discussed the notion of respect—respect for their principals and respect from their principals—as they told of their ability to challenge principals and to have their say about issues in the school environment. Hallie said, "I have generally had principals I could talk to . . . and if I don't agree with something, I feel like I could talk to them" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). And Kelly reported leveraging the respect she gained from one principal to have her say:

> I have had a principal that I didn't agree with some of the things that she did, with how she treated some people, but she didn't treat me that way. So I went and talked to her when I felt strongly about something, and I think there was some kind of respect there because she knew she couldn't—not cross the line exactly—but she knew that she would have to be justified in what she was going to tell me. (personal communication, June 11, 2013)

Kelly also told of instances where she was encouraged by colleagues to talk with the principal, again leveraging the collegial respect of other teachers to push against principal actions, "I have had fellow teachers, particularly at the other school when we were having some principal issues, who sent me to go talk to the principal about things. They were

afraid to say anything, to stand up for their thinking" (personal communication, June 11, 2013). So, Kelly, because of her relationship with other teachers, was able to speak for teachers in the school and use their regard for her to influence principal actions.

When viewed with a broad lens, then, participants in this study were respectful of their principals—toeing the line and following the rules; they felt genuine regard from/for some principals; and they recognized that principals respected them, as well. And they each attributed some of their teacher identity to their relationships with principals: Some were proud of the respect they perceived from their principals and one was subsumed into her connection with her principal—she could not continue to work without that personal connection.

Sub-Theme 1.2: Collegial Relationships (Collaboration, Supervision, and Affection)

In addition to participants' nuanced and careful relationships with their principals throughout their careers, analysis revealed the significance of connections to colleagues, to other teachers, in the ways participants described their career paths through/to this moment. Participants told stories of collaborating with others (and of having no collaborators); of leading others; and of caring about other teachers. Each participant, however, maintained an almost-singular perception of their relationships with colleagues: Each had a different story to tell.

Working with Other Teachers

For this discussion, the notion of collaboration is limited to the formalized and structurally supported work of teams of teachers. The accidental collaboration that occurs among friends engaged in the same work is discussed later.

Woven among participants' data were threads of understanding the purposes of formal collaboration, of seeing benefits of collaboration, and of seeing losses (both of teacher skill and individuality) through collaborative effort. Kelly attributed her signature

on next year's contract to her colleagues: "I seriously thought about going back to kinder or first, but I really liked the team I was working with. Not that I wouldn't have liked the kinder team or the first grade team—but the people that I work with? Another reason I'm not really thinking seriously about retirement" (personal communication, June 11, 2013). And Anne described with pride her long-term team relationship with teachers in her grade-level, "My whole grade of teachers! The three of us still work together: we plan for an hour—they don't help me plan math, of course—we discuss things, we go through the [student] data and we pick our lessons, talk about how we're going to teach it. We've been doing that forever" (personal communication, February 25, 2013).

In contrast to the Ann's pride in her team and Kelly's desire for more time with her colleagues, Hallie expressed a real struggle with the entire notion of collaboration. She recalled the start of her career, her isolation, and the joy she found in that freedom: "There was no collaborative planning, not one person there helped me with anything. I had a classroom, not a lab, and I was supposed to be able to move into a lab room when I needed to, the teachers with labs were supposed to let me when I needed to—I was totally on my own. And I loved it! And I never could get a lab room. I could never get one" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). And this statement, hissed through gritted teeth—"I didn't have to compromise then. It was my classroom, there was nobody to tell me what to do" (personal communication, May 8, 2013)—was punctuated with a pounding fist. "What did I do? I didn't know better because I had nobody" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Hallie continued to describe her current work in a district that relies on—and monitors for—formal structured collaboration among teachers, and she situated her participation as an obligation, ticking off the required activities on the fingers of one hand: "I'm on a team, just two of us, and we *have to* sit and plan together, we test together, we quiz together, we do all of our homework assignments together" (personal

communication, May 8, 2013). And yet, because of the affection she and her partner teacher developed over the past several years, this collaboration is about teamwork, not about compromise: "Now not everybody works like we do—we're a two-person team, the only teachers for this content, we like each other, we're friends" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

And although she was able to frame the accepted district discourse about collaboration as a benefit that not every district can afford, Hallie continued in her ambivalence: "I have mixed feelings about all this collaborative stuff, very mixed feelings about it. I like it and I don't like it. I can see the benefits, but I do think it brings some down. I think it has brought me down a bit. I don't think I'm as good a teacher as I was ten years ago, and that's sad. [Collaboration]'s a luxury and it's an obligation and it's a huge compromise" (personal communication, May 16, 2013). And in a follow-up conversation, Hallie reported that she had continued to think about

> . . . this collaborative stuff, and I figured out that collaborative partnerships can be good if you're with the right person—there's some benefit from teachers collaborating—I think if you're a strong team and you work well together, there's a benefit to it. Stephanie and I both like trying new things in our classrooms—once you stop wanting to try new things in your classroom, that's when you need to quit, right? That's my mark. (personal communication, June 10, 2013)

Leading Other Teachers

In examining the data aggregated around the ideas of these four teachers as leaders—department heads, grade-level leaders, instructional coaches—noticeable differences manifest. Kelly, even in accidental moments of watching other teachers work, was loath to offer any support:

> I remember hearing this other teacher one day. "We're on the letter D. Blah, blah, blah." And then they were going to talk about something else and it didn't start

> with D—like totally another piece. And I thought, "Why aren't you thinking about ways to get D into everything?" I never said anything to her about it, but to me it made more sense to build those connections. (personal communication, June 11, 2013)

She evaluated her colleague in the moment, and while she might have found an opportunity for collegial support/leadership, she turned inward and validated her own practice.

Anne described her role as an informal leader of her grade-level team within an intimate family construct: "Pretty much I get by with telling people because people know it's coming from the heart. I don't want anybody mad at me—cause I'm an only child. I've always wanted people to get along" (personal communication, May 4, 2013). And she embodied a familial leadership role: Since she retired at the close of the 2012-2013 academic year, she was like a matriarch in those last few months, bequeathing her treasures, distributing the materials she created, the resources she gathered, and the ways she planned her instruction: "I'm keeping some things I've made—those things in those blue tubs—and I'm going to give away the other stuff. I don't have room at home anymore. I'm going to give Galinda my Mountain Math. Becky wants my Math Minutes. And those notebooks? I'm going to give them to people and say please don't destroy it. I'm going to give it all away" (personal communication, June 19, 2013).

With yet another perspective, Ella reflected on her formal role as an instructional coach and department head, and shared how uncomfortably she wore that mantle:

> I'm an instructional coach and I'm department head, and those parts aren't fun. I think I've learned that I'm not very good with leading adults. I'm patient if you're struggling, like with my students, but I'm not tolerant. If you don't do what's expected of you and you know what's expected of you, I get kinda ugly inside, I think. I get very firm. "You know you're supposed to be here at 8:30. What's the

> issue?" That's how I'll say it. If you were to survey my department about me as a leader, I don't know that I'd be rated very high; but if you were to ask them what kind of teacher I am, I think I'd have a very high rating. Adults don't take to accountability very well. So there I am. Intimidating again. I'm the bad guy. It's not easy leading adults. It's ridiculous how they behave sometimes. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

Ella also dug into the evaluative aspect of leadership, sharing how disappointed she has been about novice teachers, when they interview for positions in her department—"These bright, shiny faces, fresh out of Teach for the Country, or Region 28's Tomorrow's Teachers program, or even some of the real colleges around here—and they still don't know what I mean by 'methods'" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). For Ella, the frustration about choosing among a handful of new teachers continued as she considered campus administrators' responsibilities to "[c]ut 'em loose, if they can't pass muster. We wait too long, and then we can't get rid of 'em. You got to start early and keep on and write things up—but we're too slow, we don't take care of them in the first year, when we can" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Ella's eyes sparked with anger about new teachers' lack of knowledge, and she jabbed her finger to stress the importance of "writing things up"; even with all this passion, she still was uncomfortable providing evaluative commentary to the teachers she supervises. As she discussed the teachers on her team and her evaluation of their writing skills, she leaned in and whispered, as if her negative evaluation should remain secret: "I see my own teachers' writing, when they have to prepare something (which they actually had to do about a week and a half ago). They had to select students for awards and then write blurbs on them," she shook her head and whispered, "Not good at all—kinda shocking" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). And in her whispers it seemed that she was unwilling to engage in the work of "taking care of 'em"—unwilling to assume

that piece of responsibility, not even within the safe confines of an anonymous interview. Like Kelly, she avoided opportunities to lead.

Hallie described her role as department chair, a parallel to Ella's formal leadership role in her department, as one she assumed readily, and one she recognized as a promotion: "I knew I was ready, so I applied for this department chair job and got it" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). This role fit within her notions of the chain of command, something she knew from her childhood as a "military brat" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). And she leveraged the chain in her relationship with her colleagues: "When I started as department chair four years ago, I told my folks I wanted them at lunch every Monday. Some teachers would eat lunch by themselves, and I told them I wanted them at lunch every week, sometimes I might have something to say to them, sometimes not, but I wanted them there. What has happened is that a majority of them are there every time" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

In an interesting turn, Hallie, who shared such unease with the notion of formalized collaboration as discussed above, was surprised at what happened in their weekly department lunches: "That's where the best collaboration happens. That's where the AP Chem teacher says, 'I can't get my kids to do such and such,' and we get so much talking done in that period. That's the collaboration right there. You would be surprised. We talk about particular kids. We talk about strategies. That's where a lot of good stuff goes on. A lot of good stuff" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). She also described the different qualities of collaborations in her department:

> The biology team is ridiculously strong, very, very strong—they get together, and you ought to see them plan together. As department chair I go in and watch them plan, and I'm blown away by how incredible they are. They all have input. They get on the whiteboard and they write and they plan and they really do a great job. Now our chemistry team? They'll come meet, scatter, and do their own thing.

> And they're not as strong a team [indicating a graph of the most recent district assessment scores] because of it. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

So while she recognized that the strength of collaborative relationships affected the outcomes for students in those classrooms, Hallie did not attribute the collaborative efforts of her department to her leadership, nor did she express any responsibility to improve those efforts through improving collaboration. Collaboration, good or bad, was the natural result of the relationships among the collaborators and their relationships to their profession.

Regard for Other Teachers

As discussed in earlier aspects of this theme around the socially constructed nature of teacher identity, each participant in this study assumed idiosyncratic stances toward their colleagues and highly personalized notions of their relationships with other teachers. Ann's stance—one of the caring and nurturing parent—continued to emerge as she talked of her retirement and swept her arm broadly over all the boxes, crates, and cabinets full of decades' worth of resources, materials, and supplies: "I want to help other teachers, parents come at lunch and I'll tutor. I give stuff away—it was nothing to go to Lubbock and charge $200 at the teacher supply store. And I'm going to give it all away soon" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Hallie recounted another instance of her "doing-what-I'm-supposed-to" mindset when she described her move to a leadership position earlier in her career: "I didn't like it the first couple of years, and when they moved on, I became team leader, and I got to hire who I wanted, so I got to hire more people who wanted to work on a team, and that matters" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). She valued her relationships with colleagues that she chose, and she chose based on their willingness to work on a team. Her current teaching partner, however, was the only colleague she discussed who earned Hallie's friendship:

> But I wouldn't change what I have with Stephanie because I respect her so much and see her passion and I see how well her kids do. I respect her as a teacher and I think she respects me as a teacher. We started the same year here, she started on-level and I started pre-AP/AP, then there was an opening in pre-AP and she took it. So I saw her for three years, what she did in on-level, so the respect grew and so did our friendship. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

Among the four participants in this project, Ella did not mention the nature of her relationship with colleagues; when asked specifically, she stated that they were intimidated by her and dismissed them with a wave of her hand (field notes, May 8, 2013).

Kelly, in contrast, attributed much to her colleagues—her longevity, her content knowledge, her instructional practice, and the positions she held throughout her career. She spoke of her friend, Pam, with whom she taught for almost fifteen years: "I have some friends—I've been lucky in my teaching in this way, too. Pam? We connected. We shared kids before it was something people did. We did a lot with our kids together focused on Science" (personal communication, June 11, 2013). She and Pam collaborated on lesson plans, they co-taught classes, and they attended conferences together.

> It was Pam that got me into doing workshops. She asked me to help her plan this oceanography unit from when we visited UT in Galveston, and she asked if I'd help her do the workshop. It was so much work and so much fun—she's my best friend. We did something, some workshop—sometimes for the whole district, sometimes for our school—every year after that until she left the district. (personal communication, June 11, 2013)

In an interesting tangent, it was through these workshops that Kelly noticed something about her fellow teachers: "Who is the worst? Teachers at a workshop or a faculty meeting. It's like a class. There are the clowns. There are the ones who are listening.

There are the ones who are talking and then ask a question that was just answered but they didn't hear it because they were all talking. It's all there in a faculty, no matter how well your faculty is picked. Humans are humans" (personal communication, June 11, 2013).

For Kelly, her most influential relationship was with her friend and colleague, Donna, who is now a principal at another school and who has tried without success to recruit Kelly to her campus. Her relationship with Donna was a complementary one:

> We had a lot of things that were different, like she likes to read all the research, and I'd just say, "Tell me what's good in that book or that article—convince me that I should be doing something, then I'm on board." It's not that I'm not open to new ideas, she just devours all the new research and everything. So we had a lot of things that we were really opposite about, but our fundamental philosophies about kids and hands-on and doing and all of those kinds of things were just right in sync. We made a really good balance. (personal communication, June 11, 2013)

It was Donna who was responsible for Kelly having her current position: Donna submitted an application for her and Kelly as a team, a package deal—two positions, two teachers. And she wrangled a team interview with the principal, a story that Kelly had much joy in recounting:

> It was on a Friday, or we were on a field trip, because we were in our class t-shirts, and we were going to have this interview later so we brought our interview clothes to change into. Then we got this call, "The principal had a cancellation, can you come early for your interview?" One of us said, "We can, but we're in our class t-shirts," and the secretary said, "C'mon like you are." So we interviewed in our t-shirts. Together. Donna did most of the talking, and we probably answered most of the questions before [the principal] even asked them.

> Anyway, we interviewed and we got the job. If it hadn't been for Donna, I wouldn't have moved over here to this school. I would have trudged along at the other school. I wouldn't have moved to third grade, and I really love third grade. (personal communication, June 11, 2013)

And although her two most influential colleagues are no longer in her world of work—Pam left the district and then retired, and Donna left to become a principal—Kelly considered herself lucky, lucky enough to stay in her current position. "For the most part, I'm really happy with the people I'm working with. You know, we have similar foundations, similar thinking about the kids and what we should be doing with them. I've been really lucky with people that I've worked with. That's made a big difference in how I teach and what I do in the classroom" (personal communication, July 16, 2013).

Each of the four participants in this study laced their narratives among the various touchstones of key colleagues: They were quick to tell stories of principals whom they respected and whose respect they earned, and they paused to find appropriate words to represent their relationships with other teachers, struggling, it seemed, to be careful of the social connections among colleagues.

In addition to the influence of others on these teachers' notions of themselves as teachers, a second theme emerged around the ways the organizational structures of schooling—particularly assessment and curriculum—pushed on both actions and identities as teachers.

THEME 2: THE BUREAUCRATICALLY SHAPED IDENTITY—THE INFLUENCE OF THE ORGANIZATION THROUGH TESTING AND CURRICULUM

In the past several decades, a growing body of research reveals the effects of high-stakes accountability on students' achievement (e.g., Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow, & Easton, 1998; Dee & Jacob, 2011; Elmore, 2002; Hannaway & Hamilton, 2008; J. Johnson, Skrla, & Scheurich, 2000; Klein, Hamilton, McCaffrey, & Stecher,

2000; Rowan, 1996; Mike Schmoker & Allington, 2007) Within this knowledge project, however, among the teachers informing this work, troubling conversations continued about the changes to content, attempts to standardize content, and the intrusions on instructional practices, reflecting a growing body of theory and research in the field (Dee & Jacob, 2011; Kober, Chudowsky, & Chudowsky, 2008; Wong, Cook, & Steiner, 2009).

The debate over what should be taught in schools is a long one, as is the debate over how it should be taught (e.g., Anagnostopoulos & Rutledge, 2007; Au, 2007; Hamilton et al., 2007; Hannaway & Hamilton, 2008; West, 2007). As Kliebard (Kliebard, 1986), Ravitch (2010), Cuban and Tyack (1986), and others noted, the notion of educational reform is tied to our nation's cultural understanding of progress as a linear function that can be engineered by tinkering with the variables of policy and practice. Nor is the troubling notion of standardization unexamined: It is the focus of a comprehensive body of theoretical work (Apple, 1979, 1995, 1996; Giroux, 1997; Greene, 1978a, 1985; Shulman, 1987; Wise, 1979, and others) examining the standardizing forces of technical rationality. And McNeil's analysis (2000) of our educational system surfaced another troubling notion: "In reality these policies of standardization are decreasing the quality of teaching and learning in our schools" (p. 9).

Additionally, this debate—and the myriad attempts to settle it—has surfaced questions about the ways teacher identity is formed with/in the tensions: socially constructed and emotionally laden (Day, 2002; Day & Gu, 2009; Plank & Condliffe, 2013; Reynolds, 1996; Shulman, 1987).

Here then was the rub—the push points I was looking for as I started this project: How had these veteran teachers negotiated with/in the uncomfortable spaces between policy, cultural expectation, and their own notions of teaching, and how had those negotiations shaped who they are as teachers?

As I drove home from each interview, as I listened to each phone conversation, and as I read each email, the issues of high-stakes testing and standardized curriculum barely registered. I was caught up in their narrative representations of themselves, taken with each teacher's stories and the ways those stories shaped how they see themselves. Even as I transcribed, the tests and curriculum frameworks seemed incidental. Once I dug into the transcriptions, once I sorted and coded and arranged their words, like a contract bridge player maneuvering the cards and strategizing the next play—then, the challenges of testing and curriculum became apparent.

This theme, around the ways bureaucracy constructs teacher identity—particularly, the ways district policies are viewed and enacted by these veteran teachers—can be parsed into two sub-themes—testing and curriculum—and each is informed by both social construct and emotion.

Sub-Theme 2.1: Testing

This is the burr I was looking for. I wanted to engender and then interrupt the discourse about standardized, high-stakes testing. These folks had much to say about testing—mandatory statewide assessment programs; the voluntary, hope-to-get-college-credit Advanced Placement tests; and local assessment programs. They told of the ways that testing required their time and effort, of the ways that the focus on test results inhibited and influenced the ways they taught. And undergirding all of this were deeply emotional responses, idiosyncratic and wide-ranging.

Limits to Instructional Strategies and Pacing

Two participants in this project—Kelly and Ella—appeared aware of, yet unscathed by, the prickly and dangerous high-stakes accountability culture. Kelly was able to laugh off her only reference to the test, as she described a recent classroom visit from her principal: "I was teaching what needed to be taught and I was doing a good job

of it," she said, her hands framing her face and her artificially broad smile: "My kids learned! Good thing I wasn't on my eagle tangent because I needed to be focusing on the aaaccckk! TEST!" (field notes and personal communication, May 12, 2013).

Ella dismissed testing from the outset. With her right hand adjusting the paisley scarf knotted at her throat, she vaunted, "Of course, with the testing—my kids are well over 90% passing, when the national average is 58%. So the testing doesn't bother me: I don't feel the demands of a test, I just feel that my own methodology for preparing students is going to work" (field notes, February 16, 2013). She attributed her freedom from worry to her students, hand-picked to take her Advanced Placement Writing course and well-prepared for the challenge of ". . . a very difficult test. Really very difficult because of that quick thinking and then not just regurgitating a memorized answer, but having to put it down, baring yourself to the entire world" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

The other two teachers, Hallie and Ann, both expressed a sadness that the test had limited their instructional practices to common, less-creative test prep strategies. Anne sighed and shook her head as she described her district's newly implemented formative assessment program. In addition to losing two to three weeks of instructional time in the fall semester—"Look, here's my daily notebook, and can you see these marks? The black ones? Those are testing days! Can you believe it?" (field notes, December 10, 2012)—Anne remembered her first year to worry about a test and the ways she shaped her instruction in response: "It was my first year to teach a tested year: I had never taught a testing grade. They only tested 3, 5, and 8 back then—so I got everything I could get about testing and I grilled those kids, I mean grilled 'em" (personal communication, February 25, 2013).

As Hallie considered the ways testing might have changed her practice, she fell silent. With her brows knit, she dropped her chin and stated flatly: "This is what I think is

happening—I've thought that I'm a creative teacher, and I still think that. I think that what education has done, because they worry so much about test scores, they've taken the creative teachers, and these teachers way down here, and they're trying to put them all here in the middle" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). She indicated with her hands a hierarchy of teacher effectiveness, creative at the top and these others way down *here*.

In addition to the loss of instructional time and opportunities for creativity, Anne worried about the effect of the tests on her students: "Our [local formative assessment program] is the worst testing program in my long, long career. This test is so hard for 5th-graders—and the smart kids? This is holding them back, and I'm not allowed to change for them like I could before" (personal communication, February 25, 2013). And Hallie's eyes flashed with sarcastic fervor as she swept her palms one across the other, mimicking the unnamed, bureaucratic 'They' dusting their hands of the incidental remnants of students' learning. Twice she pointed out the disregard for students inherent in the testing culture of her district: "Get them to that test. Get them there and pass them along. If they don't get the skills that they need, meh, they're already out of here, who cares?" (personal communication, May 8, 2013); and again, in a follow-up conversation: "I have a test—curriculum-based assessments—we have seven of 'em in Biology a year. My kids have to be at THIS point at THIS time to take THAT test. And if they're not there, tough, they have to take the test anyway" (personal communication, June 16, 2013). So there's this sadness for their students and this anger for their own powerlessness—given their obedience, their willingness to do what they're supposed to—to ameliorate the losses. Losses for their students. Losses for themselves.

Ella, as the English department head, described a recent and new attitude toward local and state assessments among her district's leaders. When the past year's state test scores came in, "The panic set in—it hit real hard!" (personal communication, May 8,

2013). Apparently, the scores for 9th-grade ELA were not as expected and not in keeping with the patterns of excellence for this district, so the ELA director assembled her troops, a collection of teachers from throughout the district, to analyze the data and refine their curriculum frameworks."[She] had created charts and charts and graphs and tables where students didn't do well, school by school, and these charts are hanging around the walls in the library. Well you can feel the angst, with data by teachers. At the top, there's a panic—'We need to shine! We need to be our best!'" Ella raised her hands over her head and waved her fingers in frenzy, as she repeated the heightened anxiety of her director, "We need to shine!" Then she dropped her hands to her lap with a dramatic sigh, "Of course, we don't have our results from this year yet; we've got our fingers crossed, and we've learned a lot over the year of what we needed to do But there's still lots of children, and it's still a difficult test" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). Ella seemed to regard the furor over test scores with detached amusement, and although she was an active team member in the reworking of the district curriculum resources, neither test scores or district curriculum bureaucracy influenced her "own methodology" (field notes, May 8, 2013).

Hallie shared her perception of the costs of testing, about her school system's response to lower-than-expected student achievement: "Teachers are jumping through hoops like crazy for this group," she indicated with her hand a low group of students. "What we did to prepare this group for the [state assessment] was a lot of work for teachers—we're working hard for the kids who don't care that much. And I don't know if it's that they don't care, or if something happens . . . I don't know what happens between elementary and high school. In the elementary school—I have three kids of my own, so I know!—and in elementary school they're excited! The testing beats it out of them, I think. Just beats it out of them" (personal communication, June 14, 2013).

Additional Work, Not Different Work

No matter how hard I pushed, none of these four teachers commented on changing their practice, on teaching differently because of a test. Their responses to my questions about the impact of testing centered on the pressures they felt as teacher leaders to change the practices of their colleagues and the outcomes for their students. Nor was testing perceived as a sort of galvanizing process, a way to toughen their identities as teachers—testing did not make them who they are, it simply makes them work harder, with less joy (in some instances). They described changes to curriculum, the extra work to prepare students, extra time in class for test preparation, and their greatest concerns were about the emotional discord and losses—the loss of respect for school community.

"We don't have fun in my class anymore," Hallie shook her head. And Anne wept as she whispered her shock over the grade her school earned as a result of student assessment scores: "Yes, there was testing before, but nothing like this. Now that they're giving us a letter grade—we have 96% parent approval and we're a D?! You walk in this school—do you think this is a D school?" (field notes, May 20, 2013).

The interesting notion that appears through this analysis is that of these four teachers, two posed themselves as disinterested or disaffected, while the other two showed great emotion around the assessment push—and those emotions were founded in loss. Loss of creativity. Loss of respect. Loss of status. And for one, the loss of a principal, which signaled the end of her career.

Sub-Theme 2.2: The Teacher's Relationship to Curriculum

Curriculum Writer

The relationship of teacher to knowledge emerged within the data collected in this project, as each of the four teachers participated in the writing of curriculum documents for their respective districts. Within the context of the Standards Era, the push for system efficiencies manifested in standards, curriculum frameworks, curriculum guidelines, and

instructional planning guides. Such curriculum supports were also positioned as key tools for school reform toward equity (Day & Leitch, 2001; Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2003, 2005, 2007), and teachers mediated between curriculum and student outcomes. Spanning the whole of the Standards Era, a body of work based on Schwab's (1969) initial work positioned teachers' practical knowledge as the language of curriculum. This body of work (examined by Craig & Ross, 2008) found that teachers inhabited a variety of relationships to knowledge: "[T]eacher defined as a purveyor of codified content knowledge, the teacher whose knowledge base is determined by policymakers and bureaucrats and influenced by university professors . . . and the teacher for whom the extremes of technical rationalism encroach on classroom practice" (2008, p. 296).

These four veteran teachers were each involved in curriculum work for their respective districts, and aspects of that work (and their responses to it) represented combinations of content codification, encroachment, and an emergence of Schwab's "paradigm of the practical." It is within this paradigm of the practical (Greene, 1994) that these teachers located their participation in curriculum writing. Ella put it most bluntly: "Of course, they bring in all the 'old hands' to write curriculum" (personal communication, May 8, 2013), and Kelly suggested that her years of experience at many grade levels were her qualifications for curriculum writing. Ann and Hallie both nodded their heads in acknowledgement of typical district leader decisions—the more veteran teachers are identified as storehouses of information about both content and pedagogy, so they are invited to bring their personal practical knowledge to the table to help district leaders shape supportive curriculum resources for teachers.

A perception among these veteran teachers was that curriculum support was necessary for novice teachers, that curriculum frameworks helped those new to the profession navigate the challenges of their first years. Hidden within that perception is also the perceived need to regulate the work of novice teachers, to codify the content they

teach, and to reach into new teachers' classrooms with prescriptions from veterans, veterans with decades of practical, experiential knowledge. Kelly explained, "I do think that there needs to be a certain amount of guidance for new teachers. Here are the standards, here are some of the questions you need to help kids answer, here's a road map, or a sub plan—here is how you can get there" (personal communication, June 11, 2013). Ella sighed with resignation at the need for curriculum resources: "So we have hired so many inexperienced teachers, and this has been the concern. How do we get these teachers on board, hired, and able to prepare kids to go on to college? Do we need a prescription? I guess we do" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). And when asked about curriculum documents provided by her district leaders, Hallie laughed as she recalled her first year to teach, with only the teacher's edition of the textbook as a guide:

> There was no collaborative planning, not one person there helped me with anything. I had a classroom, not a lab, and I was supposed to be able to move into a lab room when I needed to, the teachers with lab rooms were supposed to let me when I needed to—I was totally on my own. And I loved it! . . . I look back at that and think holy cow! What did I do? I didn't know better because I had nobody. Nothing. And now, everything is prescribed for you. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

So prescriptive curriculum documents are seen as useful—for new teachers. Kelly was pretty clear about her consideration of the curriculum documents she helps write: She waved her hand dismissively and explained, "I don't look at them and think, 'I have to teach this way.'. . . I try to stick to the yearly plan, but I don't like being told, 'On Day 17, you're going to be on this page and doing this activity'" (personal communication, June 11, 2013).

Ella was proud of the intellectual work she and her colleagues have done to create their district's curriculum documents, and she seemed proud of the ways they

collaborated: “We literally create lessons, but we also talk about philosophy. How we’re going to approach this [topic]—and our own methodology” (personal communication, May 8, 2013). And yet she also described the piecemeal quality of the document and recognized that different teachers have been working on different portions of the curriculum at different times, creating a disjointed cacophony. And she admitted that the curriculum resources that she has been a part of creating still need some work, at least for her in her classroom with her students: “Oh my goodness, I am extremely challenging. I know that. If you were to interview my students that’s the first thing you’d hear. What you would hear is she’s very hard but she’s very fair. The curriculum has needed a lot of . . . ummm . . . I’ve had to break things down, I’ve had to chunk, I’ve had to model—I’ve had to create segments for the students to learn it” (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Kelly told the story of the day she quit writing curriculum guides for her district because her practical knowledge was not valued:

> So we had a meeting and we were working on something—in Language Arts, they were teaching about cause-and-effect, and in Science we were planning a sequencing activity, so why not have the sequencing activity in Reading? But the Reading group had already written [their instructional planning guides], so we were supposed to come up with Science to go with their work. And I thought, “This is all backwards. It should be the other way around. We get our [Science] kits, and we can’t control when we’re supposed to be teaching this in Science, but in Reading you have those same skills going on all year long—it’s the art of using language around real content! So focus on sequence when we’re growing plants, or focus on cause-and-effect when we’re teaching about earthquakes and weather.” So that was disappointing to me to be told that we had to try to come up

> with something, that we had to make Science fit Reading, when to me it was the other way around. (personal communication, June 11, 2013)

She could not find a place for her curricular and instructional knowledge within the parameters of the district curriculum development process, so Kelly stepped away from the work rather than yield to others' instructional design and curricular choices.

Curriculum Collaborator

Anne and Hallie both mentioned doing curriculum work among collaborative teacher groups in their schools rather than within the authority of the district-level work, reflecting the ways teachers share their personal practical knowledge as curriculum makers (e.g., Calderhead, 1995; Clandinin, 1985; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Anne supplanted the approved district textbooks with a hoarded collection of an out-of-adoption textbook: "See those old green math books up there? Older'n dirt. The best math books you've ever seen. I shared this with my four buddies" (personal communication, February 25, 2013). She framed her action—one that essentially subverted the prescribed curriculum of the district and pushed her curriculum preferences into the classrooms of others—as a sign of insider status, a representation of belonging.

Hallie, sitting at her desk and indicating the doorway that connects her classroom to that of her colleague, described the collegial and collaborative relationship that has developed over time. They both teach the same course and plan together—sometimes using the district curriculum database, sometimes not.

> But she's creative and I think I'm creative—we sit down and we really come up with stuff, so we don't use that database very often. Every once in a while we'll go on there and find something we like, but for the most part, we come up with our own stuff. This is curriculum work, too. Now not everybody works like we do—we're a two-person team, the only teachers for this content, we like each other, we're friends. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

And this sharing of knowledge, this collaborative decision-making around curriculum, is limited by and reliant on the friendship, just like Anne sharing with her colleagues.

THEME 3: THE EMOTIONALLY BOUND IDENTITY—SELF AND VISION

Several of these teachers also named themselves in care-filled relationships with their students, embodying aspects of feminist notions of caring (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984); and they acknowledged the emotional work of that relational endeavor. Ella crowed, "Give me a kid that somebody can't deal with—by god, I'm going to deal with him" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). And Hallie bragged, "Oh my goodness. The kids are why I do this. I know I build a strong rapport with my kids. They come talk to me about their hopes, their dreams, their desires" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Anne talked about the moral obligation of teaching—referring to what she was "supposed" to do (e.g., mandatory testing, mandatory resources, curriculum frameworks) in opposition to what she believed was right—and she was wounded in the conflict. She brought out her "purple folder," a collection of notes from students, colleagues, and parents. She started keeping the folder years ago on the advice from a colleague—"[Her colleague] said, 'Honey, it's important for you to save this stuff. This can get you through those rough patches you know are coming.' And you know, she was right. I've saved them over the years" (personal communication, June 16, 2013). One of the notes, drawn and signed in crayon, was a picture of Ms. Anne, with a crown and a wand and stars around her head. It said, "Ms. Williams is kind of like god—no matter what we do she forgives us and still loves us" (field notes, June 16, 2013). Anne held that artifact for a moment after showing it to me, her eyes glistening with tears from earlier, then she put it back in the purple folder, patted it tenderly, and closed the folder. "I'll have to look through this again—this is one of those rough patches," she whispered, as she slid the folder into a stack on her desk (field notes, June 16, 2013; personal communication, June

16, 2013). At this point, Anne had finalized her retirement—when her principal retired, she lost her self-defining meaning and purpose, exemplifying Nias's (1989) notion of emotional loss as a crucial part of teacher identity.

Ella and Hallie—both high school teachers, both aware that their students think they are difficult teachers, and both implicitly proud of that—blame that perception on the challenges of their courses. They are both Advanced Placement teachers, and they tell of their students' results on the AP tests: "Egotistical comment here. My kids scores are the best in the district" (H. McKenzie, personal communication, May 8, 2013); and "It's the most rigorous test, and I've developed my own methodology for getting them ready—and they do it every year" (E. Rosen, personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Ella went on to describe how she "deals with" her students, ticking off her behaviors, finger-by-finger, in a checklist of advice: "I always greet them at the door. Hug or handshake. Good to see you. Get right down to business the whole period. Honor what they say. Affirm what they say. Make them comfortable" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). The business-like attitude of Ella's list morphed into a different emotional facet as she talked about her requirement for one-on-one tutoring with every student:

> When it's just the two of us in the room—if they're waiting for me they're waiting in the hall because this is private—you can just bond and you're smiling and you're encouraging and that's awesome. It's so simple. It's so simple. We're not just tutoring, though, we're building confidence and relationships. Love comes in many, many forms. Lots of hugging. And lots of tutoring. This is what I would miss. I would miss this horribly. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

Hallie also enjoyed the quality of her relationships with her students—"So I think I build a real strong relationship with my kids. That's because I was them—I was that kid in high school. A grade-grubber. A worker" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). And almost as if she were talking to that earlier, high school version of herself, she

feigned indignation at her reputation as a rigorous teacher, while the sharpness of her tone and the look in her eyes belied her words:

> I hear that from them—I'm not an easy teacher! I have very high expectations of these kids—my freshmen come in and they tell me after they find out I'm really a marshmallow inside they tell me the first couple of weeks they're scared to death of me. And I say why? They say, "Because your expectations are so high." "Am I expecting more than you can do?" "Well I thought so, but no" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Kelly's narrative is filled with reference to her luck—the luck of working with particular people, the luck of teaching science, and the luck of being in the right place at the right time for a job:

> "I'm so lucky to get to work with this team."
>
> "I think I'm lucky that I'm doing science because they're always excited about it. I've never had a kid say, 'You know, I just don't care for science.'"
>
> "And when he said, 'I asked for a Kindergarten teacher' I was the lucky one sitting right there!" (personal communications, June 11, and June 18, 2013)

It seemed, as I listened to her talk, that the luck she described might actually be representing appreciation or thankfulness or gratitude. It also seemed that her feeling lucky was closely related to expressions of fun:

> "Number one, then and now, school should be fun."
>
> "She was so fun to work with—it didn't feel like work, at all."
>
> "Which one is fun for me? Acting it out! Which one is fun for the students? Acting it out! So why would I do a worksheet?" (personal communication, June 11, 2013)

Kelly was very clear that fun and luck are the bellwethers for her career:

> When it stops being fun is when I'll quit, I guess. I'm just lucky that it's still fun. Kids come to me and say, "Look at this!" And I want to say, "Yes, I see that every year. I got that ready for you. I planned for this to happen." But it goes back to the idea that for them it's a discovery. It's brand new. It's their first time, and it's so much fun. (personal communication, June 16, 2013).

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

I thought at first, as I examined the narratives in the project, that the notions of fluid multi-layered identity (Nias, 1989; Sfard & Prusak, 2005; Wambura Ngunjiri, 2007) are manifested like a set of Russian nesting dolls, each teacher a matryoshka, with various selves nested one within another. As I worked further to analyze this data, a different image formed: Each teacher in this study brought a set of different selves to her narrative. And each set represented the different ways Hallie and Kelly and Anne and Ella acted, how they made decisions, how they reflected on their work, and how they held themselves accountable to their own vision of teaching. This visionary self, the imagined teacher, surfaced most directly when Kelly said, "I have this vision of myself as a teacher, and when I no longer live up to that expectation, I'll be done," and when Hallie named herself "a work in progress." Anne mourned the imagined teacher when she wept as she closed her classroom door for the last time; Ella wept at the scene in her head, as she imagined the last: "The thought of walking out of the classroom for the last time literally brings tears to my eyes. So I'm not ready." The multiple identities found here are perhaps the ways these experienced teachers stay safe; and as selves are picked off in moral conflict with mandates, are worn down through years of negotiations, perhaps the only safety that remains is the closed door.

Chapter 6: Looking Back to Look Forward . . .
Findings and Lingering Questions

I set out more than a year ago to talk with veteran teachers about their notions of curriculum, of knowledge, of teaching and learning. I wanted to find out how veteran teachers had fared through the onslaughts of the Standards Era. I looked for teachers who began their professional lives before the onset of the Standards Era because I wanted to know if and in what ways the context of this era might have shaped their practice, their relationships to knowledge, their considerations of teaching and learning, their understandings of curriculum. I wanted to engage in conversation with them as colleagues—to try to answer my personal questions about curriculum, teaching and learning, and knowledge.

PORTRAITURE AND IDENTITY

Because of my regard for teachers and my own years of classroom practice, I approached this question through portraiture, a postmodern ethnographic methodology that "blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. xv). In addition to talking with these four teachers about teaching, I thought I might find within their stories a rage against the machine—veterans in their third and fourth decades of teaching, working from within the structure to create sites of resistance or refuge. I looked for evidence of a critical stance, a Marxist push against the neoliberal regimes of power exerted on teachers and their profession over the past thirty years. These women did not tell of that sort of push; they did not characterize themselves as revolutionary, nor did they describe trying to change the system from within. Their identities seemed shaped by several influences—teaching colleagues and principals (e.g., Groves, 2002; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hargreaves, 1998a, 2001; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Lieberman & Miller, 1992; Marks & Printy, 2003), the structures of testing and

curriculum work (e.g., Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Hargreaves, 1998a; Langlois & Starratt, 2002), and their emotional responses to their work and the expectations of the profession (e.g., Kennedy, 2010; Kerbey, 1991; Little, 2000; Nias, 1993; Zembylas, 2004).

They characterized themselves as rule followers, as social creatures, as caring and emotional humans. I found four women, each of whom had developed a robust set of selves, selves that they could pick and choose among in response to context. I was reminded of Sandra Cisneros's (1991) short story "Eleven," when Rachel, the central character, describes her understanding of growing up:

> What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are—underneath the year that makes you eleven. (p. 6)

The teachers in this project were equally unaware of their multiple selves, their other selves underneath this one. Those others surfaced in the stories they told.

TROUBLING RESILIENCE

The research suggested I might find characteristics of resilience among the participants, and I did. They told of their collegial relationships, their passion for teaching, their respect-filled relationships with their principals. They showed me evidence of their emotional supports (Day, 2008; Day & Gu, 2009)—Anne's folder of notes, Hallie's recollection of her surprise in her difficult student when he revealed his artistic talents. Kelly reached through a career plateau by centering her curriculum with her belief in the power and connectivity of science, her content to the engagement of

students (Mansfield, Beltman, Price, & McConney, 2012). Ella exhibited pride and confidence in her own capacities and her own pedagogical method (Meister & Ahrens, 2011). And while each of these might be found within the research on resilience as evidence of the adaptability of these veteran teachers, I cannot position these findings within that body of work. The resilience research has the presumption of adversity: What environmental contexts help teachers *bounce back from adversity*? What sorts of personal character traits provide *the will to overcome challenges*? How do teachers vanquish the monster, face down the difficult situations, and survive the professional misfortunes of teaching within the Standards Era? My findings here might be supportive of the work on teacher resilience, but for one thing: There is little talk of adversity. No misfortune. No monsters. Yes, Anne talked of the adversity of the era, but she did not prove to have resilience against the challenges: She simply retired.

It might be that, as Gee (1990, 2001) suggests, these accomplished veterans have altered the cultural model of adversity—perhaps they have renamed their monsters. It might be that they crafted a new narrative and developed additional identities to address those monsters. It might also be that the grief associated with facing, even naming, adversity is a private memory (Retzinger, 1991), masked and hidden from view. Or it might also be that they erased the adversity from their stories or compartmentalized the adversity into a dead-end chapter of their interactive mythology.

THE POWER OF NARRATIVE

The stories told in this project were archetypal in their purpose: I heard stories of bold victories, like those told around campfires to keep the wolves at bay. I heard stories of morality and ethics, reminiscent of the tales I heard in Sunday School as a child, designed to teach spiritual lessons. I heard stories filled with self-deprecating humor, the teller and listener drunk on laughter. And I heard stories of comforting stillness and quiet, rooted in the past like those read before turning in for the night. All of these stories were

experiential—these four teachers lived through facets of each of them. The challenge for me is, as Fuss (1989) explains, "Experience is never as unified, as knowable, as universal, and as stable as we presume it to be" (p. 114). Lather (1991b) troubles narrative and situates both subject and object within the narrative text, as producer and receiver of text. This calls for scrutiny of the text: "To both confirm and complicate received codes is to see how language is inextricably bound to the social and ideological . . . within social practices, the historical conditions of meaning (p. 89). ". Narratives in this project are also troubling, not only for the lack of innocence, but because of the ways that teachers' lived experiences are centered as "the origin knowledge" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008, p. 301).

Butler (1993) positions narrative, not as representational, but as constative and performative, the act of telling as the act of shaping and completing. "Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed *by* a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that 'performance' is not a singular 'act' or event, but a ritualized production" (p. 95). In looking back at the set of portraits, I can see now that these narratives were designed to carry us—the teachers and me—along a path, to evoke certain emotions, to leverage our shared professional identity. Their stories were stylized and told for me in the moment. Maybe that is the nature of the researcher/researched relationship: the need to please, to delight, to entertain. Or maybe the evocative nature of their stories was to please themselves in the telling. Both possibilities highlight both Kerbey's (1991) impossibility of fixed truth in personal narrative and the performative nature of telling (Butler, 1993): I create myself in the image I think you want; I shape you with my words (and my presumptions); and I am in/formed by your response.

KNOWLEDGE, NARRATIVE, AND CURRICULUM

During interviews, I felt as if we were two teachers talking about our work. The stories relied on presumptions of common understanding, on accepted discourse of the field; if I failed to understand, that must mean I was not really a teacher. Their narratives were in language that was both coin of the realm and shibboleth. Inclusive and exclusive. Constative and performative. They talked to me, presuming that I held some personal knowledge similar to theirs, although tacit and unspoken (Polanyi, 1958). How might we surface some of that tacit knowledge with/in the curriculum? How might we position tacit knowledge (e.g., intuition, hunches, and imaginings) with/in the generative work of teaching and learning?

Pinar (2004) states that "understanding is never neutral" (p. 200), suggesting that even when teachers grapple with understanding curriculum, with understanding students, that they are making their marks. Ellsworth (1997) troubles the notion of teaching even further as she suggests that finding out "where, when, and how teaching happens is indecidable" (p. 193). It is also, in some sense, "impossible," in that "all modes of address misfire one way or another" (p. 8). Perhaps at this point, some theoretical notions from a different field might be useful. Rather than positioning teachers as resilient and multi-purpose tools within a machine (Taubman, 2009), as they are positioned by much of the national policy of the Standards Era, we might begin to position teachers—each of us—as knowledge creators, as generative actors within a knowledge ecosystem. Story (i.e., narrative) has a growing significance when positioned within a knowledge ecosystem: "The ability to convey high levels of complexity through story lies in the highly abstract nature of the symbol associations in the observer's mind when he/she hears the story. It triggers ideas, concepts, values and belief at an emotional and intellectual level simultaneously" (Snowden, 2002, p. 105).

Each of these teachers told of participating in the "contrived collaborations" (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009), of bringing their knowledge to the task of writing curriculum for their districts. Ella described the ways she and her colleagues shared philosophies and methodologies about their content; Hallie joined the writing effort out of frustration at the quality of existing curriculum documents; Kelly quit her writing team when they were forced to shape the science curriculum in support of the reading curriculum, rather than the other way around; and Anne was proud to be part of the group that shaped the Common Core State Standards into a curriculum framework for her district. They also all told of the difficulties of that work—of sharing their tacit understandings of their content and their pedagogies and trying to reach consensus on what to include and how to write it down. Perhaps curriculum is one of the monsters—dismissed by these teachers, renamed or relegated to something useful for other teachers, erased by these veterans' refusal to follow the curriculum documents they had a hand in writing. Polanyi (1958) a chemist and social scientist who theorized the importance of tacit knowledge and paved the way for Kuhn's (1962) postmodern turn put it simply: "We know more than we can tell" (p. 145). And we can probably tell more than we write down. Britzman (2003), then, brings the conversation back into education, to the relationship between teaching and knowledge:

> While something significant happens to the self learning to teach, something happens to knowledge as well. At times, the curriculum becomes a thing to deliver and then learning is reduced to a thing that can be observed. Knowledge, then, loses its constructiveness, banished to the cliché "a teachable moment." This is not something to wonder over, not is it the fuel of curiosity or the imagination. Nor is it even meant to cast the teacher and learner in awe. Instead, the features of knowledge become a means to an end; teaching about the knowledge is the preoccupation and the myth that there is direct relation between the teacher's

efforts and the student's learning is sustained. When knowledge is reduced to a speech act, an answer, say, it becomes the proving ground of competence. (p. 23)

Huebner (1999b) proposes that, through formalizing and abstracting curriculum, the process of sharing and creating knowledge has been institutionalized and bureaucratized, while Pinar (2004) adds that, "Instead of employing school knowledge to complicate our understanding of ourselves and the society in which we live, teachers are forced to 'instruct' students to mime others' (i.e., textbook authors') conversations, ensuring that countless classrooms are filled with forms of ventriloquism rather than intellectual exploration, wonder, and awe" (p. xi). So, curriculum is mimicry, standards are simply the echoes of the past, and teachers are to sound those echoes within the classroom and within students' heads.

How might the work of teachers be shaped as a place of narrative, a place of knowledge creation and generation? A place where, instead of "Will you?" and "Can you?" and "Have you?" we ask ourselves, "Who are we at this moment? What stories are we telling? What are we naming as our monsters? What ethical stances are we trying to embody?"

USEFUL TO OTHERS: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As I consider these findings—evidence of the socially constructed and narrative nature of identity; evidence of the characteristics of resilience support (without the naming of adversity against which to be resilient); and evidence of the performativity of narrative—it seems that these notions might be useful to the practical work of school leaders. Much of the school improvement/reform efforts position collaboration among teachers as a key structure for job-embedded professional development (e.g., Little, 2003; Loucks-Horsley, Love, Stiles, Mundry, & Hewson, 2003; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Marks et al., 2000). And concurrently, much of the interaction design of professional collaboration is focused on reflective practice (e.g., Hall & Hord, 2001; Schon, 1983;

York-Barr et al., 2006; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Couple the reflective practice with the expectation of shared and socially constructed knowledge of professional collaborative learning with the performative nature of narrative, and it becomes important to consider how we ask teachers to work together and learn from each other. In what ways might purposeful opportunities to story-tell be supportive of the need for knowledge generation among teachers?

Many school and district leaders with whom I work with in my professional life regard teacher collaboration—around designing lessons, crafting assessments, and building curriculum frameworks—as a costly yet productive resource. Superintendents are proud of professional learning communities (PLCs), of providing the luxury of time for teachers to work together to refine their craft

(e.g., Andrews & Lewis, 2007; Argyris & Schon, 1996; M. Schmoker, 2006; Schon, 2001; Wenger, 1998; York-Barr et al., 2006; Zeichner & Liston, 1996) . Sometimes, this time is relegated to summers, when teachers can spend long hours together, creating curriculum documents, lesson plans, assessment tasks. Sometimes, this time is distributed throughout the school year, quarterly or even weekly in some places. Perhaps if school leaders held an awareness of the relationship between narrative and knowledge—the notion that telling stories might build shared understandings of the complex notions of schooling—they might structure collaborative time and collaborative efforts in a more purposeful and fruitful way. By asking questions designed to surface teacher stories (repositories of tacit knowledge), the time teachers spend together could build both shared knowledge and common understandings.

It is important, I think, for school leaders to make the effort to move the stories from the carpool and teachers' lounge into the world of work; to recognize that the narratives (and the identities shaped by them) are co-constructed and that we can shape the message and the identity with the retelling. It is important to remember Butler's

performativity, saying and acting are conjoined twins, working to form more fully the teachers whose stories we hear. It is about storytelling. About narrative. About the purposes for telling stories. About archetypes. About tacit knowledge. The stories serve purposes, so let's make sure we get a chance to hear them.

LINGERING QUESTIONS ABOUT EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

Additional questions emerged, not about my participants, but about my process, about epistemology and methodology, and it is those questions that I cannot begin to answer.

At the start of this text, I asked forgiveness for inscription, and still, I find great challenge in the notion of writing the Other. I remain aware of the intrusive power of inscription and the normative power of narrative told and retold. The questions fomenting now, at the end of this project, are all tied up with notions of Truth—as Visweswaran (1994) queried: "How do we arrive at what we call the 'truth'? And conversely, what is the truth produced by a specific kind of epistemology?" (p. 48).

I think this is possibly also an opportunity to interrogate my choices about methodology. What started as portraiture, I realize at this point, now lives within the bounds of autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) because of my reflexive positioning: I found it impossible to remove myself and my narrative from this project. As Errante (2012) suggests, "Our academic work may be inextricably linked to our sense of self" (p. 25). In autoethnography, the past lived experiences of the researcher are privileged as sources of knowledge, as "stories worth telling" (p. 428). And it might be that I wanted these four women to tell those stories for me—to frame my experiences through their narratives. What I do know at this point is that I purposefully avoided telling my own stories, and I was not certain why until I was deep in the analysis for this project. I avoided what was

most painful: The losses in personal identity that I felt through various shifts in my professional life (from teacher to principal to consultant) are neatly rationalized and compartmentalized. I cannot open those boxes yet for fear I might lose more self than I can afford.

Feminist postructuralists (e.g., Britzman, 1995; Butler, 1993; Jackson & Mazzei, 2008; Lather, 1991b, 2007) question whether the phenomenological paradigm, the interpretivist epistemology, can present a coherent, explanatory subject without confrontation of power plays in the non-innocent game of interpretation. What are the limits of my own knowledge, and how might I interrogate the power plays in interpretation without telling my own story? Within those limitations, I can only experience Derrida's artistic surprise: "Whatever precautions you take so the photograph will look like this or that, there comes a moment when the photograph surprises you. It is the other's gaze that wins out and decides" (Derrida, 1995). So it is through the gaze of Other that I move.

NO FIXED TRUTHS OUT THERE

Playwright Harold Pinter (2005) discussed notions of truth in his Nobel acceptance speech, and I find his words useful here:

> Truth . . . is forever elusive. You never quite find it but the search for it is compulsive. The search is clearly what drives the endeavour. The search is your task. More often than not you stumble upon the truth in the dark, colliding with it or just glimpsing an image or a shape which seems to correspond to the truth, often without realizing that you have done so. But the real truth is that there never is any such thing as one truth to be found. . . . There are many. These truths

challenge each other, recoil from each other, reflect each other, ignore each other, tease each other, are blind to each other. Sometimes you feel you have the truth of a moment in your hand, then it slips through your fingers and is lost.

At the heart of this, I am still trying to figure out what teaching and learning are. What curriculum is. I hoped that by talking with some who have spent more than half of their lives in the work that I might move closer to knowing. What I found is that when asked, these teachers told stories. Perhaps they do not name teaching and learning because they cannot name teaching and learning. Perhaps they can only grasp at their contextualized memories, those times when they thought, "It's working!" And perhaps those memories are performative and constative, making them stronger and more resilient with each telling. Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005) bends language to describe that decomposition: "It is in the inaccessible-through-cognition-or-awareness events of mind/brain and body that I will locate the experience of the learning self as a self not in compliance but *in transition* and *in motion* toward previous unknown ways of thinking and being in the world" (p. 16). Now, I have language for something I have always felt: I am experiencing a "confrontation with the impossibility of teaching". That confrontation creates tensions among my practical understandings of teaching, the world of sensations that I can recall from my time in the classroom (the gut-feelings that learning is/is not happening)—the realization that "(p)edagogy's space is a space that the learning self must simultaneously read and write, and this means that pedagogical pivot places must turn around an *empty center*—a center both filled and vacated by a teacher who is present but whose supposed superiority 'ceases to be relevant to the matters at hand'" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 81). Which brings me back to Deleuze's broad scan and the ontic notion of unbounded space within unfixed time.

I set out to study veteran teachers, teachers who have lived experiences before and through the Standards Era. Why? In my professional life, I have the opportunity to work

with groups of teachers with broadly varying experiences—teachers in their first years of the profession, teachers who have entered teaching as a second career, and teachers with any number of years of practice under their belts. I also work with administrators—school and district—who seem to rely on their accomplished, seasoned veterans to take on much of the heavy lifting of curriculum work, while lavishing attentive care to early-career professionals. While there are certainly teachers out there who suffered the ravages of the Standards Era—and left the profession, or have disengaged, or are embittered—the four teachers within this project approach their work with a measure of joy and engagement not evident to me in the research of the field. And it seemed to me that a study of these women might serve multiple purposes: The findings might inform the field, the findings might be meaningful to early-career or pre-service teachers, and the process of engaging in a knowledge project might be an opportunity to tend and attend to veteran teachers through the good will of portraiture.

I have returned once again to the petroglyphs hidden in the rocky canyons of southwestern Colorado. The portraits here are pecked and painted and smoked into the walls of the canyon, and my analysis, much like the work of the cartographers and geographers and photographers with those ancient cave paintings, is just as suspect and dangerous. If you squint and imagine, you might find that these portraits—photographs of chalk outlines over scribed glyphs—actually stir a recollection or an emotion or an idea. I will claim thoughtful work and tender care; I will claim careful methodological technologies; but I cannot claim Truth.

Appendix A: Interview Protocols

Initial Interview Protocol

1. Do you know any teachers who have been teaching for more than thirty years?
2. Can you describe for me her/his relationships within the faculty (i.e., how do other teachers regard her/him? How do administrators regard her/him?)
3. Might you be willing to introduce me to her/him?

Participant Interview Protocol

1. What is teaching?
2. Think about your decision to become a teacher. What considerations did you make? What factors informed that decision?
3. What did you imagine teaching to be?
4. What aspects of this profession caught your attention?
5. Think about the full course of your career. How many years have you taught? What grades? What courses? What content?
6. What sorts of similarities and differences have you noticed between your original imaginings of teaching and the realities of your years of professional practice?
7. When you think about the full span of your career, are there instances you can remember that were pivotal to you as a teacher? Are there moments when your relationship to your profession changed?
8. Tell me about one of those moments of change.
9. What might that first-year-teacher version of you think about you as a teacher now?
10. When you introduce yourself to a new acquaintance, one who is not in the education professions, what do you say about your work?
11. What kinds of changes have you noticed in our culture through your career? In the ways our profession is represented?

References

Anagnostopoulos, D., & Rutledge, S. (2007). Making sense of school sanctioning policies in urban high schools: Charting the depth and drift of school and classroom change. *Teachers College Record, 109*(5), 1261-1302.

Andrews, D., & Lewis, M. (2007). Transforming practice from within: The power of the professional learning community. In L. Stoll & K. Seashore Lewis (Eds.), *Professional learning communities: Divergence, depth and dilemmas* (pp. 132-147). New York City, NY: McGraw Hill Open University Press.

Apple, Michael W. (1979). *Ideology and curriculum*. Boston, MA: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Apple, Michael W. (1995). *Education and power* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Apple, Michael W. (1996). *Cultural politics and education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Argyris, C., & Schon, Donald A. (1996). *Organizational learning* (2nd ed.). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Atkinson, Rowland, & Flint, John. (2001). Accessing hidden and hard-to-reach populations: Snowball research strategies. *Social Research Update*(33).

Au, Wayne. (2007). High-stakes testing and curricular control: A qualitative metasynthesis. *Educational Researcher, 36*(5), 258-267.

Au, Wayne. (2010). The idiocy of policy: The anti-democratic curriculum of high-stakes testing. *Critical Education, 1*(1), 1-15. http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/journal/index.php/criticaled/issue/v1n1

Baker, E. L., Barton, P. E., Darling-Hammond, L., Haertel, E., Ladd, H. F., Linn, R. L., . . . Shepard, L. A. (2010). Problems with the use of student test scores to evaluate teachers: Economic Policy Institute.

Behar, Ruth. (1996). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*, 107-128.

Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R., & Tarule, J. M. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Beltman, Susan, Mansfield, Caroline, & Price, Anne. (2011). Thriving not just surviving: A review of research on teacher resilience. *Educational Research Review, 6*, 185-207.

Bernstein, Basil. (1975). *Class, codes and control: Towards a theory of educational transmissions* (Vol. 3). London: Routledge.

Bhabha, Homi K. (Ed.). (1990). *Nation and narration*. London: Routledge.

Biernacki, Patrick, & Waldorf, Dan. (1981). Snowball sampling: Problems and techniques of chain referral sampling. *Sociological Methods & Research, 10*(2), 141-163.

Bobek, B. L. (2002). Teacher resilience: A key to career longevity. *Clearing House, 75*(4), 202-205.

Boler, M. (1997). Disciplined emotions: Philosophies of educated feelings. *Educational Theory, 47*, 203-227.

Britzman, Deborah P. (1992). The terrible problem of knowing thyself: Toward a poststructuralist account of teacher identity. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 9*, 23-46.

Britzman, Deborah P. (1995). The question of belief: Writing poststructural ethnography. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 8*(3), 233-242.

Britzman, Deborah P. (2003). *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach* (Revised ed.). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Bruner, Jerome. (1986). *Actual minds, possible words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, Jerome. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brunetti, G. J. (2006). Resilience uner fire: Prespectives on teh work of experienced, inner city high school teachers in the United States. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 22*(7), 812-825.

Bryk, A. S., & Driscoll, M. E. (1988). *The school as community: Theoretical foundations, contextual influences, and consequences for students and teachers*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, National Center for Effective Secondary Schools.

Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2003). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership, 60*(6), 40-44.

Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P., Kerbow, D., Rollow, S., & Easton, J. (1998). *Charting Chicago school reform*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Bushaw, William J., & Lopez, Shane J. (2011). Betting on teachers: The 43rd annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools. *Kappan Magazine, 93*(1), 9-26.

Butler, Judith. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of "sex"*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Calderhead, J. (1995). Teachers: Beliefs and knowledge. In D. C. Berliner & R. C. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of Educational Psychology*. New York City, NY: Simon &Schuster, Macmillan.

Carter, K. (1993). The place of story in the study of teaching and teacher education. *Educational Researcher, 22*(5-12).

Cary, Lisa J. (1999). Unexpected stories: Life history and the limits of representation. *Qualitative Inquiry, 5*(3), 411-427.

Cary, Lisa J. (2006a). *Curriculum spaces: Discourse, postmodern theory and educational research* (Vol. 16). New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Cary, Lisa J. (2006b). From currere to curriculum spaces: Bringing together curriculum theory and educational research. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy, 3*(2), 148-167.

Castro, A. J., Kelly, J., & Shih, M. (2009). Resilience strategies for new teachers in higih-needs areas. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(3), 622-629.

Cisneros, Sandra. (1991). Eleven *Woman Hollering Creek and other stories*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Clandinin, D. Jean. (1985). Personal practical knowledge: A study of teachers' classroom images. *Curriculum Inquiry, 15*(4), 361-385.

Clandinin, D. Jean, & Connelly, F. M. (1995). *Teachers professional knowledge landscapes*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Clandinin, D. Jean, & Connelly, F. M. (1998). Stories to live by: Narrative understandings of school reform. *Curriculum Inquiry, 28*, 149-164.

Cochran-Smith, Marilyn, & Lytle, Susan L. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of Research in Education, 24*, 249-305.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2012). Retrieved February 12, 2012, from http://www.corestandards.org/

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. Jean. (1987). On narrative method, biography and narritive unities in the study of teaching. *The Journal of Educational Thought, 21*, 130-139.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. Jean. (1996). *Shaping a professional identity: Stories of educational practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Craig, Cheryl J., & Ross, Vicki. (2008). Cultivating the image of teachers as curriculum makers. In F. M. Connelly, M. F. He & J. Phillion (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of curriculum and instruction* (pp. 282-305). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Crotty, Michael. (2004). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1984). *Beyond the commission reports: The coming crisis in teaching.* Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Sykes, G. (Eds.). (1999). *Teaching as the learning profession*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Day, C. (2002). School reform and transitions in teacher professionalism and identity. *International Journal of Educational Research, 37*, 677-692.

Day, C. (2008). Committed for life? Variations in teachers' work, lives and effectiveness. *Journal of Eucational Change, 9*(3), 243-260.

Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2009). Veteran teachers: commitment, resilience and quality retention. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice, 15*(4), 441-457.

Day, C., & Leitch, R. (2001). Teachers' and teacher educators' lives: The role of emotion. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*(4), 403-415.

de Tocqueville, Alexis. (2003). *Democracy in America* (G. Bevan, Trans.). New York City, NY: Penguin Classics.

Dee, T. S., & Jacob, B. A. (2011). The impact of No Child Left Behind on student achievement. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 30*(3), 285-313.

Deleuze, Gilles. (1984). *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights.

Deleuze, Gilles. (1994). *Difference and repetition* (P. Patton, Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.

DeLissovoy, Noah. (2008). *Power, Crisis and Education for Liberation*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

DeLissovoy, Noah. (2010). Rethinking education and emancipation: being, teaching, and power. *Harvard Educational Review, 80*(2), 203-220.

DeLissovoy, Noah, & McLaren, P. (2003). Educational 'accountability' and the violence of capital: a Marxian reading. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(2), 131-143.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Derrida, Jacques. (1995). *Points . . . : Interviews 1974-1994*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.

Eco, Umberto. (2005). Inteview with Umberto Eco in *The Diane Rehm Show*. Washington, DC: WAMU.

Eddy, Elizbeth. (1969). *Becoming a teacher*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Eggleston, John. (1977). *The sociology of the school curriculum*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

. *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. (1965).

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, and reflexivity: Researcher as Subject. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Ellsworth, Elizabeth. (1989). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review, 59*(3), 297-324.

Ellsworth, Elizabeth. (1990). The question remains: How will you hold awareness of the limits of your knowledge? *Harvard Educational Review, 60*(3), 396-404.

Ellsworth, Elizabeth. (1997). *Teaching positions: Difference, pedagogy, and the power of address*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Ellsworth, Elizabeth. (2005). *Places of learning: Media, architecture, pedagogy*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Elmore, R. F. (2002). Bridging the gap between standards and achievement: The imperative for professional development in education. Washington, D. C.: The Albert Shanker Institute.

English, Fenwick W. (2000). A critical appraisal of Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's "Portraiture" as a method of educational research. *Educational Researcher, 29*(7), 21-26.

Erikson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 119-161). New York: McMillan.

Erlandson, D., Harris, E. L., Skipper, B. L., & Allen, S. D. (1993a). The process of inquiry: Some basic considerations. In D. Erlandson, E. L. Harris, B. L. Skipper & S. D. Allen (Eds.), *Doing naturalistic inquiry: A guide to methods* (pp. 20-41). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Erlandson, D., Harris, E. L., Skipper, B. L., & Allen, S. D. (1993b). Quality criteria for a naturalistic study. In D. Erlandson, E. L. Harris, B. L. Skipper & S. D. Allen (Eds.), *Doing naturalistic inquiry: A guide to methods* (pp. 131-162). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Errante, Antoinette. (2000). But sometimes you're not part of the story: Oral historires and ways of remembering and telling. *Educational Researcher, 29*(2), 16-27.

Fay, Brian. (1987). *Critical social science*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Featherstone, J. (1989). To make the spirit whole. *Harvard Educational Review, 59*, 367-378.

Fessler, Ralph, & Christensen, Judith. (1992). *The teacher career cycle: Undrestanding and guiding the professional development of teachers*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Fuss, D. (1989). *Essentially speaking: Feminism, nature & difference*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Gee, J. P. (1990). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer Press.

Gee, J. P. (2001). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of Research in Education, 25*, 99-125.

Geertz, Clifford. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York City, NY: Basic Books.

Geertz, Clifford. (1988). *Works and lives: The anthropologist as author*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Giroux, Henry A. (1997). *Pedagogy and the politics of hope*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Giroux, Henry A. (2008). *Against the terror of Neoliberalism: Politics beyond the age of greed*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.

Glickman, C., Gordon, S., & Ross-Gordon, J. (2001). *Supervision and instructional leadership: A developmental approach*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Golden, Arthur. (1997). *Memoirs of a geisha*. New York, NY: Knopf.

Goodman, Leo A. (1961). Snowball sampling. *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics, 32*(1), 148-170.

Goodson, Ivor F. (1992). On curriculum form: Notes toward a theory of curriculum. *Sociology of Education, 65*, 66-75.

Graham, Daniel W. (2011). Heraclitus. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2011 Edition)*. Retrieved June 28, 2013, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/heraclitus/>

Greene, Maxine. (1978a). *Landscapes and learning*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Greene, Maxine. (1978b). The matter of mystification: Teacher education in unquiet times. *Landscapes of Learning*, 53-73.

Greene, Maxine. (1985). Public education and the public space. *Kettering Review*(Fall), 55-60.

Greene, Maxine. (1994). Epistemology and educational research: The influence of recent approaches to knowledge. *Review of Research in Education, 20*, 423-464.

Grissmer, D., & Kirby, S. (1987). Teacher attrition: The uphill climb to staff the nation's schools. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

Grissmer, D., & Kirby, S. (1997). Teacher turnover and teacher quality. *Teachers College Record, 99*, 45-56.

Groves, P. (2002). "Doesn't it feel morbid in here?" High-stakes tesging and the widening of the equity gap. *Educational Foundations, 16*(2), 15-31.

Grumet, Madeleine R. (1988). *Bitter milk: Women and teaching*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Grumet, Madeleine R. (1993). The play of meanings in the art of teaching. *Theory into Practice, 32*(4), 204-209.

Gu, Q., & Day, C. (2007). Teachers' resilience. A necessary condition for effectiveness. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23*(l8), 1302-1316.

Habermas, Jurgen. (1971). *Knowledge and human interests* (J. J. Shapiro, Trans.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Hall, G., & Hord, S. (2001). *Implementing change: Patterns, principles, and potholes*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, P. (1996). Reassessing the principal's role in school effectiveness: A review of empirical research, 1980-1995. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 32*(1), 5-44.

Hamilton, Laura S., Stecher, Brian M., Marsh, J. A., McCombs, J. S., Robyn, A., Russell, J. , & Barney, H. (2007). Standards-based accountability under No Child Left Behind: Experiences of teachers and administrators in three states. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Hannaway, J., & Hamilton, Laura S. (2008). Performance-based accountability policies: Implications for school and classroom practices. Washington, DC: Urban Institute RAND.

Hargreaves, A. (1998a). The emotional politics of teaching and teacher development: with implications for educational leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 1*(4), 315-336.

Hargreaves, A. (1998b). The emotions of teaching and educational change. In A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan & D. Hopkins (Eds.), *International Handbook of Educational Change* (pp. 558-575). London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Hargreaves, A. (2001). The emotional geographies of teaching. *Teachers' College Record, 103*(6), 1056-1080.

Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. (2009). *The fourth way: The inspiring future for educational change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Henderson, N., & Milstein, M. (2003). *Resilience in schools: Making it happen for students and educators*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Heubert, J. P., & Hauser, R. M. (Eds.). (1999). *High stakes: Testing for tracking, promotion, and graduation*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Heyns, B. (1988). Educational defectors: A first look at teacher attrition in the NLS-72. *Educational Researcher, 17*, 24-32.

Hodgson, Godfrey. (2009). *The myth of American exceptionalism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Holland, D., Lachicotte, W., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*.

Howard, S., & Johnson, B. (2004). Resilient teachers: Resisting stress and burnout. *Social Psychology of Education, 7*(4), 399-420.

Huberman, A., & Miles, M. (1983). Drawing valid meaning from qualitative data: Some techniques of data reduction and display. *Quality and Quantity, 17*(281-229).

Huberman, Michael. (1989). The professional life cycle of teachers. *Teachers College Record, 91*(1), 31-57.

Huberman, Michael. (1993). *The lives of teachers.* London: Cassell.

Huebner, Dwayne E. (1999a). Curricular language and classroom meanings. In V. Hillis (Ed.), *The lure of the transcendent: Collected essays by Dwayne E. Huebner*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.

Huebner, Dwayne E. (1999b). *The lure of the transcendent*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Illich, Ivan. (1971). *Deschooling society*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Ingersoll, Richard M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(3), 499-534.

Jackson, Alecia Y., & Mazzei, Lisa A. (2008). Experience and "I" in autoethnography. *International Review of Qualitative Research, 1*(3), 299-218.

Johnson, J., Skrla, L., & Scheurich, J. (2000). Equity-driven, achievement-focused school districts: A report on systemic school success in four Texas school districts service diverse student populations. Austin, TX: The Charles A. Dana Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

Johnson, Mark. (1984). Teacher thinking: A study of *Practical Knowledge* by Freema Elbaz. *Curriculum Inquiry, 14*(4), 465-468.

Kennedy, Mary M. (2010). Attribution error and the quest for teacher quality. *Educational Researcher, 39*(8), 591-598.

Kerbey, A. P. (1991). *Narrative and the self*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Kissell, Margo Rutledge. (2012). Teachers at low-scoring schools to take new test. Retrieved March 9, 2012, from http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/dayton-news/teachers-at-low-scoring-schools-to-take-new-test-1338882.html

Kitching, K., Morgan, M., & O'Leary, M. (2009). It's the little things: Exploring the importance of commonplace events for early-career teachers' motivation. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice, 15*(1), 43-58.

Klein, Stephen P., Hamilton, Laura S., McCaffrey, Daniel F., & Stecher, Brian M. (2000). What do test scores in Texas tell us? *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 8*, 49.

Kliebard, Herbert M. (1986). *The struggle for an American curriculum*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Kliebard, Herbert M. (1992). *Forging the American curriculum*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Kliebard, Herbert M. (2004). *The struggle for the American curriculum, 1893-1958* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.

Kober, N., Chudowsky, N., & Chudowsky, V. (2008). Has student achievement increased since 2002? State test score trends through 2006-07. Washington, DC: Center on Educational Policy.

Kristeva, Julia. (1980). *Desire in language* (T. Gora, A. Jardine & L. S. Roudiez, Trans. L. S. Roudiez Ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Kuhn, T. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*.

Kumashiro, Kevin K. (2004). *Against common sense: Teaching and learning toward social justice*. New York City, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.

Langer, Suzanne K. (1957). *Problems of art*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Langlois, L., & Starratt, R. J. (2002). *Ethical administrative practice within postmodern complexity: An analysis of the decision-making process of Quebec superintendents*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the University Council of Educational Administration, Pittsburgh, PA.

Lather, Patti. (1991a). Deconstructing/deconstructive inquiry: The politics of knowing and being known. *Educational Theory, 41*(2), 153-173.

Lather, Patti. (1991b). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Lather, Patti. (2007). *Getting lost: Feminist efforts toward a double(d) science*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lawrence-Lightfoot, Sara, & Davis, Jessica Hoffman. (1997). *The art and science of portraiture*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1999). The effects of transformational leadership on organizational conditions and student engagement with school. *Journal of Educational Administration, 38*(2), 112-129.

Leithwood, K., & Prestine, N. A. (2002). Unpacking the challenges of leadership at the school. In J. Murphy (Ed.), *One hundred first yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: Part I. The educational leadership challenge: Redefining leadership for the 21st century* (pp. 42-64). Chicago, IL: National Society for the Study of Education.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (1992). *Teachers: Their world and their work*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Lincoln, Yvonna S., & Denzin, Norman K. (2005). Epilogue: The eighth and ninth moments--qualitative research in/and the fractured future. In N. K. Denzin & Y.

S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research, 3rd edition* (pp. 1115-1126). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Linn, Robert (2000). Assessments and accountability. *Educational Researcher, 29*(2), 4-16.

Little, J. W. (1982). Norms of collegiality and experimentation: Workplace conditions of school success. *American Educational Research Journal, 19*(3), 325-340.

Little, J. W. (2000). *Emotionality and career commitment in the context of rational reforms*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Little, J. W. (2003). Inside teacher community: Representations of classroom practice. *Teachers College Record, 105*(6), 913-945.

Loewenberg Ball, Deborah. (2011). The cost of education wars. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from Huffington Post website: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/Deborah Loewenberg Ball/the-cost-of-education-wars.htm

Lortie, Dan C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Loucks-Horsley, S., Love, N., Stiles, K. E., Mundry, S., & Hewson, P. W. (2003). *Designing professional development for teachers of science and mathematics* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Louis, K., Marks, Helen M., & Kruse, S. (1996). Teachers' professional community in restructuring schools. *American Educational Research Journal, 33*(4), 757-798.

Lyotard, Jean Francois. (1991). *The inhuman: Reflections on time*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Malloy, W. W., & Allen, T. (2007). Teacher retention in a teacher resilience-building rural school. *Rural Educator, 28*(2), 19-27.

Mansfield, Caroline, Beltman, Susan, Price, Anne, & McConney, Andrew. (2012). "Don't sweat the small stuff:" Understanding teacher resilience at the chalkface. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*, 357-367.

Marks, Helen M., Louis, Karen S., & Printy, Susan M. (2000). The capacity for organizational learning: Implications for pedagogical quality and student achievement. In K. Leithwood (Ed.), *Understanding Schools as Intelligent Systems*. Stamford, CT: Jai Press.

Marks, Helen M., & Printy, Susan M. (2003). Principal leadership and school performance: An integration of transformational and instructional leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 39*(3), 370-397.

Marshall, J. . (2009). Divided against ourselves: Standards, assessments, and adolescent literacy. In L. Christenbury, R. Bomer & P. Smagorinsky (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent literacy research* (pp. 113-125). New York City, NY: Guildford.

Masten, A., Best, K., & Garmezy, N. (1990). Resilience and development: Contributions from the study of children who overcome adversity. *Development and Psychopathology, 2*, 425-444.

McAdams, D. P. (1993). *The stories we live by: Personal myths and the making of the self*. New York, NY: Morrow.

McNeil, Linda. (2000). *Contradictions of school reform: Educational costs of standardized testing*. New York City, NY: Routledge.

Meister, Denise G., & Ahrens, Patricia. (2011). Resisting plateauing: Four veteran teachers' stories. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*, 770-778.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968). *The visible and the invisible* (A. Lingis, Trans.). Evanston, IN: Northwestern University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2004). The visible and the invisible: The intertwining - the chiasm. In T. Baldwin (Ed.), *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic writings* (pp. 247-257). London: Routledge.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Meyer, J. W. (1970). The charter: Conditions of diffuse socialization in schools. In W. R. Scott (Ed.), *Social procresses and social structure*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Miller, Janet L. (1990). *Creating spaces and finding voices*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Miller, Janet L. (2005). *Sounds of silence breaking: Women, autobiography, and curriculum* (Vol. 1). New York City, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Mishler, E. (2000). *Storylines: Craftartists' narratives of identity.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Murnane, R. (1987). Understanding teacher attrition. *Harvard Educational Review, 57*(2), 177-182.

Murnane, R., Singer, J., & Willett, J. (1988). The career paths of teachers: Implications for teacher supply and methodological lessons for research. *Educational Researcher, 17*(5), 22-30.

National Academy of Sciences. (1987). Toward understanding teacher supply and demand. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (1997). Doing what matters most: Investing in quality teaching. New York, NY: NCTAF.

Neuman, M. (1996). Collecting ourselves at the end of the century. In C. Ellis & A. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing*. London: Alta Mira Press.

Nias, J. (1989). *Primary teachers talking: A study of teaching as work*. London: Routledge.

Nias, J. (1993). Changing times, changing identities: Grieving for a lost self. In R. G. Burgess (Ed.), *Education research and evaluation: For policy or practice?* (pp. 139-156). London: Falmer Press.

Nias, J. (1996). Thinking about feeling: The emotions in teaching. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 26*(3), 293-306.

Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Noy, Chaim. (2008). Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research. *Social Research Methodology, 11*(4), 327-344.

Olsen, B. (2008). *Teaching what they learn, learning what they live.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pease, Donald E. (2007). Exceptionalism. In B. Burgett & G. Hendler (Eds.), *Keywords for American cultural studies* (pp. 108-112). New York City, NY: New York University Press.

Pinar, William F. (1975). *The method of currere*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, Washington, DC.

Pinar, William F. (2004). *What Is Curriculum Theory?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Pinar, William F., & Grumet, Madeleine R. (1976). *Toward a poor curriculum*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

Pinar, William F., Reynolds, William M., Slattery, Patrick, & Taubman, Peter M. (2004). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contempporary curriculum discourses*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Pinter, Harold. (2005). Nobel Lecture: Art, truth and politics. Retrieved from Nobel Prize website: http://nobelprize.org/literature/laureates/2005/pinter-lecture-e.html

Plank, Stephen B., & Condliffe, Barbara Falk. (2013). Pressures of the season: An examination of classroom quality and high-stakes accountability. *American Educational Research Journal, 50*(5), 1152-1182.

Polanyi, Michael. (1958). *Personal knowledge. Towards a post critical philosophy*. London: Routledge.

Porter, Andrew, McMaken, Jennifer, Hwang, Jun, & Yang, Rui. (2011). Common Core Standards: The new US intended curriculum. *Educational Researcher, 40*(3), 103-116.

Printy, Susan M., & Marks, Helen M. (2003). Communities of practice and teacher quality. In W. Hoy & C. Miskel (Eds.), *Educational Administration, Policy, & Reform: Research and Measurement* (Vol. 3). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Ravitch, D. (2010). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and choice are undermining education*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Reeves, Douglas B. (2004). *Accountability for learning: How teachers and school leaders can take charge*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Retzinger, Suzanne M. (1991). *Violent emotions: Shame and rage in marital quarrels*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Reynolds, C. (1996). Cultural scripts for teachers: Identities and their relation to workplace landscapes. In M. Kompf, W. R. Bond, D. Dworet & R. T. Boak (Eds.), *Changing research and practice: Teachers' professionalism, identities and knowledge* (pp. 69-77). London, Washington, DC: The Falmer Press.

Rich, Adrienne. (1973). *Diving into the wreck: Poems 1971-1972*. New York City, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Rowan, B. (1996). Standards as incentives for instructional reform. In S. Furhman & J. A. O'Day (Eds.), *Rewards and reform: Creating educational incentives that work* (pp. 195-225). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Said, Edward. (1985). *Beginnings: Intention and method*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Said, Edward W. (1993). *Culture and imperialism*. New York, NY: Vintage.

Sammons, P., Day, C., Kington, A., Gu, Q., Stobart, G., & Smees, R. (2007). Exploring variations in teachers' work, lives, and their effects on pupils: Key findings and implications from a longitudinal mixed-method study. *British Educational Research Journal, 33*(3), 681-701.

Schmoker, M. (2006). *Results now: How we can achieve unprecedented improvements in teaching and learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Schmoker, Mike, & Allington, Richard. (2007). The gift of bleak research: How the Pianta classroom study can help schools improve immediately. *Education Week, 26*(37).

Schon, Donald A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action.* US: Basic Books, Inc.

Schon, Donald A. (2001). The crisis of professional knowledge and the pursuit of an epistemology of practice. In J. Raven & J. Stephenson (Eds.), *Competence in the learning society*. New York City, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Schwab, Joseph J. (1969). The practical: A language for curriculum. *School Review, 78*, 1-23.

Scott, C., & Dinham, S. (2008). Born not made: The nativist myth and teachers' thinking. *Teacher Development, 12*(2), 115-124.

Sfard, A., & Prusak, A. (2005). Telling identities: In search of an analytic tool for investigating learning as a culturally shaped activity. *Educational Researcher, 34*(4), 14-22.

Shulman, Lee. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review, 57*(1), 161-182.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. New York, NY: Room 400.

Snowden, David. (2002). Complex acts of knowing: Paradox and descriptive self-awareness. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 6*(2), 100-111.

Stake, Robert E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Stedman, Lawrence C. (2011). Why the standards movement failed: An educational and political diagnosis of its failure and the implications for school reform. *Critical Education,* *2*(1), 1-20. http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/journal/index.php/criticaled/issue/view134

Steiner, George. (1974). Books: *The Lost Garden*. *The New Yorker*, 100-108.

Sykes, Gary. (1990). Fostering teacher professionalism in schools. In R. F. Elmore (Ed.), *Restructuring schools: The next generation of school reform* (pp. 59-96). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Tait, M. (2008). Resilience as a contributor tonovice teacher success, commitment, and retention. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 35*(4), 57-75.

Taubman, Peter M. (2009). *Teaching by numbers: Deconstructing the discourse of standards and accountability in education*. New York City, NY: Routledge.

Trinh, Mihn-Ha. (1992). *Framer framed*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

Valenzuela, Angela. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Valenzuela, Angela (Ed.). (2004). *Leaving children behind: How "Texas-style" accountability fails Latino youth*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

van de Vall, Renee. (2002). *A Companion to Art Theory*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Van Meter, K. (1990). Methodological and design issues: Techniques for assessing the representatives of snowball samples. *NIDA Research Monograph*, 31-43.

Visweswaran, Kamala. (1994). *Fictions of feminist ethnography*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Waller, Willard. (1961). *The sociology of teaching*. New York City, NY: Russell and Russell.

Walton, Kendall. (1990). *Mimesis as make-believe: On the foundations of the representation arts*. London, UK: Harvard University Press.

Wambura Ngunjiri, Faith. (2007). Painting a counter-narrative of African womanhood: Reflections on how my research transformed me. *Journal of Research Practice, 3*(1), M4.

Weis, Lois, & Fine, Michelle (Eds.). (2005). *Beyond silenced voices: Class, race, and gender in United States schools, revised edition*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

West, M. (2007). Testing, learning and teaching: The effects of test-based accountability on student achievement and instructional time in core academic subjects. In C. F. Finn & D. Ravitch (Eds.), *Beyond basics: Achieving a liberal education for all children* (pp. 46-62). Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute.

Wise, Arthur. (1979). *Legislated learning: The bureaucratization of the American classroom*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Wong, M., Cook, T. D., & Steiner, P. M. (2009). No Child Left Behind: An interim evaluation of its effects on learning using two interrupted time series each with its own non-equivalent comparison series (W-09-11). Evanston, IL: Institute for Policy Research.

Wright, William Aldis (Ed.). (1936). *The complete works of William Shakespeare*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc.

Yin, R. (1989). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

York-Barr, J., Sommers, W. A., Ghere, G. S., & Montie, J. (2006). *Reflective practice to improve schools: An action guide for educators* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Young, Marilyn. (2005). *The new American empire: A 21st century teach-in on U.S. foreign policy*. New York City, NY: New Press.

Zeichner, K., & Liston, D. (1996). *Reflective teaching: An introduction*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Zembylas, Michalinos. (2003). Emotions and teacher identity: A poststructural perspective. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice, 9*(3), 213-238.

Zembylas, Michalinos. (2004). The emotional characteristics of teaching: An ethnographic study of one teacher. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*, 185-201.

Zembylas, Michalinos. (2005). Beyond teacher cognition and teacher beliefs: The value of the ethnography of emotions in teaching. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 18*(4), 465-487.

Zembylas, Michalinos. (2007). Emotional ecology: The intersection of emotional knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23*, 355-367.

Zinn, Howard. (1980). *A people's history of the United States: 1492 to present*. New York City, NY: HarperCollins.