HARMONIC CONVERGENCE: PARALLEL STORIES OF

A NOVICE TEACHER AND A NOVICE RESEARCHER

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Gayle Allene Curtis

May, 2013

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Abstract

In the United States, the issue of teacher attrition and retention is
particularly critical among early-career teachers. While the overall teacher attrition
rate is at 8.0 percent (Keigher, 2010, p. 3), an estimated 46 percent (Ingersoll, 2003)
of teachers leave education within the first five years of entering the profession.
Over 10 percent of new teachers leave the profession after only one year of teaching
and another 12 percent after the second (Kaiser, 2011, p. 3). High teacher attrition
carries with it substantial financial and instructional costs as schools are forced to
continuously hire new staff (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005), and students
potentially suffer a learning deficit from receiving instruction from inexperienced
teachers year after year (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004).

This narrative inquiry centers on the first- and third-year experiences of a
high-school history teacher in an inner-city school serving a high-minority, high-
poverty student population. It explores the ways in which her situated experiences,
personal motivations, beliefs on education, personal practical knowledge (Connelly
& Clandinin, 1988), relationships, and support systems contributed to her
persistence in education. Novice teacher stories were paired with novice researcher
reflections to provide insights into the processes of narrative inquiry (Clandinin &
Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor, &Murray Orr, 2007) as teacher and researcher
moved together through the inquiry. Utilizing the narrative representational forms

of telling stories (Craig, 1997) and parallel stories (Craig, 1999), teacher and researcher concurrent experiences were presented in two collections of stories, like two movements in a musical composition. The metaphor of harmonic convergence provided a way of talking about the concurrent teacher and researcher narratives paired in a single inquiry, while allowing consonance and dissonant resonances (Conle, 1996, 2000) to emerge. The parallel stories revealed challenges, growth, transformation, and the "intentionality and concreteness of everyday life" (Greene, 1995, p. 10) as educators and researchers.

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Invitation

Come.
Come and enter in,
into the telling and retelling of a story—
her story, your story,
mine, theirs, and
our story.

Come and join in,
into the knowing and re-knowing
we encounter quite profoundly
through the unwrapping and unfolding,
the unspooling and unrolling
of those stories—yours, and mine, and ours.

Come and lay your story next to mine.
Lay it out against the landscape;
lay your story next to hers, and his.
Lay your story next to our story.

Come and know where stories push and pull
and sometimes knot and even bind;
know where themes emerge, and threads align,
and know where ribbons intertwine.
Come.

Invitation by Gayle Curtis (see appendix A)

You are invited to participate in this narrative inquiry into the beginning

journeys of Sarah (pseudonym), a novice teacher, and Gayle, a novice researcher.

Come and take part in the telling and retelling of stories lived and then relived as

they were storied and restoried in harmonic renderings of a teacher's early-career

experiences and a researcher's entry into narrative inquiry. As a reader, a reflective

practitioner, or simply as an individual with a personal story, you are invited to lay

your story alongside those shared here. You are asked to reflect upon how these

stories might resonate with experiences in your personal journey or echo the familiar occurrences on the broader education landscape. Come and enter in.

Introduction to the Inquiry and the Metaphor

Harmonic convergence: Parallel stories of a novice teacher and a novice researcher is a narrative inquiry into the beginning experiences and persistence in education of a novice teacher paired with a beginning researcher's reflections of the inquiry.   This inquiry centered on the first- and third-year experiences of Sarah (pseudonym), a high school history teacher in an inner city school, and explored the ways in which her situated experiences, personal motivations, beliefs on education, personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), and support systems contributed to her sustainability as a teacher. Through sharing and examining her experiences thus far in education, the inquiry sought to illuminate the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in education.   The inquiry provided insights into how early-career teachers navigate the challenges of transitions into teaching and manage unexpected situations. Furthermore, it illuminated how novices become curriculum-makers, enact theory in practice, develop relationships with students and colleagues, and balance internal and external demands on their practice. As such, it brought forward possible reasons early-career teachers remain in the profession.

Drawing on the narrative representational forms of telling stories (Craig, 1997) and parallel stories (Craig, 1999, 2003), individual teacher narratives are re-presented and interpreted, and then followed by my researcher narratives of moving through the inquiry. Laying my novice researcher stories alongside Sarah's

novice teacher stories uncovered the challenges of becoming a narrative inquirer, revealing the varied, complex, and fluid processes of narrative inquiry. The transparency of my researcher experiences highlighted the ways in which Sarah's experiences resonated with my personal teacher narrative and developing researcher narrative. Like two movements within a musical composition, the parallel stories of novice teacher and novice researcher came together as a harmonic convergence within this inquiry.

The metaphor of harmonic convergence provided a way of talking about the concurrent teacher and researcher narratives paired in a single inquiry, while allowing consonances and dissonances to emerge naturally. It draws attention to the complementary stories of Sarah and me as we each set out in new career directions within the context of a single inquiry. In music, harmony is created when one or more notes ring out simultaneously throughout a score or composition (Benjamin, Horvit, & Nelson, 1986). Intervals between the notes create either the pleasant timbre of consonance or the tension-filled reverberation of dissonance. The juxtaposition and correlation of successive harmonies in consonance and dissonance express complexities in the score's chord progression and come together to create harmonic balance and unity. Harmonic qualities are further enhanced through the particular combination of different instrumental or vocal colors, such as the grouping of flute, cello, and oboe or that of soprano, tenor, and basso. The blending of distinct combinations adds richness and expressive variations to the score, enhancing the listening experience. When two musical genres are combined in one work, a musical convergence occurs, creating a new, integrated form.

Like distinct but harmonic melodies flowing through a musical score, the separate stories of novice teacher and novice researcher explored here moved concurrently in a parallel fashion through the context of school and this narrative inquiry. Taken separately, one journey is of a new teacher striving to enact theory in practice while managing the challenges of internal and external demands on her practice and endeavoring for continual improvement. The other is of a new researcher, exploring the intricacies of narrative inquiry while discovering what it means to be a narrative inquirer bringing her co-participants story to the foreground. Together, the journeys reflect harmonic counterparts, a harmonic convergence of sorts, of becoming and being the "best-loved self "(Schwab, 1954/1978, p. 124; see also Craig, 2011) as teacher and as researcher.

Coming to the Inquiry

Narrative Beginnings

Working closely with both novice and veteran teachers for almost twenty years has given me a great appreciation for the richness and diversity of the personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) that teachers bring to education. That is to say that each teacher brings a unique combination of professional training, teaching expertise, and personal experiences to his or her practice and school. Teachers are emotional and active beings whose intellect and feelings are inseparably expressed and present in their actions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Fenstermacher, 1994). Understanding the internal and external factors that influence teacher persistence will aid my efforts as I continue to work

with teachers and prepare pre-service teachers to enter teaching. As Schwab

(1954) reminds us,

> Education cannot . . . separate off the intellectual from feeling and action,
> whether in the interest of the one or of the other.   Training of the intellect
> must take place ("must" in the sense of "unavoidably") in a milieu of feelings,
> and express itself in actions . . . We may employ the emotional and active
> factors existent in student and teacher as means for intensifying and
> facilitating the process of intellectual education—or ignore them and suffer
> at the least a loss of them as effective aids, or possibly an alienation which
> places them in active opposition to our purposes. (p. 61)

The genesis of this study occurred in 2009 when changes in the education

landscape and personal interactions with teachers and parents weighed heavily on

my mind. Over the years, accountability-related tensions grew considerably as I

moved out of the classroom into administration and new, school accountability

mandates were enacted under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2002). Schools not

demonstrating expected student academic growth annually, and therefore not

meeting annual yearly progress (AYP) toward NCLB goals, are subject to federal and

state sanctions, such as reduced funding and possible school restructuring (NCLB,

2002). Value-added assessment systems (Sanders & Horn 1998; Sanders, 2000)

that track student academic growth over time further increased teacher

accountability through performance bonuses that connect student achievement

directly to teacher evaluations.

In 2006, I became the principal of Lamar PK-8 Montessori in the midst of a whole-school transition to Montessori instruction. Between 2004 and 2006, the school experienced an 88 percent teacher turnover due to the change, bringing many teachers from private schools into the public school system. In the process of these changes the Lamar's state accountability rating fell from Recognized to Academically Acceptable. By the 2008-2009 school-year, student achievement outcomes on state tests were linked to teachers' performance appraisals statewide and utilized in the district's value-added system (Sanders & Horn 1998; Sanders, 2000) in determining district awarded teacher bonuses. To track student academic progress toward state testing goals, the district required Academically Acceptable schools to administer periodic benchmark tests. The fact that benchmark exams followed a different scope and sequence than the district-approved Montessori curriculum we were implementing created a critical problem at Lamar. School and teacher compliance with testing requirements unintentionally imposed alterations to the curriculum-based scope and sequence of content objectives, in effect shifting the focus of instruction away from students and toward meeting district established expectations of student academic performance. In addition, periodic district strategy meetings with the regional superintendent necessitated pulling teachers out of the classroom. This environment of school-wide change and high expectations for academic excellence generated a great deal of tension in the school environment, seeding teacher dissatisfaction.

While as principal I did my utmost to curb the pressures flowing in from outside of our school, mounting accountability-related tensions were evident as

conversations progressively centered on test-related issues rather than on what was happening in the classroom. Teachers repeatedly complained about the loss of instructional time due to pre-testing and testing activities (i.e., benchmark testing, strategy meetings), especially those teachers who had to be pulled out of class to participate in district strategy meetings. Routinely, teachers expressed concern over increased district scrutiny of their teaching practices and pressures to assure that all students pass state accountability tests. When student scores were linked to teacher appraisals (Sanders & Horn, 1998; Sanders, 2000) grade level teams that once prized their collaborative actions began to snipe about who did or did not contribute to school accountability rankings. Veteran teachers who once offered to take on the most academically or behaviorally challenged students now balked at the possibility, citing the potential negative impact on classroom learning and performance. Parents also registered complaints around testing—their children exhibiting stress, the number of days devoted to testing, and the loss of instructional time resulting from benchmark tests, district exams, and state accountability tests. Alongside these teacher and parent grievances, my own concerns about the physical, emotional, and professional well-being of teachers working in the era of high-stakes accountability grew.

Wonderings and a Direction of Inquiry

While no one would argue the importance of student success, policies and practices inherent to high-stakes testing and accountability raised pertinent concerns about the emphasis on student test scores and the ways in which those scores were utilized to measure student learning, teacher effectiveness, and school

quality (Nichols, 2011; Ravitch, 2010; Dorn, 2007). Personal experiences led to initial wonderings about the current state of teachers, and to subsequent research into the "unintended consequences" (Amrein & Berliner, 2002, p. 9) of accountability. Each question sent me in a new direction of inquiry, resulting in a series of seemingly "attractive blind alleys" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 24; see also Schwab, 1960). As the information gathered from these various directions began to coalesce, however, my attention turned to research on teacher retention and attrition and the high number of teachers leaving the profession early in their career (Ingersoll, 2003; Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007; Keigher, 2010; Aud et al, 2011).

Entering into a new phase in my career as a teacher educator, I wondered about the implications of high early-career teacher attrition. I wondered what it meant to my continued work with teachers, to how I might work with pre-service teachers in the future, and to what veteran and novice teachers might need in regards to knowledge, skills, and support. More specifically, I wondered about early-career teachers, like Sarah, my participating teacher in this inquiry, who make a difference in student learning and hold fast to their education beliefs despite challenges, tensions, and external expectations. How are some teachers able to persevere through early-career experiences when so many others do not? Presuming all teachers experience challenges, what is different about the experiences of stayers versus leavers? What personal attributes or characteristics support persistence? Continued reflection and study motivated me to understand more about the experiences of early-career teachers, and the intrinsic and extrinsic

factors that influence their persistence in education. These personal experiences, wonderings, and ideas ultimately gave focus to my inquiry. Furthermore, they relate the process of coming to this narrative inquiry and serve to situate me, as researcher, within the context of the inquiry.

Introducing the Context of the Inquiry

The Broader Education Landscape

The education landscape in the United States (U.S.) is currently marked by high-stakes accountability and a crisis in teacher attrition and retention. Sparked by *A Nation at Risk* (ANAR) in 1983, the accountability era of education in the United States grabbed hold during the 1990's standards movement and later became embedded in education policy under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) (Ravitch, 2010). Associated mandates and policies increased expectations for student academic performance and instituted substantial consequences for underachievement. Concurrently, teacher attrition rates climbed steadily across the country, creating a crisis in retaining qualified, quality teachers (Kaiser, 2011; Keigher, 2010; Ingersoll, 2003).

With its overriding goal of attaining minimum proficiency in mathematics and reading for 100% of the nation's students by 2013 (NCLB, 2002), critics argue that NCLB policies resulted in significant "unintended and negative consequences" (Amrein & Berliner, 2002, p. 9). Former Assistant Secretary of Education and education historian, Diane Ravitch (2010), suggested that pressures to produce high student test scores shifted the focus of education away from the informed practices of teachers.

"In order to reconcile the consequences attached to high-stakes tests" (Amrein & Berliner, 2002, p.48) many teachers altered their classroom practices, particularly in urban or low-performing schools (Faulkner & Cook, 2006; Diamond & Spillane, 2004). These commonly include the explicit teaching of test taking strategies and routine use of test-like teaching instructional materials (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Dorn, 2007). Increased instructional time devoted to tested curriculum objectives often occurs at the expense of non-tested content areas, leading to a narrowing of the curriculum (Nichols, 2011; Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Dorn, 2007; Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Hamilton, Stecher, & Klein, 2002). Curriculum is further narrowed when instructional time is taken up with the administration of practice tests (Good, Heafner, Rock, O'Connor, Passe, Waring, & Byrd, 2010; Vogler et al, 2010).

The growing weight given to test scores under NCLB has also been criticized for the way in which test scores are utilized in making important decisions regarding the futures of students and teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ravitch, 2010). For students, passing state exams is a determining factor in grade promotion, entry into special programs, and high school graduation. In states and districts with value-added (VAA) systems, annual student growth rates based on test scores are linked to teacher performance and bonuses (Sanders & Horn, 1998; Sanders, 2000), augmenting accountability-related tensions and pressures on teachers' practices and impacting teacher persistence in education.

Over the past twenty-five years, however, teacher attrition and retention in the U.S. has become a critical issue with teacher turnover rates escalating from 5.6

percent in 1989 to 8.0 percent 2009 (Keigher, 2010, p. 3). Particularly significant is the high number of early-career teachers leaving the profession. The U.S. Department of Education 2011 survey (Kaiser, 2011) on teacher attrition and mobility reveals 10 percent of new teachers leave the profession after only one year of teaching and another 12 percent after the second (p.3; see also Aud et al., 2011). Ingersoll's (2003) analysis of school staffing problems indicates that an estimated 46 percent (p.16) of teachers leave within the first five years.

These statistics are reflected in the school district context of this research—a large, urban, and multicultural district situated in a major city in the southwestern U.S. District administered teacher exit surveys show that 19 percent of the district's teachers leave the profession after the first year of teaching and another 2 percent after the second (Terry, 2009, p. 1). Furthermore, nearly half of beginning teachers (47 percent) abandon their teaching careers by their fourth year (p. 1). Locally and nationally, teacher turnover further increases in urban schools characterized as low performing, high minority, and/or high poverty (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Attrition is also greater among teachers under the age of thirty (Aud et al., 2011; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005) and those in specialized areas such as mathematics, science, and special education (Ingersoll, 2003).

Teacher attrition is a pressing issue due to its financial and instructional costs. The Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE) (2005) estimates that teacher turnover carries a national financial cost of $2.2 billion annually (p. 1; see also Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). In high population states (i.e. California, Texas,

and New York) the cost to replace teachers exceeds $200 million each year (p. 4). In

Texas, for example, almost 20,000 teachers leave the profession annually resulting in

a yearly cost to school districts and schools of over $214,000,000 (AEE, p. 5). High

teacher turnover also impacts school stability, effective use of resources, curricular

consistency, and instructional quality (Shields et al., 2001), particularly in urban

districts where turnover rates are the highest (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007;

Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). This means that some

"schools are staffed disproportionately with inexperienced and often untrained

teachers" (Loeb & Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 48), potentially resulting in a learning

deficit when students receive instruction from inexperienced teachers year after

year (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; see also Rothstein, 2010; Darling-Hammond,

2000). Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson (2005) assert,

> Since there is general consensus that teaching effectiveness increases within
>
> at least the first few years of a teachers' career… schools that lose new
>
> teachers [and] replace them with other novices ensure that instruction, on
>
> average, will be persistently weak. (p. 11)

Teachers' reasons given for departure demonstrate personal, financial,

instructional, and organizational related motives. Those highlighted in research

include: low salaries, student discipline problems, lack of administrative support,

lack of teacher input in decision-making processes (Ingersoll & Perda, 2009), lack of

curricular guidance (Johnson et al., 2004), lack of parental support (Curtis, 2012)

accountability-related tensions (Curtis, 2012; Keigher, 2010; Hanushek, Kain, &

Rivkin, 2004; Stecher, 2002), and lack of teacher collaboration and networking

(Borman & Dowling, 2008). Research at the local level reflects similar findings, as evidenced in a 2009 teacher exit survey (Terry, 2009). The primary reasons most often associated with teacher departures centered on teachers feeling undervalued in the workplace (46.3 percent), lack of administrator support (45.2 percent), and overall working conditions and policies (43.9 percent) (p. 2-4). Other noteworthy factors in teacher turnover included lack of job security (10 percent), professional development opportunities (7.7 percent), and salary (5 percent).

Efforts to stem the rise of early-career departures have gained the most ground through new teacher induction and mentoring programs. New teachers who participate in mentoring programs are twice as likely to remain in teaching as new teacher who are not assigned mentors (Kaiser, 2011; Keigher, 2010; Orland-Barak & Klein, 2005). Despite these efforts, teacher attrition and retention remain a critical issue in the U.S.

The School Context of the Inquiry

Located in a major southwestern U.S. city, California High School is situated on the outskirts of one of the city's oldest and traditionally Hispanic communities, near a major commercial waterway, and in close proximity of three major petrochemical plants. Immediately surrounding the school are well-established, predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods filled mostly with wood-framed bungalows, small areas of mid-century brick homes, and rows of apartment complexes along major streets. Opened in 2000, California was built to ease overcrowding in a neighboring 74-year-old high school whose enrollment had swelled due to increased numbers of immigrant families to the area. Thirteen years after its

opening, the school retained its clean and polished appearance inside and out. Two-storied classroom wings and a sports center connect to open, sunlit common areas at the entry and cafeteria. Since its opening, annual district principal's meetings had been held in California's spacious auditorium. A teaching lab provided instructional setting options and classroom interactive whiteboards facilitated the integration of technology.

Serving over 2700 students Grades 9 through 12, California's student population was predominantly Hispanic (83.7 percent), with many students (82.7 percent) coming from economically challenged home situations (see Table 1). The school's Applied Sciences and Engineering Magnet program drew in students from across the city and its Gifted and Talented program provided students with additional academic opportunities. Of the total student population, 30.5 percent were enrolled in the Advanced Placement program, earning 'dual credit' high school and college credits.

Table 1 - California High School Demographics 2012				
Student Demographics			**School Characteristics**	
Enrollment	2746		**Program Enrollment:**	
Hispanic	81.7%		AP/IB	30.5%
African Am.	12.7%		GT	6.8%
White	1.6%		ESL	9.2%
Asian	3.3%		CATE	55.7%
Pacific Isl.	0.5%		**Additional Data:**	
Econ. Disadv.	82.7%		Attendance	91.9%
LEP	8.2%		Mobility	19.8%
At-risk	70.6%		Dropouts	12.2%

Overall the campus was rated Academically Acceptable by the state's education agency for the school year 2011-12, reflecting campus passing rates of 89 percent in reading, 87 percent in math, 82 percent in science, and 95 percent in social studies on the state's accountability test. Apart from improving the academic performance of its students, challenges at California include raising the student attendance rate of 91.9% as compared to 95.4% for the district, and decreasing the 19.8% mobility rate (20.2% in district) and 12.2% dropout rate (10.8% in district).

California High School is also characterized by a high percentage of novice or early-career teachers (see Table 2). Of the school's 134 teachers, nearly 41 percent have five years or less teaching experience and over 61 percent less than ten year experience. The average years of experience of California teachers is 10.1 as compared to the overall district average of 12.0.

Table 2 - California High School Teachers by Years of Experience					
Year	New	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	20 + Years
2010	16.0%	34.7%	16.0%	19.3%	14.0%
2011	10.0%	35.9%	17.2%	20.0%	16.4%
2012	5.2%	35.7%	20.2%	23.9%	15.0%

Introducing the Co-Participants

Co-participants in this study include Sarah, an early-career teacher, and me, the researcher. The purpose in selecting one primary participating teacher was to conduct an in-depth study of an individual's storied experiences. For convenience purposes, Sarah, my participating teacher in this narrative inquiry, was selected from a group of teachers enrolled in classes along with this researcher.

Sarah: A Novice Teacher

Sarah (pseudonym), the participating teacher in this study, hails from a rural community in the southwestern U.S. Known for its oil and timber rich natural resources, Sarah described the area in which she grew up as a "place that still wrestles with the ghosts of its past; a place where racial tensions simmer below the surface in towns that continue long held traditions of de facto segregation" (interview excerpt, February 2013). Her burgeoning high school interests in social studies, politics, and journalism shifted Sarah's sights and ambitions beyond the boundaries of her small community and into the completion of her Bachelor's degree in history and journalism. As a single parent confronted with providing for her family, she turned to teaching as a career, completing her graduate studies in secondary social studies education while working part-time as a substitute teacher. Finding the notion of living in a large city appealing, Sarah explained that she was drawn to "the culture, the diverse people, and greater opportunities for [her] education, career, and work" (interview excerpt, October, 2010) of an urban environment. It was not surprising then that when Sarah took her first teaching position, it was at a large, culturally diverse school in a major metropolitan area.

After completing her Master's degree, Sarah enrolled in a doctoral program at a local tier-one research university, pursuing her interests in social studies, urban education, social justice, and critical pedagogy.   That same year she secured her first full-time teaching position at California (pseudonym), a large inner city high school. According to No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) guidelines, she was considered a highly qualified teacher because she held a degree and state certification in history,

the academic subject she teaches. During her three years at California, Sarah has taught both regular and Advanced Placement (AP) history classes at multiple grade levels, however, in her third she taught only Grade 11 AP classes.

Gayle: A Novice Researcher

Growing up in the Pacific Northwest, my ties to the southwestern U.S. reach back to January 1, 1850 when my maternal great, great-grandparents and family migrated from the Deep South to the southwest. Life events brought me back to my mother's home state as a young adult, where I worked in the oil industry for a number of years before returning to school to complete a Bachelor's degree in bilingual education. The change in career direction was influenced by my involvement with local and international Hispanic communities while establishing friendships and developing fluency and literacy in Spanish. As friends shared their experiences of negotiating their way through life in a predominantly white-privileged and English dominant society, I, a white, middle-class woman, increasingly became a part of those experiences. Through those interactions I gained an understanding of what it means to be marginalized in the U.S. because of one's color, culture, language, and economic status. During this period, my interest grew in additive education that intellectually, culturally, and linguistically empowers students, leading me to complete a Bachelor's degree in bilingual education. As a first-year bilingual teacher, I continued on to a Master's degree in bilingual supervision and a principalship certification. At the time of this inquiry, I was completing my doctoral degree in education.

Over nearly two decades in education, I changed roles several times, moving from classroom teacher to program coordinator, from assistant principal to principal and now to doctoral student and researcher. My career as a bilingual teacher began in the mid-1990s during the era of site-based management and a growing accountability movement (Ravitch, 2010). In the reform era of the late 1990s, I moved out of the classroom to work more closely with teachers, parents, and partners. Reflective practices that began in the classroom were augmented with school portfolio work alongside other educators involved in school reform.

The school portfolio work engaged teachers, students, parents, and partners in the telling of our school instructional initiatives, campus activities, challenges, achievements, partnerships, and collaborations. They also became a reflective tool that informed campus decisions and influenced change. Brought together by professor and researcher Dr. Cheryl J. Craig, the Portfolio Group (Gray, 2008) was a safe space in which to share, reflect upon, and restory my experiences. It was a space of learning—the context in which I was introduced to narrative inquiry methodology and collaborated in action research, traveling journals, grant writing, and self-study. These experiences and knowledge gained through them continue to influence my work.

Experiences as a classroom bilingual teacher, program coordinator and campus administrator led to my present concentrated studies in curriculum and instruction. Working and collaborating with teachers, colleagues, and researchers over the years spurred my interest in narrative inquiry as a way to better understand both the complexities of teachers' situational experiences and the varied

influences on their classroom practices. Regardless of my role and responsibilities, I have always considered myself a teacher. So it is that as I enter into this narrative inquiry, I do so from the vantage point of a teacher and with teachers in mind.

Need for the Inquiry

"Teaching is becoming to some extent a career of 'movement in and out'" (Skilbeck & Connell, 2003, p. 32) as evidenced by the high numbers of teachers leaving the profession worldwide—in Canada (Fontaine, Kane, Duquette, & Savoie-Zajc, 2008), New Zealand (Post Primary Teacher Association, 2005), Finland (Webb, Vulliamy, Hämäläinen, Sarja, Kimonen, & Nevalainen, 2004) and the United States (U.S.) (Kaiser, 2011; Aud et al, 2011; Keigher, 2010). The critical issue of teacher attrition and retention carries with it steep financial costs to schools and districts (AEE, 2005) and potential education deficits in student learning (Rothstein, 2010; Loeb & Darling-Hammond, 2005; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Rockoff, 2004). This problem is exacerbated when nearly half of teachers depart within five years of entering teaching—a period in which the learning curve for a new teacher is the greatest (Ingersoll, 2003; see also Loeb & Darling-Hammond, 2005).

Research on teacher attrition and retention in the U.S. over the past decade has provided extensive quantitative data (Keigher, 2010; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Ingersoll, 2003; Stecher, 2002), but has yielded limited qualitative information. While there is extensive qualitative research on beginning teacher experiences, much of the literature focuses on specific aspects related to entry into education. Examples

related to beginning and early-career teacher experiences include: induction

programs and mentoring (Orland-Barak & Klein, 2005; Achinstein & Barrett, 2004),

attitudes/dispositions (Bullough, 2005), novice teacher challenges (He & Cooper,

2011; Piot, Kelchtermans, & Ballet, 2010; Ulvik, Smith, & Helleve, 2008; Romano &

Gibson, 2006), school culture (Roehrig, Kruse, & Kern, 2007; Kardos et al., 2001;

Gratch, 2001), specific content areas (Curtis, 2012), and student behavior

(Patterson, Roehrig, & Luft, 2003). Both quantitative and qualitative research on

teacher induction programs (Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Johnson, Berg, &

Donaldson, 2005) and mentoring (Kaiser, 2011; Keigher, 2010; Orland-Barak &

Klein, 2005) evidenced the positive impact of mentoring on increasing teacher

retention. A void exists, however, in regards to a comprehensive examination of

early-career teacher experiences and the intrinsic and extrinsic influences that

contribute to teacher retention. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD) asserts that "a need exists for further more detailed study on

the movement in and out of teaching, particularly by teachers in the younger age

cohorts" (Skilbeck & Connell, 2003, p. 32-33).

Significance of the Inquiry

The significance of this inquiry lies in its social, practical, and personal

justifications. From a social perspective, this study addressed the high rate of early-

career teacher attrition by gaining insights into early-career teacher experiences

and the factors that influence their decisions to remain in the profession. More

specifically, the inquiry filled a research void related to intrinsic and extrinsic

factors promoting teacher persistence. Insights gained potentially inform policy

makers and districts, thereby aiding efforts to retain teachers. At the level of teacher practice, new knowledge and understanding provided information to guide the actions of school administrators, mentors, and colleagues in supporting and working with novice teachers during the critical first years of teaching. From a personal perspective, insights gained will aid my future work with teachers and enable me, from a pragmatic viewpoint, to better prepare teacher candidates for classrooms and to act upon factors that promote teacher longevity.

In relation to the inclusion of researcher reflections, this inquiry provided insights into the procedures and processes of narrative research. It illuminated contrasts between narrative inquiry and other formalistic methods of research. Researcher reflections highlighted challenges of becoming a narrative inquirer, lending a practical importance to the inquiry. From a personal perspective, purposeful reflections became a tool through which I could construct meaning of my experiences of becoming a narrative inquirer.

Purpose of the Inquiry

Grumet (1987) reminds us of the personal and practical nature of teachers' storied lives and the constructed knowledge held therein that are somewhat elusive and frequently hidden. She explains,

> Teacher personal knowledge is constituted by the stories about experience we usually keep to ourselves, and practical knowledge by the stories that are never, or rarely related, but provide, nevertheless the structure for the improvisations that we call coping, problem-solving, action. (p. 322)

Utilizing narrative methodology, this inquiry sought to access teacher personal and practical knowledge through the telling and retelling of teacher stories lived and relived (Craig, 1997; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Its primary aim was to understand the experiences of early-career teachers that influence their decisions to remain in the profession, and specifically, the intrinsic and extrinsic factors prompting such decisions. The inquiry centered on the following questions:

- In what ways do the experiences of early-career teachers influence their decisions to remain in the profession?

- How do internal factors (e.g., emotions, dispositions, self-efficacy, and identity) shape early-career teachers' decisions to stay in teaching?

- In what ways do external factors (e.g., standards, expectations, responsibilities, and professional development) affect those decisions?

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

Introduction
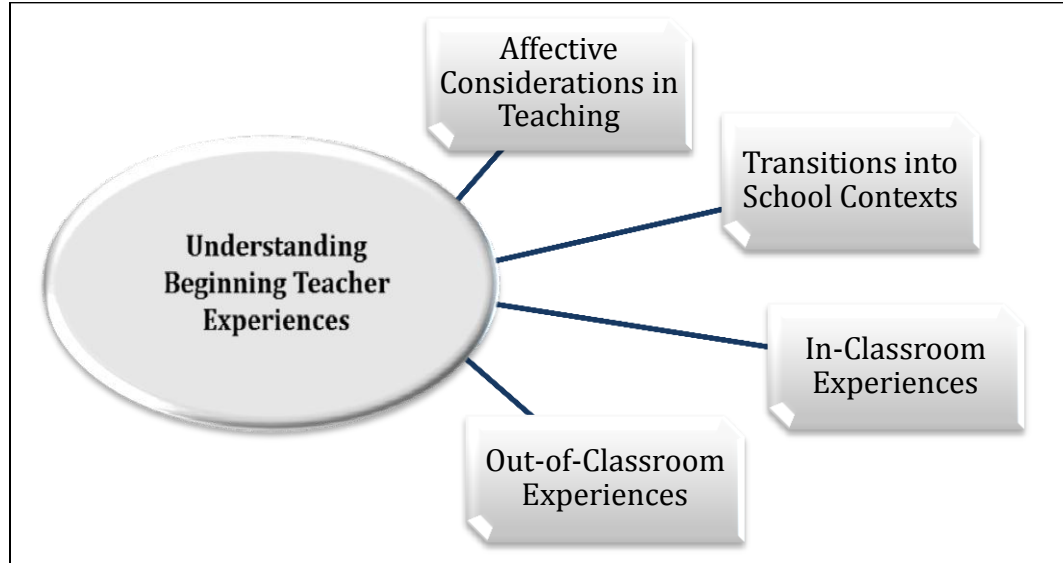
Figure 1 – Themes of inquiry related to early-career teacher experiences

A Narrative Approach

This literature review lays the groundwork for inquiring into the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence early-career teachers' decisions to remain in teaching (see Figure 1). It is approached from a narrative perspective of teacher experience, with Dewey's (1938/1997) view of education as experience that is "individually continuous and socially interactive" (Pembrook & Craig, 2009, p. 787) and Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) notion of teachers living storied lives (contextualized, relational, and temporal) creating the underpinnings of the investigation. The inquiry also draws on Clandinin and Connelly's conceptualizations of teachers' personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin,

1988, 1999) and the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990) which link respectively to the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of teaching.

Personal practical knowledge: Intrinsic aspects of teaching. Building on Dewey's view of education as experience, Clandinin and Connelly augmented the narrative discourse of teaching with their conceptualizations of teacher knowledge as personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1999; see also Elbaz-Luwisch, 2010). The authors suggest that teacher knowledge is not "something given to people, but [is] something narratively embodied in how a person stands in the world. Knowledge as attribute can be given; knowledge as narrative cannot. The latter needs to be experienced in context" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 137). In this narrative view, "our teaching practices [are] expressions of personal practical knowledge…the experiential knowledge that [is] embodied in us as persons and [is] enacted in our classroom practices and in our lives" (Clandinin, 1993, p. 1). Personal practical knowledge, then, can be considered as an internal or intrinsic feature that teachers hold and bring to their practice. The concept of personal practical knowledge "allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons" (p. 25) in a way that uniquely captures the ever-changing quality of teacher knowledge as it is shaped and reshaped by situations, relationships, and contexts over time.

Professional knowledge landscape: Extrinsic aspects of teaching. Clandinin and Connelly's (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995, 1997; Clandinin & Connelly, 1996) notion of a professional knowledge landscape situates teachers' experience and personal practical knowledge within a multi-layered professional setting,

reflecting the varied professional spaces that teachers navigate in and out of the

classroom daily. The professional knowledge landscape is situated "at the interface

of theory and practice in teacher's lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995, p. 4), the place

"where teachers' personal practical knowledge and professional knowledge meet"

(Pembrook & Craig, 2009, p. 788). Clandinin and Connelly (Connelly & Clandinin,

1995) tell us that:

> A landscape metaphor…allows us to talk about space, place, and time.
>
> Furthermore, it has a sense of expensiveness and the possibility of being
>
> filled with diverse people, things, and events in different relationships.
>
> Understanding professional knowledge as comprising a landscape calls for a
>
> notion of professional knowledge as composed of a wide variety of
>
> components and influenced by a wide variety of people, places, and things.
>
> Because we see the professional knowledge landscape as composed of
>
> relationships among people, places, and things, we see it as both an
>
> intellectual and a moral landscape. (p. 4)

The professional knowledge landscape in which teachers live and work is

comprised of multiple spaces that seldom have finite borders, but rather overlap

and shift, constantly changing the spheres of influence on teachers and on their

practice (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). This is particularly evident when considering

the in-classroom teaching spaces and out-of-classroom professional spaces that

teachers routinely navigate—spaces that shape one another and the teacher

experiences within them (Craig, 1995a; Connelly & Clandinin, 1995). In both spaces,

teachers respond to the internal expectations that they set for themselves as well as

to accountability demands coming in from multiple, inter-related external sources—
political, legal, bureaucratic, public, and professional (Nelson, Palonsky & McCarthy,
2010; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Craig, 1995a).

Organization of the Review of Related Literature

The intertwining of teaching's affective qualities in teachers' personal
practical knowledge with the extrinsic professional knowledge landscape spaces
creates the basis for the organization of this review of literature. Four primary
sections include: affective considerations in teaching, beginning teacher transitions
into schools, in-classroom experiences, and out-of-classroom experiences.

Affective Considerations in Teaching
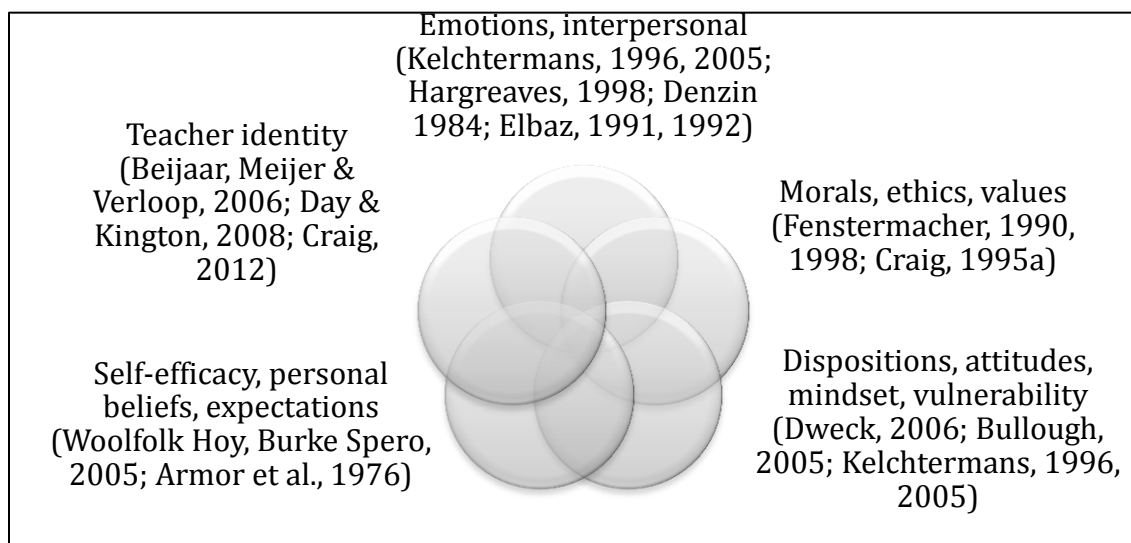
Figure 2 - Affective considerations in teaching

Emotion and cognition, self and context, ethical judgment and purposeful
action: they are all intertwined in the complex reality of teaching
(Kelchtermans, 2005, p. 996).

Like all teachers, early-career teachers are "knowledgeable and knowing persons" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 25) who experience situations, not only intellectually, but also emotionally, morally, and aesthetically (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Fenstermacher, 1994). As individuals, novice teachers possess attitudes, feelings, motivations, and values (Day & Kington, 2008; Dweck, 2006) and hold multiple identities (i.e. mother, artist, Hispanic, political activist) that accompany them into the classroom and the school environment (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). This section explores emotions, dispositions, self-efficacy, and teacher identity in teacher experiences, as well as the physiology of emotions (see Figure 2).

Teaching and Teacher Emotions

Teaching is a "personal and emotional process, perhaps as much as a cognitive and rational affair" (Hollingsworth, Dybdahl, & Minarik, 1993, p. 6; see also Hargreaves, 1998; Denzin, 1984). It is also a morally-charged (Fenstermacher, 1994; Craig, 2004) and highly relational profession (Hargreaves, 1998; see also Kitchen, 2005) in which teachers' emotions are inseparable from their values, morals, beliefs, actions, and teacher identities (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The reasons new teachers give for entering teaching often reflect emotional motivations, such as a love for a particular content area (Richardson & Watt, 2005; Noddings, 1992) or a personal enjoyment in working with young people (Curtis, 2012; Sinclair, Dowson, & McInerney, 2006).

New teachers need to understand the role of emotions in forging relationships and creating classroom environments that promote learning (Rogers, 1969; see also Freire, 1970/2010). When communicating with students, teachers

continuously employ their emotional understanding to recognize students'

emotions, interpret them, and respond (Denzin, 1984). By appropriately sharing

feelings, sensitivity, and empathetic understanding, teachers enable their students

to see them as real people and to relate to them in a more authentic person-to-

person manner (Rogers, 1969). Hargreaves (1998) stresses, "Good teachers are not

just well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with

their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity,

challenge and joy" (p. 835).

Emotions are embedded in teachers' actions, their practice, and in their sense

of self (Hargreaves, 1998; Elbaz, 1991, 1992). "Emotional practice radiates through

[a] person's body and streams of experience, giving emotional culmination to

thoughts, feelings, and actions" (Denzin, 1984, p. 89). Additionally, teachers'

emotions "reflect the fact that deeply held beliefs on good education are part of

teachers' self-understanding" (Kelchtermans, 2005, p. 995) and teacher identity.

This aspect of teaching also makes teachers "vulnerable when the conditions of and

demands on their work make it hard for them to do their 'emotion work' properly"

(Hargreaves, 1998, p. 840; see also Bullough, 2005; Ben-Peretz, 1996).

The physiology of emotions. Once thought to be separate from rational

thought (Damasio, 1994), "emotions, such as anger, fear, happiness and sadness, are

cognitive and physiological processes that involve both the body and mind"

(Immordino-Yang, 2011, p. 99, see also, Damasio *et al.*, 2000). Advances in

neuroscience connecting emotions, social functioning, and decision-making have

direct implications for understanding the "role of emotion in decision making, the

relationship between learning and emotion, how culture shapes learning, and ultimately the development of morality and human ethics" (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007, p. 3). Emotions are both involved in and affect the aspects of cognition concerned with education—learning, memory, decision-making, attention, motivation, and social functioning. The implication for new teachers is that they must understand that learning is not a purely rational process but one that is intrinsically connected to emotion. In the broader context, educators and policy-makers must recognize the connection of emotions to the physiological well-being of teachers and their ability to function normally.

As learning centers and workplaces, schools are social contexts in which school culture and social and emotional experiences shape cognitive learning in students, teachers, and even researchers (Rueda, 2006, Jensen, 2005). For both student and educator, "body, brain and mind come together to produce cognition and emotion, which are subjectively intertwined as [they] construct culturally relevant knowledge and makes decisions about how to act and think (Immordino-Yang, 2011, p. 101). For example, moderate levels of stress have been shown to increase motivation and cognition, whereas high stress levels can lead to distress and decreased energy, impaired memory and diminished cognitive abilities (McEwen & Lasley, 2002). This means that in high-stress environments students and teachers may experience low motivation, low-morale, and the inability to make decisions. For researchers working within the social contexts of schools, emotional responses to the situated experiences they study and the social interactions experienced in the midst of their work are intertwined with their motivations to

conduct research and the decisions made in the research processes, thus potentially influencing their interpretation of the research findings.

Teaching and Teacher Dispositions

The word "dispositions" refers to one's inherent qualities, states of mind, character, temperament, attitudes, and tendencies (*The American Heritage Dictionary*, 1970). Attitudes towards teaching (e.g., teaching as making a social contribution) have been shown to be motivating factors in choosing teaching as a career (Bruinsma & Jensen, 2010; Watt & Richardson, 2008). Similarly, pre-service and beginning teachers' attitudes toward specific content areas are linked to their being receptive or resistant to learning, and subsequently implementing, specific content and related instructional strategies (Price, 2012). Negative practical experience such as student discipline problems or lack of administrative support, may change teachers attitudes toward teaching, leading to teacher departures (Ingersoll, 2003).

Mindset. Psychologist Carol Dweck's (2006) extensive research on how people cope with different life events suggests that the attitude or "*view you adopt for yourself* (italics in original) profoundly affects the way you lead your life" (p. 6). Dweck's conceptualization of mindset distinctively portrays the sense of our looking outward from a personal perspective that is externally observable in our actions and responses. Dweck proposes two contrasting mindsets—the fixed mindset and the growth mindset.

A fixed mindset is based on one's belief that basic personal qualities are unchanging. An individual with a fixed mindset acts on the assumption that his or

her talents, aptitudes, interests, and temperaments remain stable and fixed. Conversely, the growth mindset is based on the belief that personal "basic qualities are things that [one] can cultivate through [one's] efforts" (p. 7). Someone with a growth mindset approaches life from the perspective that talents, aptitudes, interests and temperaments can be altered over time through personal application of effort or with training. The end result is that the fixed mindset creates a constant "urgency to prove [oneself]" (p. 6), whereas the growth mindset promotes a sense of dynamic flow as individuals learn from their experiences and grow.

Fixed and growth mindsets are evidenced quite differently in the classroom as teachers interact with students, negotiate relationships across the landscape, or encounter challenges in meeting external demands and expectations. Dweck's (2006) research suggests that teachers with fixed mindsets frequently shut down, become depressed, or uncooperative when they encounter situations in which they do not immediately succeed or perform up to their personal expectations. Difficulties are viewed as failures by these teachers, prompting them to attempt to restore their self-esteem by placing blame elsewhere. In contrast, those with a growth mindset tend to exhibit resiliency and perseverance when faced with challenging or difficult situations (Dweck, 2006). They view failure as an opportunity to learn and to improve, and are receptive to feedback.

Vulnerability. Teaching has been described as a "daily exercise in vulnerability" (Palmer, 1998, p. 17 as cited in Bullough, 2005) as teachers engage in (Kelchtermans, 2005), rather than resist, the challenges of difficult situations,

unsolvable problems (Schwab, 1983), and external demands on their practice. Vulnerability is considered:

> A mood born of a demanding and uncertain environment where teachers confront ever present and constant reminders of their limitations as reflected in the eyes of a disappointed pupil or made public by a grumbling and dissatisfied parent . . . To be vulnerable is to be capable of being hurt. (Bullough, 2005, p. 23)

Novice teachers allow themselves to be vulnerable and risk being hurt when they are receptive to feedback (Bullough, 2005). When they resist critical feedback and therefore reject vulnerability, they run the risk of not growing and developing as a teacher. The ways in which they manage vulnerability have "profound importance" (p. 25) for the teachability and development of novices, as well as for their students and the learning that takes place in their classrooms.   Teachers also allow themselves to be vulnerable when they engage in reflective and reflexive practices in which they acknowledge their lack of knowledge and understanding or that their knowledge and understanding needs to change in response to new learning (Vinz, 1997).

Differences in the school cultures and teachers' work environments either heighten or diminish teachers' sense of vulnerability, enabling or limiting "their ability to realize their aims and to preserve their senses of self" (Bullough, 2005, p. 24). Vulnerability is a state of being in which teachers feel their "professional identity and moral integrity . . . are questioned and that valued workplace conditions are thereby threatened or lost" (Kelchtermans, 1986, p. 319). Managing

vulnerability can then be viewed as a "political action" (p. 319) as teachers strive to recover their professional identity and "restore the necessary workplace conditions for good job performance." In this regard, according to Kelchtermans (2005), vulnerability "is not only a condition to be endured, but also to be acknowledged, cherished, and embraced" (p. 999).

Teaching and Teacher Self-Efficacy

Over 25 years ago, teachers' self-efficacy (teachers' self-perceptions regarding their ability to promote student learning) was linked to teaching, learning, and student achievement (Armor et al., 1976). Self-efficacy is based more on teachers' "perceptions of competence rather than [their] actual level of competence" (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005, p. 344; see also Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 2007). It is influenced by personal mastery experiences, observing other teachers, receiving feedback, and working environments; which in turn impacts teachers' ability to cope and to persist in stressful or tension-filled situations (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1986, 1997). The level of beginning teachers' sense of efficacy as a result of pre-service teaching experiences is linked to the "amount of time pre-service teachers intend to remain in the profession" (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010, p. 1). While self-efficacy may be high during their pre-service and student teaching experiences, self-efficacy frequently diminishes when novice teachers enter the classroom to take full responsibility of teaching and learning (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005). The level may be further altered by the quality of resources and support made available to them or the degree of constraints put on their teaching (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, &

Hoy, 1998; Tschannen-Moran, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). In addition, feedback from

mentors, students, and parents act as sources of social persuasion that impact

teachers' sense of efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Early-career teachers' sense of self-

worth directly impacts how they view themselves as teachers (Day & Kington,

2008).

Teaching and Teacher Identity
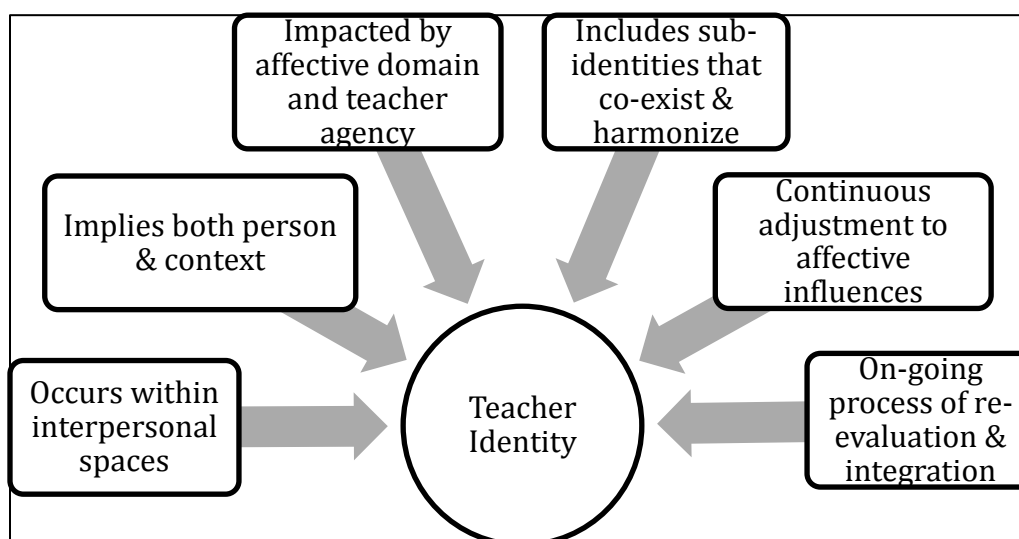
Figure 3 - Elements of teacher identity (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004)

Others determine "exactly" what "you are" and use fixed names. To be

"yourself" is to be in process of creating a self, of creating an identity. If it

were not a process, there would be no surprise. The surprise comes along

with becoming different—consciously different as one finds ways of acting

on envisaged possibility. It comes along with hearing different words and

music, seeing from unaccustomed angles, realizing the world perceived from

one place is not the world. Moreover, to learn and to teach, one must have an

awareness of leaving something behind while reaching toward something

new, and this kind of awareness must be linked to imagination" (Greene,

1995, p. 20).

As Featherstone (1993, as cited in Feiman-Nemser, 2003) explained, "the

new teacher is constantly on stage and urgently needs to develop a performing self

with whom he or she can live comfortably" (p. 101). Consequently, "each new

teacher's learning agenda is also intimately bound up with the personal struggle to

craft a public identity" (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, p. 26).

Professional identity development. There exist numerous research-based

theories of the development of teacher professional identity. For the purposes of

this inquiry I drew on Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop's (2004) synthesis of research

on teacher identity which identified four common features in teacher identity:

develops in an interpersonal space, implies both person and context, impacts by

one's affective domain, and includes co-existing multiple identities (see Figure 3).

One's identity develops in an interpersonal field and changes over time

(Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004, p. 16; Kerby, 1991; Gee, 2001) as influenced by

contexts, gained knowledge, and experiences (Day & Kington, 2008; Clandinin, et al,

2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 1999; Bruner, 1987, 1997). It implies seeing oneself as

a certain kind of person and being recognized as that person within a given context

(Kerby, 1991; see also Gee, 2001, Greene, 1995). Identity is impacted by one's

values, motivations, attitudes, feelings, and stereotypes associated with the affective

domain. Simultaneously, it is influenced by the contexts in which teacher work and

live and by an individual's perceived sense of agency within those contexts.

Individuals also hold multiple identities, or multiple I's, associated with personal,

situational, and professional dimensions (Gee, 2001; see also Day & Kington, 2008;

Olson, 1995; Olson & Craig, 2005) that change over time as those dimensions shift.

A veteran teacher, for example, may identify her personal self as a mother, daughter,

artist, and social justice advocate while simultaneously holding professional

identities as social studies teacher, critical pedagogist, and even school-community

member. On the other hand, a beginning teacher holding the same personal

identities just described, may not view herself professionally as a critical pedagogist

at the onset of her career but later adopt that identity as she gains expertise in

enacting critical pedagogy in the classroom.

 Balancing Multiple Identities. Understanding the notion of teachers

holding multiple identities gives insight into how new teachers may manage

transitions into new school environments and develop strategies to cope with stress

and change. Gee (2001) acknowledges that identity involves being seen as a "kind of

person" within a particular context, and that while a core identity may exist, people

develop multiple identities with different contexts (p. 99).

 Building on this idea, Day and Kington (2008) suggested that a teacher's

overall identity is a "composite consisting of interactions between personal,

professional, and situational factors" (p. 11), with each one entailing sub- or

competing identities (see Figure 4). Each of these dimensions may at times assert

positive or negative influences that potentially affect but do not determine teachers'

"commitment, job satisfaction, well-being, self-efficacy and vulnerability, agency and

resilience, and perceptions of effectiveness" (p. 11). Prolonged dominance in any

one area creates instability in overall identity and has the capacity to aid or hamper

teacher overall identity. Along with all other persons, teachers must learn to juggle

contrasting identities, seek balance, and develop coping strategies to manage

circumstances of dominance in one dimension (i.e. problems at home, student

behavior issues, policy demands) over another (Day & Kington, 2008). The ability of

beginning teachers to manage situations such as transitions, workplace tensions,

and/or competing ideologies influences the effectiveness of their instruction.

• Out-of-school dimension linked to family and social roles • Involves various competing elements/roles (i.e. mother, daughter, friend, etc.) • Feedback comes from family and friends • May be sources of	• Context dimension linked to specific school, department, or classroom • Impacted by situational conditions (i.e. students, leadership, support, etc.) • Feedback loops from teachers' immediate	• In-school dimension linked to social, political & educational expectations • Influenced by policy and social trends as to what constitutes a good teacher. • May have competing elements (i.e. policy from multiple sources, workload & responsibility, etc.)
Personal identity	Situational identity	Professional identity

Figure 4 - Dimensions of teachers' overall identity (Day & Kington, 2008)

Stories to live by and the best-loved self. "Stories to live by" (Clandinin &

Connelly, 1996, 1998b) and "the best-loved self" are notions of teacher identity that

incorporate the features of identity development previously presented with an

emphasis on the influences of context, experience, and time on teacher identity. As

novices mature as teachers and set down their unique narratives of teaching, their

stories intertwine with the multitude of teacher and school stories present within

their particular school settings (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, 1998b; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) reflecting the temporal and contextual changes of their environment and giving rise to communal narratives. "Stories to live by" draws on the notion that personal narrative experiences serve as exemplars for the novice to guide daily practice.

Craig's (2011) notion of "the best-loved self" comes from a narrative perspective as well. It suggests that over time new teachers establish both who they are and how they want to *be* as teachers. As teaching experiences expand, early-career teachers identify personal traits and practices that they hold before themselves as images of their best days in teaching to be emulated daily. Craig's concept of "the best-loved self" captures the reality of teachers as imperfect beings striving to continuously improve their practice.

Beginning Teacher Transitions into Schools
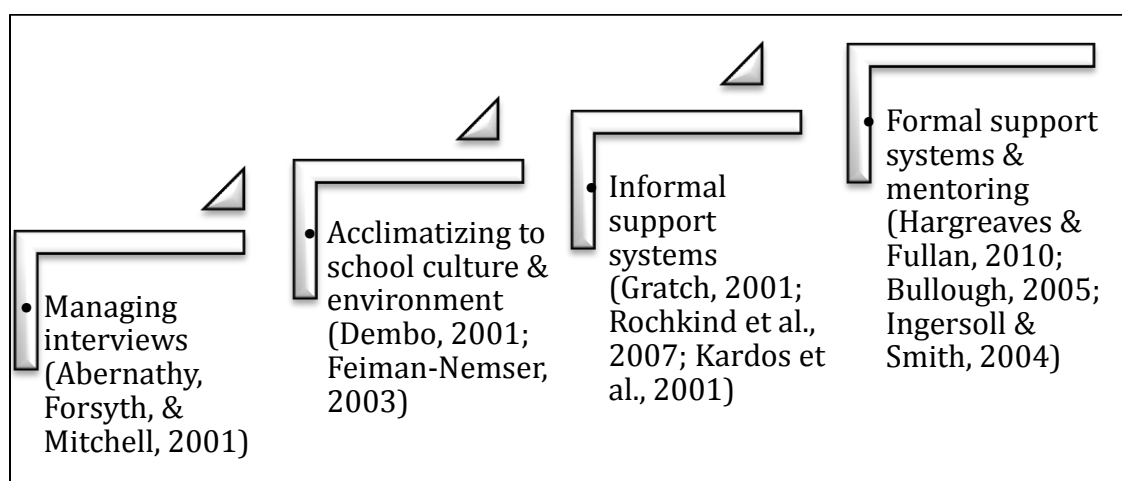
Figure 5 – Social and contextual considerations in school transitions

Challenges for early-career teachers start with the transition into their new school context, extend into new areas of learning (Dembo, 2001), requiring constant adjustment and negotiation (see Figure 5). These transitions are supported informally by other teachers who introduce new teachers to the school environment and more formally by established district systems that provide orientation, professional development, and mentoring. Recent studies suggest that lack of support and the challenges of transition are contributing factors behind the increased numbers of early-career teachers that leave education (Keigher, 2010; Ingersoll, 2003).

Informal Support for Beginning Teachers

Adaptation and adjustment begin as pre-service teachers move from the familiar college/university setting to the unfamiliar territory of job searches and interviews. During the interview process to secure a teaching position, applicants frequently adapt their educational perspectives to secure employment (Abernathy, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2001). Based on the school's profile, new recruits shift their viewpoint from that which was stressed in the university setting to what they perceive to be important in a particular school's environment. Further adaptation is required in the transition into their new school where novice teachers not only learn about their particular new environment (Feiman-Nemser, 2003) but also find their own place within that space (Gratch, 2001). In the process, they need to acclimatize and acculturate to a distinct school culture whose support system for beginning teachers is equally unique and varied (Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr, Doble, & Johnson, 2007).

New teachers are "the most at risk for experiencing social isolation and the most dependent on meaningful collaboration with colleagues" (Shernoff et al., 2011, p. 465; see also, Lortie, 2002; Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, & Peske, 2002). Beginning elementary teachers are more likely to be satisfied with administrative and colleague support during their first-year experience than their secondary counterparts (Rochkind et al., 2007, p. 13), leading to increased departures. The type and degree of support provided to beginning teachers varies from school to school and reflects each school's singular professional culture.

Kardos, Moore Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, and Liu (2001) identified three classifications of professional cultures—veteran-oriented, novice-oriented, and integrated—characterized by the professional interactions of teachers and determined in large part by a school's staffing ratio of experienced to new teachers. Veteran- and novice-oriented cultures represent opposite extremes of the interaction continuum (Kardos et al., 2001). In the veteran-oriented culture the norms of interaction are focused on, and determined "by the veterans with little attention to the particular needs of beginning teachers" (p. 250). This may be reflected in instructional teams exhibiting preference for the knowledge and instructional contributions of veteran teachers over novices, potentially leading novice teacher to feel that their work is not valued (Johnson et al., 2004; Johnson & Kardos, 2002; Gratch, 2001). In contrast, novice-oriented cultures are characterized by innovation brought by beginning teachers, but lack sufficient numbers of veteran teachers to adequately provide the expertise needed to guide novice teachers (Kardos et al., 2001).

Kardos et al. (2001) suggest that integrated cultures with a balance of experienced and new teachers offer optimum support for new teacher transition into the school setting. Integrated cultures reflect a greater balance in the accepted exchange of knowledge and ideas from teachers all along the experience continuum, benefiting the school culture as new ideas, instructional techniques, and strategies brought by new teachers link with the experience and expertise of veterans. Professional growth and development for all teachers is further enhanced when schools emphasize a culture of learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2001, 2010).

Beginning teachers want and need veteran teachers to observe them and provide practical feedback (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). Novice-oriented professional cultures however, provide limited access to experienced teachers to support and guide beginners, resulting in beginning teachers feeling that they are "drifting along in [their] own little boat" (p. 15). Similarly, veteran-oriented professional cultures may result in novice teachers feeling isolated when their experienced teachers do not listen to or appreciate ideas from beginners. In contrast, when school cultures emphasize campus-wide professional development novice teachers feel that they are learning with and from veteran teachers, and that their principals are also engaged with teachers in the professional work of the school (Johnson & Kardos, 2002).

Formal Support Systems for Beginning Teachers

Whereas informal supports for new teachers originate on school campuses, formal support systems most commonly initiate at district levels in the form of new

teacher induction programs. Overall the purpose of these programs is to orientate new teachers to district standards, procedures, resources, and culture, as well as to provide overall support and guidance (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Although the majority of newcomers participate in some form of induction program, the type and length of support varies widely, from one day orientations to extensive professional development courses and campus mentoring (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2010; Rochkind et al., 2007; Feiman-Nemser, 2001, 2012). New teachers who are provided mentors are twice as likely to remain in teaching as teachers who are not assigned mentors (Kaiser, 2011; see also Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Mentoring is a complex, interpersonal, and professional endeavor, which is different from structured induction programs (Wong, 2004). From the mentor perspective, effective mentoring requires a commitment to the role of mentoring, interpersonal communication skills, proficiency at providing new teachers with instructional support, and being a model of continuous learning (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2010; Rowley, 1999). The mentor's role is provide emotional support, feedback, and to work alongside teachers (Bullough, 2005). The mentor-protégé relationship is at the core of successful mentoring. Meaningful relationships build the trust needed for new teachers to receive and act upon mentor suggestions and critical feedback (Hargreaves, & Fullan, 2010). Without trust, mentor-protégé relationships may become strained and new teachers may become resistant to feedback (Bullough, 2005). Through meaningful relationships, new teachers are able to draw on the knowledge and expertise of veteran teachers to transition in to

schools, accommodate to the school culture, negotiate challenges, and augment

what they know about teaching and learning.

Feiman-Nemser (2012) and Orland-Barak (2010) propose that informal and

formal support for beginning teachers must be aimed at more than easing the

transition into teaching, and instead need to be oriented toward bringing new

teachers into collaborative communities of learning.

In-Classroom Experiences of Early-Career Teachers

Instruction	Social interactions	Responsibilities	Expectations
curriculum-making	students	grading	standards
specialized programs	colleagues & administrators	attendance	accountability
time and energy	parents	reporting	personal
	specialists	extra-curricular duties	public
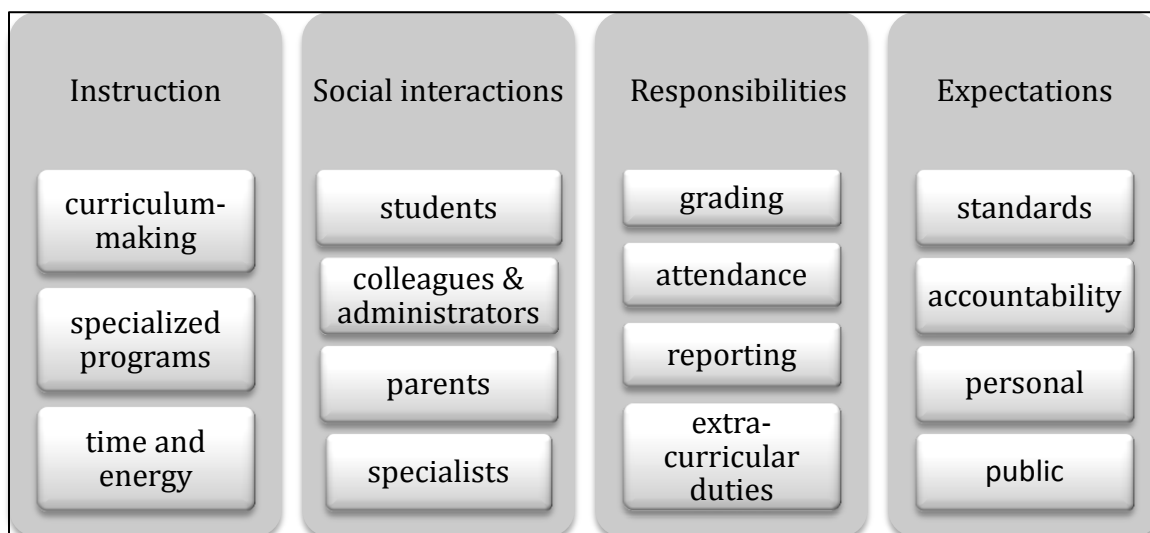
Figure 6 – Multi-faceted in-classroom experiences

There is more to teaching and being a teacher than technically linking the

means (teaching actions and methods) that promise to be most effective to

the ends. Although, this instrumental concern in the teachers' job is a

legitimate dimension, there is always more *at stake* (italics in original). Since

the relationship with students is an ethical one (Fenstermacher, 1990, p.

132), the teacher never has full control over the situation, nor over the

outcomes of his/her actions (Kelchtermans, 2005, p. 998).

Thus far in the literature review, I have examined affective considerations related to teacher and informal and formal support for beginning-teacher transitions into schools. I now turn my attention to in-classroom experiences to explore the diverse challenges confronting early-career teachers within the classroom space (see Figure 6).

What New Teachers Need to Know and Learn

When new teachers enter the classroom, many believe that they "should already know how their schools work, what their students need, and how to teach well" (Johnson & Kardos, 2002, p. 12). However, new teachers are not "finished products" (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 11), despite entering the profession with content knowledge and teaching strategies acquired through their teacher preparation programs (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005). Before ever getting to instruction, novices must learn a myriad of seemingly minor tasks, but tasks that nevertheless contribute to effective teaching and student learning. Chief among these are classroom management skills that contribute creating an environment where learning can take place and help teachers' to maximize instruction time in the classroom (Beaty-O'Ferrall, Green, & Hanna, 2010; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003; Glasser, 1969). This includes, for example, effective classroom arrangement, strategic placement of student and teacher materials, providing instructional transition activities, and establishing routines and expectations.

The first few years of teaching represent a period of enormous learning as novice teachers gain a wide variety of experience and knowledge: situational

instruction, curriculum, interpersonal, classroom management skills, and organizational (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Beginning teachers need to learn how to interpret standards documents and to think on their feet and how to teach in their particular context and utilize situationally relevant instructional techniques, as well as "the nitty-gritty things like transitions and momentum" (p.12). Novice teachers experience large gains in professional growth and effectiveness between the first and second year teaching, followed by smaller gains between the second and third year (Gordon, Kane, & Staiger, 2006). By most accounts, new teachers need three or four years to achieve competence and several more to reach proficiency (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Ericsson, 2006).

Beginning teachers need to learn that professional growth involves and is enhanced through reflection, reflexivity, and a willingness to change. Reflection is not simply thinking about one's practice without direction, but rather is a complex purposeful tool to be employed to reflect-or know-in-action (Schön, 1983) by drawing on tacit knowledge to guide actions during teaching, or to critically examine one's practice. Purposeful reflection that leads to professional growth is reflexive and critical (Thompson & Pascal, 2012; Ovens & Tinning, 2007). Reflexivity requires recognizing and examining one's own influence, as well as the influences of cultural and social contexts, on practice and the construction of knowledge (Fook, 1999). "Reflective practice is a challenging, demanding, and often trying process" (Osterman & Kottkamp, p. 2) that is often most successful as a collaborative endeavor as colleagues critically examine and provide feedback one another's workplace practice, dilemmas, or concerns.

Beginning Teaching Experiences

     Instruction. Beginning teachers bring to their new schools the knowledge and skills gained through their teacher induction programs (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2010; Rochkind et al., 2007; Feiman-Nemser, 2001, 2012; Wong, 2004), as well as through a lifetime of past experiences. New teachers begin to develop their personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) the moment they begin teaching. It is evidenced in teachers' practices as they engage in teaching and learning experiences alongside of their students; an action that stands in contrast to the traditional view of teachers as a "conduit" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Craig, 2002) through which prescribed knowledge and skills are passed on to students from the system above.

     When new teachers take on the role of curriculum-maker (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) by creating their own innovative instructional activities, they bring together what Schwab (1973, 1983) referred to as the four commonplaces of curriculum—student, content, teacher, and milieu. Through experience in teaching new teachers become change agents (Fullan, 1993), building their capacity to transform students' learning experiences and lives.

     Entering the classroom, new teachers are immersed in meaningful and important dilemmas in the "swampy lowlands" (Schön, 1995, p. 28) of day-to-day classroom interactions and through which they further develop their professional expertise. Many of the more important instructional dilemmas that confront early-career teachers in the classroom however are not easily solved through straight forward application of theory, but instead are "messy and confusing and incapable

of technical solution" (Schön, 1995, p. 28). When confronted with such situations

beginning teachers must decide between approaching the problems from a distant

technical stance of rigor or immersing themselves in the problems amid ambiguity

and uncertainty.

For some early-career teachers, classroom teaching and learning may seem

like a daunting task. Beginning teachers' self-perceptions of their effectiveness as

teachers has been shown to negatively affect persistence in education (Rochkind et

al., 2007).   New elementary teachers, for example, are more likely to feel confident

that their students are learning than new secondary teachers.

Teacher-student relationships. Reasons for teacher job dissatisfaction and

departures often cite student behavior and lack of administrative support related to

student discipline issues (Keigher, 2010; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006;

Ingersoll, 2003). Yet the relational realm of the classroom is where teachers

develop relationships with students and "co-construct meaning with students" as

they interact together with curriculum (Craig, 1995a, p. 16; see also Roberts &

Renard, 1999; Hargreaves, 1998). Positive relationships between teachers and their

students is instrumental in helping students adjust to school (Baker, 2006), in

motivating students to learn (He & Cooper, 2011) and, ultimately, in succeeding

academically (Decker, Dona, & Christenson, 2007; Rogers, 1969; Hargreaves, 1998).

Along with the organization of the classroom, new teachers need to establish

classrooms expectations and guidelines for student behaviors that are age and

context appropriate (Beaty-O'Ferrall, Green, & Hanna, 2010; Emmer, Evertson, &

Worsham, 2003). New teachers need to find their own way of connecting with

students, appropriately sharing emotions, challenges, and personal goals (He &

Cooper, 2011). Even sharing one's knowledge of social media like Facebook and

Twitter helps to build a social relationship between teachers and students and to

motivate student interest in learning.

Teacher-student research relationships also means that early-career

teachers need to respond to the needs of their students. They may have special

needs students whose Admission, Review, and Dismissal reports (ARD) outline

specific accommodations for instruction, testing, and even behavior (Baker, 2006).

The student diversity encountered in today's classrooms requires that novices

respond to the cultural and language needs of students as well (Piot, Kelchtermans,

& Ballet, 2010; Cochran-Smith, 2003; Gay, 2000). Research suggests that this an

area in which many beginning teachers in the U.S. and Canada often are under

trained (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2001). The implication is

that early-career teachers may need to seek advice from colleagues about working

with diverse populations and seek out related professional development

opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills.

Managing multiple responsibilities. Along with constructing and

implementing lessons and managing the classroom, novice teachers confront the

same issues and concerns as veteran teachers (van Hover & Yeager, 2003, 2004)—

textbooks, classroom materials, attendance reporting, and discipline reporting—all

of which are part and parcel of teaching and learning that places additional demands

on teacher time and energy. Novice teachers must also work into their practice the

requirements and expectations related to instruction and assessment of special

needs students, as well as participating in annual Admission, Review, and Dismissal meetings (TEA, 2012b). District benchmark tests and the correlated content scope and sequence further affect what early career teachers need to know, learn, and do in the classroom. School cultures may put additional pressure on teachers' time and energies with the expectation that all teachers participate in extra-curricular student and campus events (i.e., sports events, after school clubs, open house) (Craig, 2001).

Influences of External Demands on Teacher Practice

The in-classroom teaching experiences of early-career teachers are significantly influenced by the expectations and demands that originate in out-of-classroom spaces (Nelson, Palonsky, & McCarthy, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Craig, 1995a). Teachers are expected to implement district standards, policy, state objectives, and federal law, while concurrently performing to public and campus expectations. In response to district or campus adopted instructional programs and the accountability demands of high-stakes testing, teachers frequently alter their instructional practice (Crocco & Costigan, 2006, 2007; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006; Craig, 2001, 2009; Stecher, Hamilton, & Klein, 2002). As a result, "the discretionary classroom space where teachers and students actively live curriculum—guided, though, not controlled, by official documents and administrative oversight—has become increasingly disputed" (Craig, 2009, p. 1034).

Prescribed instructional programs. When prescribed instructional programs and materials flow into teachers' in-classroom spaces from the school system, or "the conduit" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992, p. 370), the required

programs and materials may be "so prescribed that they take away teacher empowerment" (Craig, 2001, p. 321). Such programs and materials often carry with them lesson modules, instructional strategies, and pacing that potentially prohibit or, at the minimum, limit teachers' abilities to develop projects fully and to cover content materials more deeply (Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Consequently, teachers may perceive that their practice is shaped by official pedagogic discourse that is handed down to them, a discourse with which they may be personally, morally, and professionally uncomfortable (Barrett, 2009). These situations move teachers from being curriculum-makers to curriculum-implementers, creating tensions between teachers' professional judgments and the competing demands of administrators and school districts.

Teachers become "disenfranchised from their profession when they are told what to teach, how to teach," (Nichols & Berliner, 2007, p. 120) and are subsequently evaluated based on the performance of their students on state mandated tests. When teachers are "handed scripted lessons…told how to structure [their] lessons . . . [and] treated as if [they] were incapable of doing things on [their] own" (Crocco & Costigan, 2007, p. 521), their self-efficacy diminishes.

Accountability Demands. In addition to being knowledgeable, creative, and taking the initiative, novice teachers need to demonstrate "the ability to grow in their practice, as well as [teach] in the testing and accountability-driven culture found in many schools today" (Crocco & Costigan, 2006, p. 1). Teachers may also need to learn how to deal with non-academic issues such as student frustration, discouragement, and diminished value of education (Stecher, 2002). Confronted

with the challenges of accountability demands, early-career teachers must determine how testing requirements and tensions will affect their teaching.

Since the advent of NCLB legislation, accountability demands on teachers and subsequent changes in teacher practices aimed at increasing test scores have been well documented (Nichols, 2011; Amrein-Beardsley, 2009; Dorn, 2007; Abrams, 2004; Amrein & Berliner, 2002, 2003; Hamilton, Stecher, & Klein, 2002). Teachers often change their classroom practices "in order to reconcile the consequences attached to high-stakes tests" (Amrein & Berliner, 2002, p.48; see also Nichols, 2011; Hamilton, Stecher, & Klein, 2002). Described as the "unintended and negative consequences" (Amrein & Berliner, 2002, p. 9) of high-stakes testing, instructional adaptations include: teaching to the test, direct instruction of test-taking strategies, (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009; Dorn, 2007; Amrein & Berliner, 2002), lecture and worksheets (Faulkner & Cook, 2007) administration of practice tests (Good, Heafner, Rock, O'Connor, Passe, Waring, & Byrd, 2010; Vogler et al, 2010), educational triage (Booher-Jennings, 2005, Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). These actions potentially lead to a narrowing of the curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ravitch, 2010; Faulkner & Cook, 2006; Amrein & Berliner, 2002), undervaluing of non-tested content areas (Vogler et al., 2007; Diamond, & Spillane, 2004), and even unethical behavior (Amrein-Beardsley, Berliner, & Rideau, 2010).

In addition to the instructional side of accountability pressures (Stecher, 2002), teacher blame related to school failure (Curtis, 2012) also contributes to early-career teacher departures. School accountability rankings are routinely listed on countless internet sites and teacher bonuses based on student achievement

reported in local newspapers. As a result of pressure to assure increased student

test scores, new teachers may feel that "the state test force[s] them to focus on

breadth more than depth of coverage" (Clarke et al, 2003, p. 53) and that "the state

assessment . . . is driving instruction" (p. 54) and directing how they should teach.

Out-of-Classroom Experiences of Early-Career Teachers
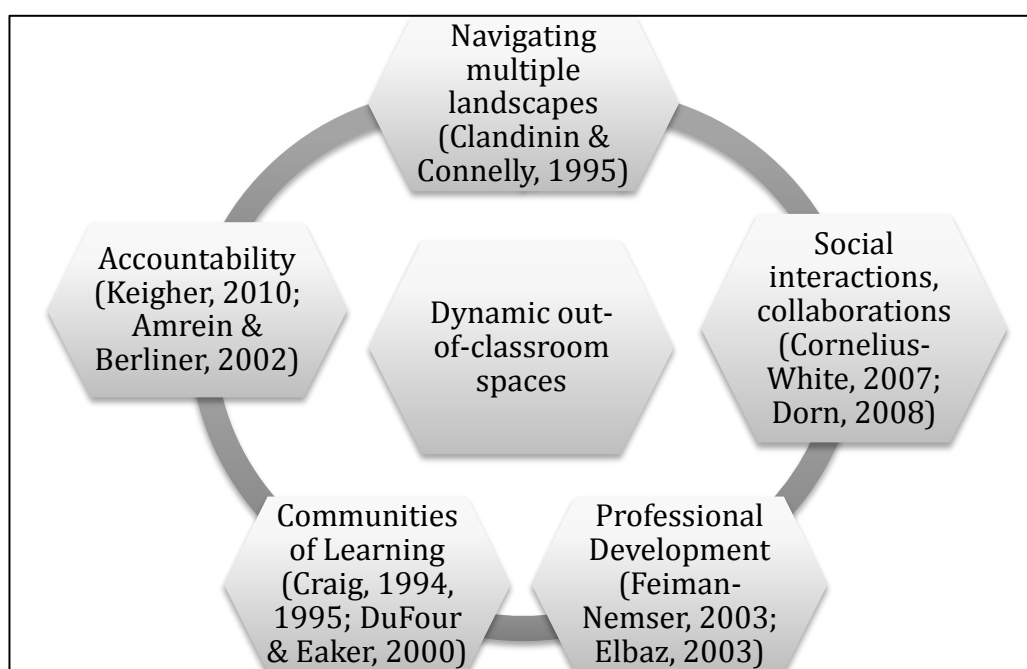
Figure 7 - Considerations in teachers' out-of-classroom experiences

Should we aspire for excellence in schools? Of course we should. But in

aspiring for excellence we need to weigh with care with what understanding

of excellence we are calling upon teachers and students to excel (Aoki, 1990,

p. 5).

When teachers move to out-of-classroom spaces to engage in activities such

as team meetings, professional development, staff meetings, and parent

conferences, they take with them multiple aspects of their in-classroom experiences, including knowledge, skills, instructional issues, and student-related concerns (see Figure 7). Out-of classroom spaces in the professional knowledge landscape are where many of the demands, policies and expectations of teachers originate; and where new teachers navigate "all other aspects of the educational enterprise such as the philosophies, the techniques, the materials, and the expectations that [they] will enact certain educational practices" (Craig, 1995a, p. 16).

Social Interactions

Negotiating one's place within existing school cultures and established relationships can be challenging for new teachers (Gratch, 2001). Novice teachers may enter teaching "expecting trouble with the material or with the children, but…are caught off guard by the difficulty of working with their more experienced colleagues" (Payne, 2010, p. 20). The enthusiasm and energy of new teachers may be met by hostility and criticism from experienced teachers, particularly in school environments focused on high-stakes testing.

Building relationships and developing collegial connections, however, are integral to eliminating teacher isolation and promoting retention (Shernoff el al., 2011; Kardos & Johnson, 2007, Kardos e al., 2001). In communities of learning that promote collaboration, novice and veteran teachers learn together and from one another, with the entire learning community taking responsibility for supporting new teachers (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2010; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). This shifts the focus from supporting new teacher transitions into school to developing strong professional cultures and improving teaching and learning for all.

When teachers come together to share stories of experience and critically discuss their work, teacher practices improve and student gains achieved (Sinclair, Wineberg, Woolworth, 2001; Craig, 1994, 1995b). In communities of learning, "students learn more and [new] teachers experience greater satisfaction and commitment when they engage with their colleagues, improving instruction and strengthening schools" (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005, p. 72).

Professional Development

Continued professional development is instrumental in early-career teachers' acquisition of the knowledge related to content, curriculum, and pedagogy needed to provide effective classroom instruction (Doubek & Cooper, 2007). Diverse pathways to teaching increase the "importance of providing useful and sustained professional development at the school site" (Johnson & Kardos, 2002, p. 12). This is particularly true in the case of teachers entering from alternative certification programs or on emergency certificates. When schools and districts adopt cultures of learning, they move from simply keeping new teachers in education to "helping them become good teachers" (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, p. 25; see also Warren Little, 2003).

New teacher growth and development is augmented by experiences garnered as teachers traverse multiple education landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999)—from in-classroom interactions with students, to out-of-classroom professional development and colleague collaborations, district professional development opportunities. Communities of learning or knowledge communities (Craig, 1992, 1995b; see also Grossman, Wineburg, Woolworth, 2001;

DuFour & Eaker, 1998) provide opportunities for new teachers to share stories of experience and discuss instructional issues.

School Environments

The context in which teachers begin their careers contributes to what they need to know, as well as the degree of self-efficacy and sense of agency obtained (Imig & Imig, 1996). New teachers are more likely to become both emotionally and intellectually engaged in their work when they are "able to see the relationship between their values and the strategic directions of their school" (Day, Elliot, Kington, 2005, p. 574). School cultures that promote collaboration, and include teachers in decision-making positively influence teacher retention (Kaiser, 2011; Keigher, 2010).

Accountability and high-stakes testing have taken a toll on school environments, shifting the focus from what happens in the classroom to student academic achievement. "The movement for school accountability is essentially a movement for more effective top-down control of the schools" (Moe, 2003, p. 81), leading to a "tightening of the loose coupling between policymakers (Burch, 2007 as cited in Au, 2007, p. 264) intentions and the institutional environments created by their policies" (see also Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Apple, 2002). Pressures on districts and schools to perform well on state accountability tests has led to increased top-down curriculum directives and decreased the control that teachers have in the classroom (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). The loss of teacher control in the classroom and lack of a sense of efficacy as a result of top-down directives and high-stakes accountability has been linked to teachers' diminished sense of narrative

authority and adversely shifted how they think about themselves as teachers

(Canrinus, Helms-Lorenz, Beijaard, Buitink, & Hoffman, 2011).

External Influences on School Practice

Expectations flow into school spaces from multiple sources, carrying many

forms of accountability—political, legal, bureaucratic, public, and professional

(Darling-Hammond, 2006; see also Nelson, Palonsky, & McCarthy, 2010). According

to Craig (2004) high-stakes testing and accountability "arrive on teachers'

landscapes not as ideas for professional consideration but as morally charged action

items around which a great deal of societal urgency exists" (p. 1232). Accountability

becomes a high-stakes enterprise when student test results are "used to make

significant educational decisions" (Amrein & Berliner, 2002, p. 5) regarding

students, teachers, administrators, and schools.

The growing weight given to test scores under NCLB has also been criticized

for placing unreasonable demands and pressures on school-wide practices and

environments (Darling-Hammond, 2010). In response, teachers and schools may

utilize practices that are counter to their own beliefs, such as school-wide direct

instruction of test-taking strategies, tracking student progress through benchmark

tests, and educational triage , "in order to reconcile the consequences attached to

high-stakes tests" (Amrein & Berliner, 2002, p. 48). Educational triage (Booher-

Jennings, 2005) involves the reallocation of teachers' time and energies, shifting

their focus and efforts away from all students and to small percentages of students

that can have a positive impact on school accountability ratings (Reback, 2007,

Booher-Jennings, 2005; Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Nichols & Berliner, 2007). As

teachers and schools manage the demands of accountability, high-stakes testing has

led to low teacher morale, high teacher stress, and increased "incidences in which

teachers must question their own professional integrity" (Amrein & Berliner, 2002,

p.42). Some teachers and administrators have even engaged in cheating on state

accountability tests as a way to manage dilemmas (Amrein-Beardsley, Berliner, &

Rideau, 2010; Amrein & Berliner, 2002).

Teachers' professional identities are affected by the "compulsory testing

mandates [that] originate in out-of-classroom and out-of-school places, yet carry

with them intellectual, moral, and professional imperatives for teachers' practices

both in in-classroom and in-school places" (Craig, 2004, p. 1231). Accountability-

related policies and the lack of teacher control in the classroom "neglect or

instrumentalize (and thus reduce) the interpersonal dimension in teaching"

(Kelchtermans, 2005, p. 999). Such working environments lead to the

demoralization of school environments (Payne, 2008). Although the "culture of

shaming schools has been lessened" (Apple, 2011, p. 26) under Obama's Race to the

Top education initiative, according to Apple, early-career teachers must be prepared

to enter cope with public criticism of teachers (Apple 2011; Ravitch, 2010) and the

pressures of accountability on school environments.

Summary

As novices join veterans in the ranks of classroom teachers they begin to

enact theory in practice, develop relationships, traverse multiple landscapes, and

commence living their own teacher narratives. Their early-career experiences

shape their future professional lives and spill over to personal experiences

simultaneously (Gold, 2011). Laying the groundwork for this inquiry into the intrinsic and extrinsic influences on early-career teachers' decisions to remain in teaching, the review of the literature provides insights into the complex issues confronting early-career teachers: the affective considerations in teaching, transitions into teaching, in-classroom experiences, and out-of-classroom experiences. It highlights the challenges encountered by early-career teachers and underscores the notion that teaching involves the whole person. As Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) remind us,

> Being a teacher and in particular being a 'beginning' teacher implies far more than a merely technical set of tasks that can be reduced to effectively applying curriculum knowledge and didactical skills. The person of the teacher is inevitably also at stake in these professional actions…when one's identity as a teacher, one's professional self-esteem or one's task perception are threatened by the professional context, then self-interests emerge. They always concern the protection of one's professional integrity and identity as a teacher. (p. 110)

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction
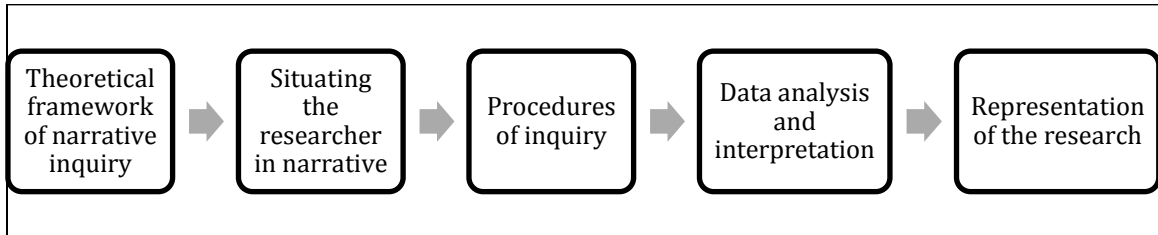
Figure 8 – Overview of the methodology

Narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) is the methodology adopted in this study of the experiences and internal/external factors that influence early-career teacher retention.   My narrative inquiry centers around the following wonderings, or questions: In what ways do the experiences of early-career teachers influence their decisions to remain in the profession? How do internal factors (e.g., emotions, dispositions, self-efficacy, and identity) shape early-career teachers' decisions to stay in teaching? In what ways do external factors (e.g., standards, expectations, responsibilities, and professional development) affect those decisions? This chapter (see Figure 8) explains the theoretical framework of narrative inquiry, presents the rationale for selecting narrative inquiry methods, and describes the particular research procedures, and the analytical and interpretive tools to be employed in the inquiry. The chapter ends with a discussion of ethical considerations, trustworthiness, or validation of the inquiry (Mishler, 1990), and representational form of the research text.

Theoretical Framework of Narrative Inquiry

An established qualitative method of inquiry, narrative inquiry is rooted in Dewey's (1938/1997) writings on education as experience, and specifically that experience is relational (personal and social), situational, and temporal. For him, "the two principles of continuity and interaction are not separate from one another. They intercept and unite. They are, so to speak, the longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience" (Dewey, 1934/1997, p. 44). These fundamental qualities of education form the underpinnings of the narrative view of teaching as comprised of relational (personal and social), situational, and temporal experiences; "experiences [that] grow out of other experiences, and . . . lead to further experiences" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2).

Building on Dewey's concept of experience and drawing on the use of narrative by multiple researchers—Johnson, Gertz, Bateson, Czarniawska, Coles, Polkinghorne—Clandinin and Connelly (2000) reasoned that because we understand our experiences narratively, or as storied experiences, our experiences should be studied narratively. Adopting a narrative view of experience acknowledges that "life—as we come to it and it comes to others—is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities" (p. 17). My goal in this study is to illuminate the storied moments and experiences of teachers in the early years of their teaching careers and, in particular, the elements that influence their retention in education. More specifically, the aim is to uncover what early-career teachers "undergo" (Eisner, 1988, ix) in their contextualized

experiences, the meaning that they construct from situations, how they interpret

the contexts in which they work and live, and the changes that ensue.
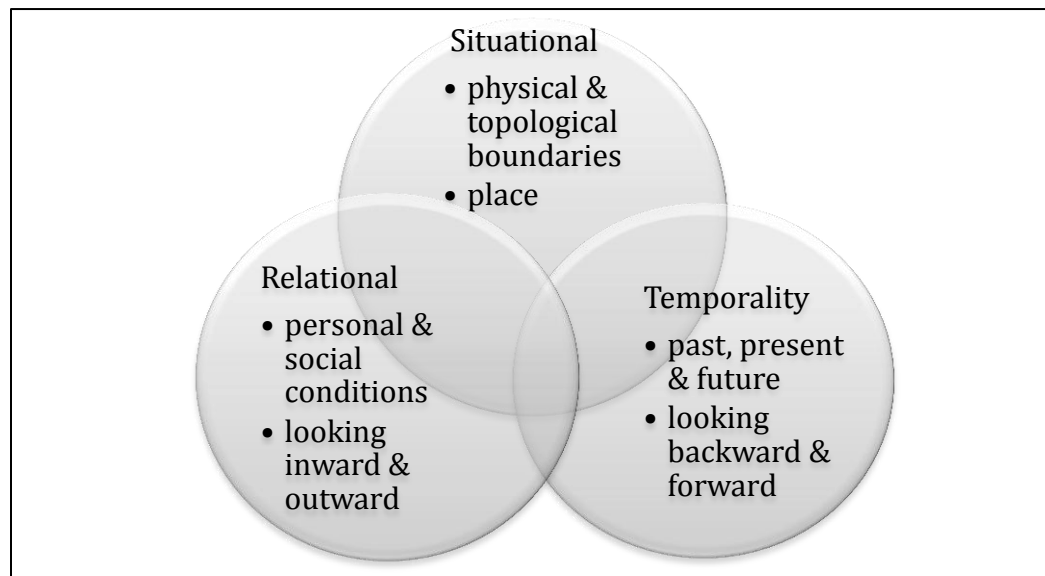
Figure 9 - Three-dimensional research space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)

Dewey's notion of experience forms the underpinnings of narrative inquiry

in which time (temporality), interactions (relational), and context (situational)

create "a metaphorical *three-dimensional narrative inquiry space* (italics in original),

with temporality along one dimension, the personal and the social along a second

dimension, and place along a third" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50) (see Figure

9). These three dimensions form the commonplaces of narrative inquiry that are

explored continuously by narrative inquirers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000;

Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006; Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007).

Narrative Inquiry: A Relational Inquiry
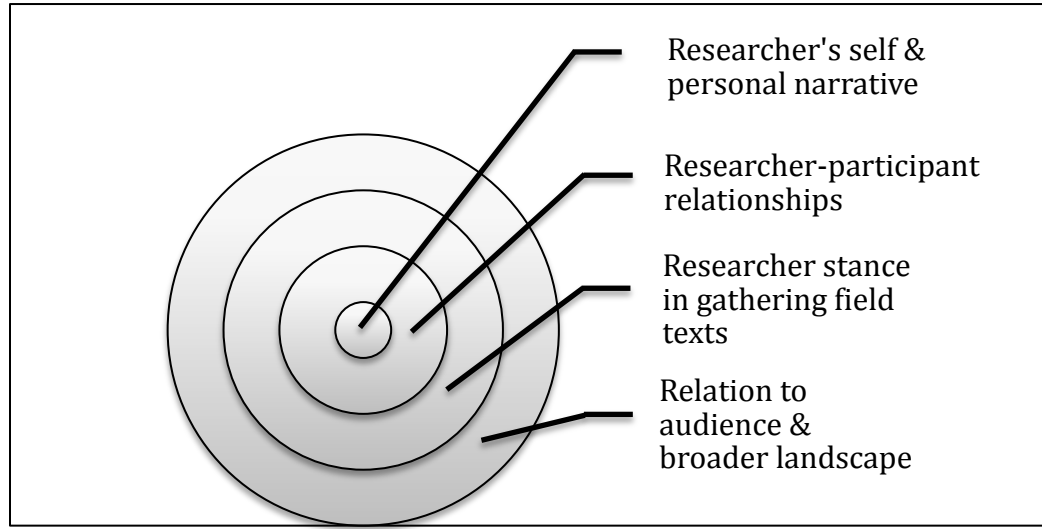
Figure 10 - Relational qualities of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)

The relational quality of narrative inquiry is a characteristic that sets it apart

from other modes of inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; see also Connelly &

Clandinin, 2006) (see Figure 10). Central to narrative inquiry are the collaborative,

trusting relationships (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 109) between research and

participants that develop during the course of the inquiry. These relationships

influence the types of field texts gathered, the analysis and interpretation of field

and interim texts, ultimately lending meaning to the research text.

Narrative inquirers take a participatory approach to research, working

alongside their participants rather than observing from afar. Working closely and in

collaboration with participants reveals the "intentionality and concreteness of

everyday life" (Greene, 1995, p. 10) as experienced by participants. It also brings

the narrative researcher "in close contact with details and with particularities that

cannot be reduced to statistics or even to the measurable." Additionally, throughout

the inquiry, researchers share field, interim, and research texts, enabling participants to clarify information gathered and to negotiate meaning of the texts. The ongoing negotiation of meaning in the interim and research texts builds trust, further enhancing the researcher-participant relationship. The process of negotiation makes known the fluid nature (Schwab, 1962) of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) that allows for new themes of inquiry to emerge naturally and for new meaning to be found throughout the inquiry. This would not be possible without establishing and maintaining a trustful researcher-participant relationship. In this way, relationships shape field texts and the stories told (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 94), augmenting the "lifelikeness" (Bruner, 1986, p. 11) of the experiences and knowledge shared in the research text.

The relational qualities of narrative inquiry extend beyond the central relationship between researcher and participant. While narrative inquirers must become wholly involved with their participants and their stories, they must also determine the relation between their participant's story and their own personal narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 61). In sharing their experiences, researchers become "visible with [their] own lived and told stories," adding a sense of openness and vulnerability to relationships, and transparency to the research text. Finally, inquirers must ascertain and show how their participants' story relates to the larger landscape in which both researcher and participant live (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 81). In this way, researchers act in relation to other research and, equally important, to their readers.

As evidenced in the foregoing discussion of narrative as a relational inquiry, narrative inquiry offers insights that other approaches do not. Narrative inquiry uncovers both the intentions of human actions and the knowledge constructed from situated experiences (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002). It illuminates the complexities of social interaction and relationships and as they pertain to the participants stories and also to the inquiry process. Furthermore, narrative inquiry firmly nests the inquiry within a specific context or contexts of the broader landscape. These understandings outweigh any criticism of the intersubjective nature of narrative inquiry or charge of research contamination (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 181) because narrative inquiry provides an up close view of "how a practice works" (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002, p. 6). Without the relational quality of narrative inquiry, such revelations would not be possible.

Narrative Inquiry: A Reflective, Wakeful Inquiry
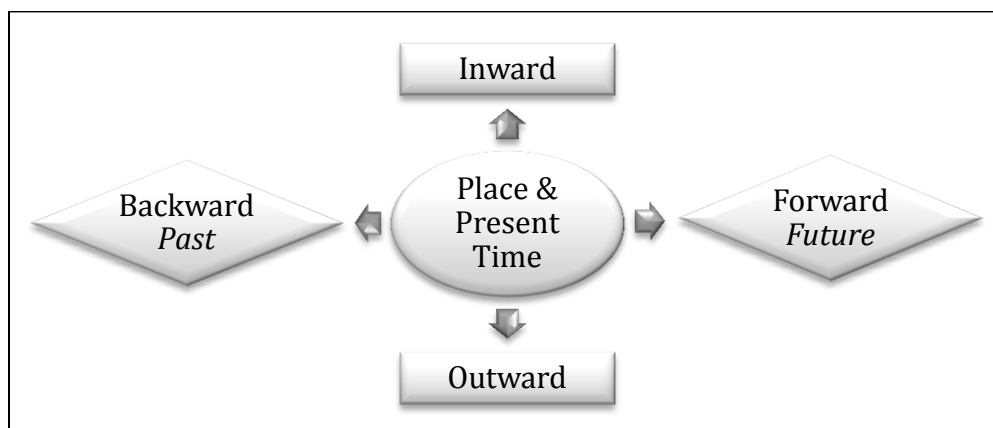
Figure 11 – Multiple directions of reflection (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)

Narrative inquiry "necessitates ongoing reflection" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 184) in multiple directions by the researcher—what Clandinin and

Connelly term as "wakefulness" (Clandinin, Pushor & Murray Orr, 2007, p.21) (see

Figure 11).   This means that throughout the investigation inquirers draw on their

personal practical knowledge, engage in reflection, and are constantly mindful of the

events unfolding around them, as well as their role in the developing experiences.

As such, when inquirers enter the research space they are cognizant of entering

"into the midst" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20) of their participants' on-going

stories. They also mindfully develop and maintain trusting relationships—being

responsively wakeful to sensitive issues or events, and attentively protective of the

participants' confidentiality.

Throughout the research, inquirers continuously look both inward and

outward, and backward and forward, reflecting on their research. That is to say that

they are attentive to internal conditions, external environment conditions, and the

temporal continuum of the inquiry. As researchers approach the research text they

are also wakeful to the selection of exemplars that show "how a practice works"

(Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002, p. 6) and the positioning of their research alongside other

research (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Equally important, is that inquirers are

mindful of the entirety of the research process, who they are as inquirers, and "what

it means to do narrative inquiry" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 184).

Narrative inquiries provide access to teacher knowledge (Craig, 1997), elicit

questions about teacher experiences, and deepen our understanding of those

experiences and the complex milieus in which they occur (Connelly & Clandinin,

2006; Clandinin, Pushor, Murray Orr, 2007). Furthermore, research using narrative

methods allows us to learn from stories of experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990;

Craig, 1997), to shift our practice in response to them, and to bring about change on the professional knowledge landscape (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995; Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997) of schools. My aim in this inquiry is to uncover and explore my participants' unique stories as they naturally emerge and to expand understandings of why early-career teacher remain in education.

Approaching the Inquiry

As I entered into this inquiry, I was aware of entering "into the midst" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20) of an on-going assemblage of storied lives that existed before my entry and that would continue after the research ended. Reflecting upon my own narrative beginnings in teaching acted as a way to situate myself in relation to the research. Continuing to reflect inward helped to assure that I understood how my personal narrative related to my participants' story as the research shifted and took shape. I strived to be constantly wakeful and aware of the complexities of my research into experience, as well as the ambiguity of the contextual and situational spaces in which those experiences occurred.

Approaching my study narratively allowed me to capture the intentionality of my participant's actions, as well as "the situated complexities" (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002, p. 15) of her practice that were "often messy, uncertain, and unpredictable." Throughout this inquiry, I looked inward to examine affective conditions and outward to examine environmental conditions; including "the social, cultural, and institutional narratives in which [my participant's] experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted" (Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007, p. 29). Looking inward and outward enabled me to identify resonances with

between my personal narrative experiences and those of my participating teacher and to connect the inquiry to the broader education landscape.   Concurrently, I reflected backward and forward over time, ever cognizant with them a temporal quality of experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000). Sharing interim and research texts with my participant created a way to collaboratively explore my participant's stories over time, situated in contexts, and in social interaction with multiple milieus. Through telling stories (Craig, 1997) this study brought together the narrative fragments of my participant's experiences, illuminated her "stories lived and told" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20), how she made sense of their experiences, and ultimately her growth and transformation.

Situating the Researcher in Narrative Inquiry

Researcher	Narrative Inquiry
Professional • Teachers' knowledge & different ways of knowing • Complex lives of teachers	**Grounding assumptions** • Personal practical knowledge • Professional knowledge landscape
Practical • Teaching as a relational profession	**Research Process** • Narrative as a relational inquiry
Personal • Reflective practices in multiple personal areas	**Interpretive Process** • Wakefulness • On-going reflection

Figure 12 - Resonant connections between the researcher and narrative inquiry

Coming to narrative inquiry as a research method was a natural extension of my personal experiences and my understandings of teachers' lives. This section of

the methodology chapter serves to situate me, the researcher, in narrative inquiry, thereby presenting the rationale for my choice of narrative inquiry in the study of early-career teacher experiences. I use the concept of resonance (Conle, 1996, 2000) to elucidate connections between narrative inquiry and my professional, practical, and personal experiences. Resonance, as conceptualized by Conle, is a process through which the telling and retelling of stories elicits other stories, creates connections, and promotes meaning-making. The professional, practical, and personal resonances that follow illustrate why, in my opinion, narrative inquiry is the best way "to think about [the] experience[s]" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 80) of teachers and to illuminate my participants' storied lives.

Professional Resonances of Narrative Inquiry

As a research method rooted in Dewey's (1938/1997) concepts of experience, narrative inquiry is informed extensively by Clandinin and Connelly's conceptualizations and understandings of teacher experience. It is the work of Clandinin and Connelly and other narrative inquirers—Craig, Lyons, LaBoskey, Phillion, Conle, Olson, Pushor, and others—that drew me to narrative inquiry as my method of research. In this section, I point to specific resonances between narrative inquiry's approach to studying teachers' storied experiences and my professional understanding of teachers within the contexts in which they live and work.

Important to me in my research and in learning from other researchers, are the assumptions made concerning teachers. An underpinning of narrative inquiry is the notion that teachers lead storied lives that occur in relationship with others, and happen within physical places over time (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000).

Equally important, are the grounding assumptions regarding teachers as

knowledgeable and knowing persons who experience situations holistically—

intellectually, physically, emotionally, and aesthetically (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988,

2000). Clandinin and Connelly view "our teaching practices as expressions of

personal practical knowledge…the experiential knowledge that [is] embodied in us

as persons and [is] enacted in our classroom practices and in our lives" (Clandinin,

1993, p. 1). Their concept of personal practical knowledge uniquely captures the

cumulative and constantly changing knowledge that teachers' possess, as well as

teachers' multiple ways of knowing (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). The notion that

teachers' personal practical knowledge is embodied in their practice links with how

I view teachers in action as they translate theory into practice to make it their own

(Schwab, 1973). At the same time, the visible or observable aspects of teacher

practice are preceded by the less-observed curriculum making (Connelly &

Clandinin, 1988) in which teachers' personal practical knowledge and

understandings of the students and the milieu converge (Schwab, 1973). Personal

practical knowledge is also evident in teachers' relational knowing as they interact

with their students, learn about their situations, and shift instruction accordingly

(Hollingsworth, Dybdahl, Minarik, 1993).

  Similarly, Clandinin and Connelly's (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995) professional

knowledge landscape metaphor appropriately represents the varied contexts in

which teachers work and live. The metaphor reflects the notion that professional

knowledge is "composed of a wide variety of components and influenced by a wide

variety of people, places, and things" (p. 5; see also Clandinin & Connelly, 1996,

Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997). As such, it connects with my professional

understanding of how teachers' knowledge is impacted by their experiences as they

navigate across in-classroom and out-of-classroom contexts (Craig, 1995a). These

assumptions, understandings, and conceptualizations of teachers and teachers'

experiences that are associated with narrative inquiry resonate with my

professional understanding of teachers' knowledge and how it is evidenced in the

classroom.

Practical Resonances of Narrative

The relational aspects of teaching are evident across teachers' professional

landscapes as they interact with students, parents, colleagues, specialists,

administrators, and others (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hollingsworth, Dybdahl, &

Minarik, 1993). In my view, teaching is a relational profession in which all parties

benefit when solid relationships are formed. As a teacher, and later as a school

administrator, being in relationships with those with whom I lived and worked was

integral to living out my "best-loved self" (Craig, 2011, p. 2) and being a "decent

[person] doing decent work" (Curtis et al., 2012, p. 84). Sustaining positive

relationships gave me access to knowing and understanding the situations of

students, parents, and teachers, enabling me to better teach to the needs of my

students. Maintaining relationships also helped to create better home-school

communication and effectively impacted the collaborative work between me and my

staff. At the same time, being in relation demanded a certain amount of

transparency, vulnerability, and risk. It has always been a risk I was willing to take

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because relations I forged built trust that positively impacted student learning outcomes, teacher moral, and school culture.

Narrative inquiry entails the same transparency and vulnerability from researchers as they co-participate in inquiries and share their related, interwoven stories of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As previously mentioned, the researcher-participant relationship allows the researcher to a get close up view of the participants' intentions in actions and the meaning making that ensues (Greene, 1995). This approach to studying teacher experiences respectfully acknowledges the narrative authority of teachers (Olson, 1995; Olson & Craig, 2001) and the ways in which knowledge is shaped through their experiences, interactions, and the context. Additionally, the trust created as researchers work alongside their participants facilitates the trajectory of the inquiry, placing both the researcher and the participating teacher in "the swampy lowlands" (Schön, 1995, p. 28) where the problems of important problems of practice are "messy and confusing and incapable of technical solution." Clandinin and Connelly reasoned that because we understand and communicate experiences narratively, it makes sense to study them narratively (1994, 2000). Similarly, because teaching is a relational profession, it makes sense to study teachers' experiences while in relationship with teachers. The relational quality of narrative inquiry resonates with my understanding of teaching as a relational profession and the manner in which I wish to carry out my research.

Personal Resonances of Narrative

From a more personal perspective, the role of reflection in narrative inquiry resonates intrinsically with my reflective practices in teaching and creative writing,

and the role that reflection plays in being responsive to situations and to bringing an idea to fruition. As an educator, I found that teaching and school administration demand constant reflection in order to better understand experiences—with students, parents, teachers, curriculum and contexts—and to improve one's practice. Likewise, creative writing requires constant consideration of format, word choice, and even how a piece will be interpreted by others. Both areas of experience combine the constant application of personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) with reflection in decision-making—what Schön (1983) referred to as knowing- and reflecting-in-action.

Reflective practices played a key role in my school's portfolio-making to evidence our collaborative efforts in school reform. Drawing on the work of Nona Lyons (1998), we utilized narrative pieces written by teachers, parents, and school partners to illuminate all aspects of school life—teaching, learning, reform initiatives, professional development, campus activities, and partnerships. These "school stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996) told our collaborative story through multiple lenses and voices representative of our school context. Documenting the multi-dimensional aspects of school life in this way revealed the interconnectedness of our work across home-school-community landscapes, demonstrated our school progress towards our goals, and illuminated where our reform initiatives were situated in connection to the broader school reform movement. Ultimately, the school portfolios served as reflective tools that enhanced our understanding of past experiences, informed our present decisions, and led to future school improvement (Lyons, 1998, see also Craig, 2007). These reflective practices have continued for

thirteen years through my involvement with the Portfolio Group (Curtis et al., 2012), a knowledge community (Craig, 1992, 1995b, 2007) whose collaborative work has included portfolio-making, presentations, traveling journals, grant writing, action research, self-study, and publications (see also Gray, 2008).

Knowing- and reflecting-in-action translate to wakefulness (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) in narrative inquiry, where reflective awareness is not simply a stance the researcher takes, but rather is a way of being in the research. As previously discussed, wakefulness echoes Schön's (1983) concepts in that researchers bring their personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) with them into their inquiries and engage in constant reflection and interpretation throughout the study. The process of uninterrupted awareness, reflection, and interpretation—from the field to field text, to interim text and to research text— leads ultimately to the construction of meaning. When this reflective practice is coupled with researcher-participant relationships, it resonates with Aoki's assertion that authentic "teaching is watchfulness" (p. 8), or a kind of "mindful watching over." While narrative inquirers are not "watching over" their participants as teachers might watch over their students, the closeness in which inquirers work with their participants evokes the same sense of relational experience and caring as Aoki's watchfulness. The prospect of engaging in constant reflection during my inquiry resonates with reflective practices in my professional and personal life.

In summary, the assumptions and conceptualizations grounding narrative inquiry in experience and story resonate professionally with my understandings of teachers and the complex milieu in which the live and work. Together with the

practical connections to the relational aspects of narrative inquiry and teaching, and the personal correlations in reflection and wakefulness, these resonances provide the rationale for selecting narrative inquiry as my research method in this study.

Procedures of Inquiry

Thus far in this chapter, the theoretical underpinnings of narrative inquiry research methods have been presented and the rationale for selecting narrative inquiry methods explained. The following section provides an overview of the context and participants, followed by detailed descriptions of the procedures of the inquiry. All components of the study discussed here and in previous chapters are based on the common elements of narrative inquiry (see Figure 13).

Justification	Personal, social & practical
Name the phenomenon	"What" we are inquiring into; questions & wonderings
Methods	Theoretical framework of narrative inquiry ; types of field texts gathered
Analyze & interpret	Narrative commonplaces; reflection; broadening, burrowing, restorying, fictionalization
Position of study	In terms of other studies, the broader landscape, & other forms of research
Uniqueness of the study	Distinctive lens; coming alongside your participant
Ethical considerations	Researcher-participant relationships; confidentiality; negotiation of the research text with participants
Representational forms	Unpacking; resonance; metaphor, telling stories, parallel stories

Figure 13 – Common elements in narrative inquiry (Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007; see also Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000).

Context

   The site for this research is California High School, located in a well-established and predominantly Hispanic neighborhood of a large city in the southwestern United States (U.S.). Serving over 2700 students in Grades 9 through 12, California is described as a high minority (83.7 percent Hispanic), high poverty (82.7 percent) inner-city school with 70.6 percent of students characterized as at-risk of school failure. California's specialized instructional programs include: Applied Sciences and Engineering, Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate, Gifted and Talented. Overall the campus is rated Academically Acceptable by the state's education agency for 2011-12, reflecting campus passing rates of 89 percent in reading, 87 percent in math, 82 percent in science, and 95 percent in social studies. Of the total teaching staff, 50 percent of teachers have been in teaching for five years or less.

Participants

   The participants in this study included Sarah, an early-career teacher, and the researcher, both white females. Sarah (pseudonym) entered education through a traditional one-year teacher preparation program after obtaining a bachelor's in history and journalism. During the course of this inquiry she taught history at California, a local inner-city high school and pursued doctoral program studies in social studies and urban education. As the researcher, I became a participant in this inquiry as my personal experiences in education and in the study became visible. I entered this inquiry with almost twenty years of experience in bilingual education and school administration. While areas of experience included action research,

portfolio making, and self-study, this inquiry marked my entry into narrative inquiry as the primary researcher.

Field Texts

Field texts, referred to as data in other research methods, included observation notes, interview notes and transcripts, archival data, and researcher reflective journals (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000). The field texts were utilized for reflection, analysis, and interpretation, with the purpose of "discover[ing] and construct[ing] meaning in [the] texts" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 423). This process drew on Dewey's (1938/1997) notion of knowledge as the reconstruction of experience. Storied experiences initially captured in the field texts (constructed representations of participant and researcher experiences) were then be storied and/or restoried in the research text (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Craig, 1997). Exemplars from the field texts illuminated and explicated emergent themes in the study. The processes for gathering field texts are further explained below.

Observations. A total of 21 classroom observations were conducted between Sarah's first and third years in teaching. The purpose of classroom observations was to gain insights into the intricacies of Sarah's teaching practices and her relationships within her professional knowledge landscape. The stance that I adopted as a researcher was one of walking alongside Sarah as a co-participant rather than as a distanced observer (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This approach to observations helped to build a relationship between us and to create the trust that enabled our conversations to burrow deeper into Sarah's practice and the meaning-making and knowledge constructed as a result of her growing classroom experience.

Interviews. Interviews of various lengths were conducted in conjunction with each of the observations with the purpose of gaining knowledge and understanding of the Sarah's storied experiences and meaning she constructed related to those experiences (Mishler, 1990). In this study, I adopted Mishler's view of interviews as a problem solving activity in which my participant and I collaborated in bringing forward what teachers do in their practice. Interview questions were designed to elicit responses pertaining to Sarah's lived experiences as a novice teacher: choosing and transitioning into education, negotiating challenges, and constructing meaning from those experiences (Seidman, 1991).

➢ **Life History**

- Tell me about your early school experiences.

- How did you come to be a teacher?

➢ **Details of Experience**

- Tell me about your relationships with students, mentors, other campus teachers, administrators, parents, and the wider community.

- Tell me about the in-classroom challenges that you have encountered as a beginning and/or early-career teacher.

- Tell me about the out-of classroom challenges that you have encountered as a beginning and /or early-career teacher.

- How were you able to navigate your way through those challenges?

- Talk about the various people or systems (i.e. individuals, campus/off-campus groups, professional development, district programs, etc.) that have supported your beginning years in teaching.

➢ **Reflection on Meaning**

- What did you learn from those early-career experiences?

- Talk about the role or place of professional development in that learning?

- How have you changed as a teacher and person as a result of your experiences and new knowledge? (i.e., in practice, attitudes, values, etc.)

- What motivates you to continue teaching?

- What is the vision that you hold for yourself as a teacher?

Reflective journals. Researcher reflective journals were employed as field texts as a way of recording and gaining insights into the processes involved in narrative inquiry. Entries illuminated challenges and brought forward resonances between the teacher and researcher storied experiences.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Analysis and interpretation began with an in-depth review of and reflection upon the field texts. After identifying emergent themes, I created a variety of interim texts, including interim narratives centered on a particular theme, poetry, and researcher reflections. Throughout the process, the commonplaces of narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) were examined to illuminate the temporal

(backward and forward), social (inward and outward), and contextual (place) aspects of my participating teachers experiences. Additionally, I made use of Maxine Greene's (1995) notion of seeing small and seeing big in considering the field texts from multiple perspectives, such as that of the classroom teacher, the teacher educator, and the campus administrator or policymaker. According to Greene,

> To see things or people small, one chooses to see from a detached point of view, to watch behaviors from the perspective of a system, to be concerned with trends and tendencies rather than the intentionality and concreteness of everyday life. To see things or people big, one must resist viewing other human beings as mere objects or chess pieces and view them in their integrity and particularity instead. . . . When applied to schooling, the vision that sees things big brings us in close contact with details and with particularities that cannot be reduced to statistics or even to the measurable (Greene, 1995, p.10).

Analytical and Interpretive Tools

Utilizing analytical and interpretive tools allows the narrative inquirer to transition from the field texts to communicating lived experiences of participants in the research text. Drawing on the work of Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative tools employed to facilitate analysis and interpretation included broadening, burrowing, storying and restorying, and fictionalization (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Peer debriefing, or peer review, was also used, as described in the following paragraphs.

Broadening. By stepping back to consider Sarah's story in relation to the grand narrative of education, broadening provided the socio-cultural background of the studied experiences and connected the inquiry to the broader education landscape. In particular, Greene's (1995) notion of "seeing small" was utilized to link the study to current the broader education landscape and to position in the research within educational research (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007).

Burrowing. Utilizing burrowing, I probed into the meaning-making of participants' experiences, thereby illuminating emergent threads within the participants' stories. It included the examination of motivations, attitudes, beliefs, and values. This drew on Greene's (1995) concept of "seeing big," of working alongside participants to see the detail, complexity, and intentionality in their storied experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007).

Storying and restorying. These tools were used to bring forward the three-dimensional (temporal, contextual, and social) features of participant experiences. Storying and restorying illuminated how my participant's understandings of events and personal identity changed over time and across different spaces (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000, 2006; Craig, 1997).

Fictionalization. This tool was employed in some cases to decrease the likelihood of participants, schools, or districts being identified. This was a particularly important tool when a participant or context could be easily recognizable by others (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Debriefing

Debriefing with my participant and with critical friends was an integral feature of the inquiry as I strived for transparency throughout the study. Interim and research texts were shared with Sarah to verify accuracy and to provide a space in which to negotiate meaning (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, 1994, 2000). Additionally, teachers from my professional knowledge community, the Portfolio Group (Gray, 2008), provided critical feedback, thereby stimulating my reflective processes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Peer debriefing enabled me to check for any researcher bias in the inquiry (Carspecken, 1996).

Ethical Considerations

In narrative inquiry, relational ethics are given special consideration through the entirety of the study (Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007; see also Clandinin & Connelly, 1994) revealing yet another layer of relationship in narrative inquiry. As a participatory inquirer, I was mindful to the responsibility of developing and maintaining a trusting relationship with my participant, Sarah. For this reason, I remained transparent regarding the purposes of the study and shared interim and research texts as the inquiry progresses (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988). This practice helped to maintain the ethical responsibility I had to my participant and in ensuring that I "re-present[ed] [participant] voices and stories in resonant ways" (Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, p. 30). In addition, Sarah was assigned a pseudonym to protect her anonymity (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative methods of inquiry is achieved through the use of exemplars to address "the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006, p. 403) of the study and its findings. It is based on Mishler's (1990) reformulation of "validation as the social construction of knowledge," (417) in which exemplars show by example "how a practice works" (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002, p. 6). Using exemplars that express a sense of real-life experiences, or "lifelikeness" (Bruner, 1986, p. 11), in representing my participant's stories promoted trustworthiness in this study. More specifically, exemplars were useful in capturing both the intents of my participants' actions and their meaning-making in the midst of situations (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002). Through exemplars, the relational aspects of my participants' stories became illuminated, as well as the immediate and broader contexts in which those experiences occurred. Exemplars also aided in revealing my participant's identity as teacher and as person. Finally, utilizing exemplars helped me to connect to my reader and the reader to my participant's stories as stories were unpacked in the research text.

Representational Form of the Research

The representational form of the research text drew on the concept of resonance (Conle, 1996, 2000) and the narrative methods of telling stories (Craig, 1997) and parallel stories (Craig, 1999, 2003) (see Figure 14). It also employed the use of metaphor and original poetry.
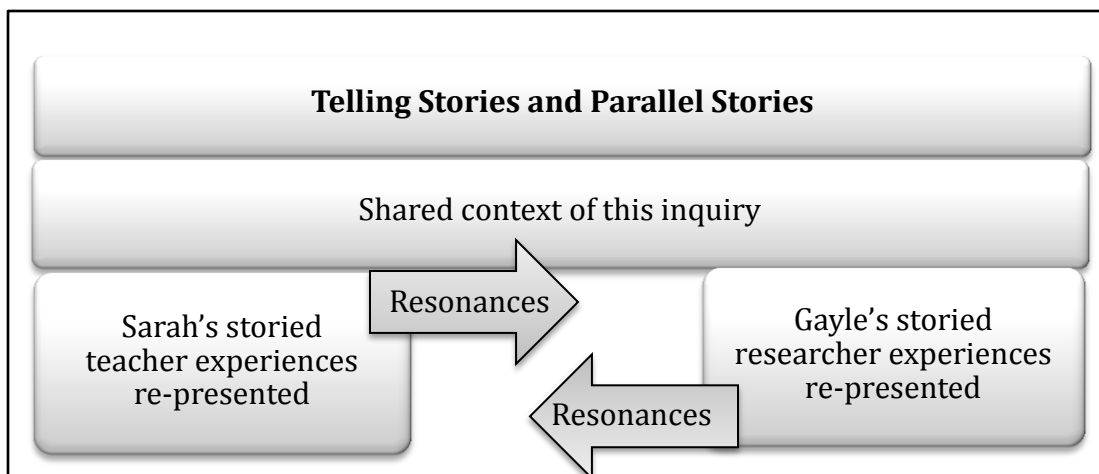
Figure 14 – Merging representational forms

Resonance

I utilized Conle's (1996, 2000) notion of resonance to highlight emergent themes from teacher narratives that paralleled my researcher narrative. These resonances were then connected to other teacher experiences represented in research literature. Representing the resonances of teacher and researcher experiences linked the research text to the broadening analysis and interpretation process; just as unpacking teachers' stories in the research text connected to burrowing in a similar manner (Clandinin, Pushor, Murray Orr, 2007).

Telling Stories: A Narrative Representational Form

In telling stories methodology, the researcher "re-present[s] the field texts [she] constructed as a series of stories" (Craig, 1999, p. 400) created by the participants and the researcher, which are then exchanged and responded to by each. The stories and responses are subsequently compiled into collections. In this inquiry, stories were compiled into a collection reflecting Sarah's first-year and third-year teaching experiences.

Parallel Stories: A Narrative Representational Form

Craig's (1999) parallel stories method incorporates "the narrative of a school as an institution" (p. 401) with "the stories of a teacher's experiences within that institution." The stories are then narratively woven together by the researcher. Drawing on each of this approach, my stories as researcher were laid alongside Sarah's re-presented stories and interwoven as a harmonic convergence.

Metaphor

The metaphor of harmonic convergence provided a way of talking about the concurrent teacher and researcher narratives paired in a single inquiry, while allowing consonances and dissonances to emerge.

Original Poetry

In addition, original interpretive poetry was written in response to Sarah's stories and my personal experiences. Utilized in the research text, these poems serve as introductory pieces to the main ideas expressed in the stories that follow.

<div align="center">

Summary

</div>

This chapter discussed the theoretical framework of the inquiry and presented a rationale for selecting narrative inquiry methodologies. Procedures relating to field texts, analytical and interpretive tools, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness were described. Finally, the representational format of the research text was explained. In addition to aiding the reader in understanding the research methodology employed in this inquiry, this chapter provides a backdrop for understanding the researcher experiences presented as parallel stories in the research text.

Chapter Four: Parallel and Converging Stories

Introduction

This narrative inquiry centered on the storied experiences of Sarah (pseudonym), a beginning teacher and me, a beginning researcher; experiences that transpired concurrently and resonated with one another. We were immersed in different yet similar situations that reflected the continuing progressions of our individual goals and reverberated with the challenges of beginning teacher and beginning researcher that lead to professional growth. Independently, our novice stories moved forward through ups and downs like notes on a musical staff, expressing unique and separate melodies. Those melodies converged within the context of this inquiry to form a new composition, one that Sarah and I composed together.

The inquiry began when I entered Sarah's classroom in conjunction with a qualitative research course during Sarah's first year in teaching and on into her second. Her beginning stories provoked numerous questions regarding the many influences on teachers' experiences and contexts, prompting me to spend much of Sarah's second year unpacking the stories and returning to the research literature. Eventually, my wonderings about the internal and external factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in education led me back to Sarah's classroom and the continuation of this inquiry.

To reflect the temporality of the inquiry, parallel teacher and researcher stories (Craig, 1999) are re-presented as two collections of stories—the first, "Our Beginning Stories," and the second, "Our Continuing Stories." Within each collection

(Craig, 1997) Sarah's teacher stories are followed by an unpacking, and then my

corresponding researcher stories presented as reflections (see Figure 15). Like

movements within a symphony, the two collections come together as one;

uncovering storied teacher and researcher experiences, revealing meaning

constructed, and illuminating professional growth.

Movement I – A Collection of Our Beginning Stories

- Curriculum-making: Content, Students, Teacher, and Milieu
  - Unpacking
  - Researcher Reflections: Letting narrative melodies emerge
- Students: Engagement, Learning , and Relationships
  - Unpacking
  - Researcher Reflections: Entering in the midst
- Accountability: Expectations, Comparisons, and Consequences
  - Unpacking
  - Researcher Reflections: Finding my place in the inquiry
- Critical Incidents: Unexpected, Unprovoked, and Unresolved
  - Unpacking
  - Researcher Reflections: Moving from field to research text
- Knowledge Communities: Support, Commonalities, and Sustainability
  - Unpacking
  - Researcher Reflections: Being Wakeful to Layered Stories

Interlude

Movement II – A Collection of Our Continuing Stories

- Teaching: Theory, Beliefs, and Personal Practical Knowing
  - Unpacking
  - Researcher Reflections: Burrowing and Broadening
- Relationships: Students, Conversations, Emotions, & Watchfulness
  - Unpacking
  - Researcher Reflections: Living a relational inquiry
- Transformation: Reflection, Change, Challenges, and Vision
  - Unpacking
  - Researcher Reflections: Becoming a narrative inquirer

Figure 15 - Beginning and continuing stories re-presented in the inquiry

Movement I: Our Beginning Stories

Curriculum-making: Content, Students, Teacher, and Milieu

Finding my way
along the twists and turns has not been easy,
yet I tirelessly, determinedly,
venture on along the path before me.
Sometimes people, plans, and purpose gel as events unfold
recalling the reasons why <u>this</u> *road is the path I chose.*

Excerpt from *Finding my Way* by Gayle Curtis
(See Appendix A for entire poem)

Sarah first became interested in politics and social issues during high school

when she frequently entered into debate on current issues with her social studies

teacher. Eventually, those interests led her to becoming a certified high school

history teacher and steered her into a social studies doctoral program in which

urban education and critical pedagogy became a new focus. From her first year to

her current third year in education, Sarah's teaching practices have reflected these

areas of interest and informed her classroom decision-making. As a beginning

teacher just starting out in education, Sarah's goal in lesson planning was to:

> Deconstruct the curriculum and rebuild it into something that [she] feels is
>
> honest to the students, providing them multiple perspectives of an event, and
>
> in a way that is more engaging than what [students] are used to doing.
>
> (Interview excerpt, November 2011)

Looking back at Sarah's teaching during her first year, lessons were designed

to draw out connections between historical episodes and current issues introduced

by Sarah or offered by students during class. Lessons were intended to elicit

student-to-teacher and student–to-student conversations, with quick-paced lectures in which Sarah called on students every few minutes to answer questions and project-oriented learning activities that typically provided opportunities for students to voice their opinions on either the historical era studied or a related present day topic. By engaging her students in dialogue around historical occurrences and related current issues, she aimed to raise students' critical awareness and promote critical thinking. Rather than utilize district issued textbooks, Sarah used primary source alternative texts (van Hover & Yeager, 2004) to demonstrate varied historical perspectives drawn from multiple sources. In her opinion, textbooks most often "represent the mainstream view of historical events" (interview excerpt, November 2011) and do not necessarily "reflect events from the perspective of non-mainstream groups," namely minorities, subgroups, and marginalized populations.

Sarah routinely integrated technology and hands-on activities into her lessons, devoting much of her instructional time to facilitation of student learning. On a typical day, Sarah greeted her students at the door and they immediately began working on a digitally displayed, and timed, warm-up activity which students completed independently. Lessons then led into the day's instructional objectives and key points. One day, for example, she prepared a digital sequence of political cartoons on the construction of the Panama Canal, which became a story of multiple perspectives from which the class discussed and analyzed contrasting views of a historical event. Students then created individual cartoons to illustrate their own opinions on self-selected current issues (see Figure 16). In another lesson, Sarah

linked maps, newspaper articles, and photos to create a digital story of America's

Open-Door policy of 1899, and then led the class in a discussion of key points. In

both lessons, students utilized the classroom computer to pull resources from the

internet to support and/or enhance their related class work.

Figure 16 – Student projects on free trade and non-violence

Reflecting on what she had learned during her first year of teaching, Sarah

pointed to lesson development as her greatest challenge. She explained that it had

required much more time and effort than had been anticipated. According to Sarah,

analyzing state objectives, "deconstruct[ing] the curriculum" (interview excerpt,

March 2011), and creating lessons as she went along was the most stressful aspect

of teaching during her first year. Although she had previous lessons to draw from

and build upon as the year progressed, she continued her analysis of state social

studies objectives throughout the school year while simultaneously correlating and

integrating recent events into her lessons. The effort required was something Sarah

considered to be a "natural element of being a classroom teacher" (interview

excerpt, March 2011). She indicated that there were "millions of smaller things"

that she gained through the day-to-day experiences of teaching and working with

students, adding, "Nothing compares to those experiences, but I am very grateful for

the strong theoretical foundation that guides my practice" (interview excerpt, March

2011).

Unpacking curriculum-making: Content, students, teacher, and milieu.

Sarah's first-year experiences drew attention to the role of teacher preparation

programs in equipping beginning teachers with the knowledge and skills needed for

the classroom (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, 2012) to establish their classroom practice,

to create lessons based on state objectives, and then to implement lessons in a way

that engages students. Her approach to teaching and curriculum-making provided

insights into her personal interests, hinted at her philosophy of education, and

showed that she was developing her own understanding of what it means to enact

theory in practice.

In her first year of teaching, she spent much of her after school time

deconstructing the curriculum and rebuilding it in a way that represented multiple

perspectives. This recalled the work of Jonathon Kozol (1999). He challenged

teachers to "desanctify" (p. 3) the education system by not only questioning the

purposes of education, but by identifying the values and ideologies embedded in and

perpetuated by that system. More specifically, Kozol stated,

> Anything that was first contrived by men and women can be taken
>
> apart or thrown away by men and women also. It isn't unchangeable.

It isn't inexorable. You and I can leave school as it is, can change it

slightly, or else we can turn it inside out and upside down. (p.8)

Sarah's practice—utilizing alternate texts in presenting multiple perspectives

of historical events, creating student activities that relate to student current

realities, and integrating technology—reflected instructional practices suggested by

the national social studies curriculum (Herczog, 2010). It also demonstrated her

desire to be more than a conduit (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) for the school's and

district's sacred story of teaching (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996); that is to say the

system's view of how and what she should teach.

In the process of exploring the curriculum and pulling together learning

experiences for her students, she acted as an agent of translation and became a

curriculum-maker (Schwab, 1973), combining her content knowledge, personal

practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), and understanding of the

students' needs amid the classroom milieu. In addition, the way in which Sarah

constructed lessons in a story-like fashion to convey multiple perspectives of

historical events demonstrated the narrative quality of teaching (Jackson, 1995)

that has the capacity to transform students' knowledge and understanding. Sarah's

approach to teaching and curriculum-making provided insights into her personal

interests, hinted at her philosophy of education, and showed that she was

developing her own understanding of what it means to enact theory in practice.

Researcher Reflections: Letting Narrative Melodies Emerge

Just as novice teachers entering the classroom for the first time finally have

the opportunity to apply what they learn, this inquiry provided me with the

opportunity to apply what I have learned in regards to narrative inquiry. At the

same time, there was the ever present realization that I was learning as I went—

sometimes feeling confident, other times feeling like a fish out of water. Although I

brought with me an entourage of multiple I's (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Day

& Kington, 2008; Day, 2002; Olson, 2000)—Gayle as Bilingual Teacher, Gayle as

Principal, Gayle as Coach, Gayle as Doctoral Student, Gayle as Singer/Songwriter,

Gayle as Learner, as Daughter, as Sister and Friend, etc.—I did not have a central

identity to claim or role to hold onto as I initiated this narrative inquiry. It is

probably correct to say that at this point I did not know which of my identities to act

through or to draw on in regards to knowledge and expertise. There were certainly

times when I drew on my own experiences as teacher, coach, and administrator to

gain insights into Sarah's beginning journey, particularly when watching and

reflecting on her teaching and the multiple landscapes she had to learn to navigate.

At the same time, I found myself going back to reread research on narrative inquiry,

and to make new and meaningful theory-practice connections, which led me to

consider myself to be as much a learner as a researcher at this early point in my

inquiry. Ultimately, I considered this an appropriate position since researchers are

perpetual inquirers, life-long learners who question, delve, uncover, and discover.

One of my concerns in the initial stage of this study was that I might fall back

on my principal-self during observations of Sarah's classroom, thus producing more

of an evaluation than a re-telling of her story. I kept going back to Joann Phillion's

(2002) description of one of her early studies in which she entered a multicultural

classroom with a "script" (p. 268) already prepared. According to Phillion, she

carried with her a preconceived notion of the teacher qualities and classroom engagement she would observe as based on her previous studies, research, teaching experiences, and theoretical foundations.   In a way, she was laying her anticipated story over the preexisting story of her participant teacher, using a "script [that] served as an undetected, unspoken hypothesis for [her] planned inquiry" (p. 268). Phillion abandoned the assumptions of her preconceived script, however, when confronted with the reality of the daily life of a multicultural classroom that actualized theoretical expectations in complex and unexpected ways.

        With this in mind, I determined to be cognizant of my own script and the story line that I might be tempted to carry into this study. Taking the lessons learned from Phillion to heart, my goal at the onset of this inquiry was to uncover and explore Sarah's unique story as it naturally emerged, and to utilize my own experiences and personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) as a teacher, as well as my multiple I's (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Day, & Kington, 2008; Olson, 2000), to gain a deeper understanding of her situated experiences. My desire was to bring Sarah's story to the forefront, to let her voice soar in the telling, and to allow the narrative melodies of her story to emerge naturally throughout this inquiry. As I moved through this inquiry with Sarah, I reflected upon my storied experiences of becoming a researcher with the hopes of gaining insights into what it means to be a narrative inquirer.

Students: Engagement, Learning, and Relationships

> *I find relationship in those I guide and teach.*
> *Enveloped in a sense of watchfulness*
> *I wait in hopeful anticipation*
> *of the goals that they will reach.*

Excerpt from *Finding my Way* by Gayle Curtis
(See Appendix A for entire poem)

Examining Sarah's classroom teaching practices provided insight into the influence of her personal beliefs regarding teaching and learning on her lesson planning, development, and implementation. Teacher-student relationships came forward as an equally integral part of Sarah's first year as a teacher, as evidenced in her classroom facilitation, extracurricular activities, and personal reflections. All of this tied back to the way in which she specifically constructed her lessons with her students in mind. In reflecting on Sarah's classroom, her exchanges with students, and their combined interactions with the curriculum, the metaphor *centerpoint of teaching* emerged as representational of where Sarah consistently placed her students in her teaching—at the center. In Sarah's view,

> *All* (italics in original) kids need good teachers, regardless of the type of
>
> school situation, but now I've grown attached to my kids and school and I
>
> really can't imagine teaching anywhere else in the near future. I've also found
>
> more opportunities for influencing meaningful change that I don't think I
>
> would have at other schools. (E-mail communication, March 2011)
>
> On a typical day, Sarah spent most of her time facilitating—walking around

the room continuously and weaving in and out of the groups as students worked on their assignments. She periodically stopped, leaned in to look at a piece of work,

and asked questions. Other times she stopped in response to student questions. At such times, Sarah routinely turned to face the student, look him or her in the eyes, and lower her voice as they carried on a conversation. The fact that she lowered her voice made teacher-student interactions almost seem like a private conversation even though these dialogues took place surrounded by a classroom of actively engaged students. When exchanges with students were audible, Sarah's comments and questions to students focused on the progression of the activity at hand, drawing out the students' thought processes, and punctuated by affirmations of, "That's right," "Yes," and "You can do it." While Sarah facilitated and encouraged her students during their work, she was mindful of students who needed additional support, returning to those students frequently throughout the class period.

An example of this was Sarah's coaching of a tall, slender, ginger-haired boy who I called "Rob" (pseudonym). He caught my attention initially because of his demeanor. While other students around him worked, he sat silent and still, his head faced forward and hands resting quietly on top of the blank white sheet in front of him. Moving his eyes from one paper to the next, Rob slowly surveyed the work of other students in his group for a few minutes, and then, picked up his pencil and began to write. Before long, however, Rob was once again idle and slumped in his chair. That is when Sarah made her way over to his group.

She immediately eased herself into the empty chair next to Rob and the two carried on an inaudible discussion while the rest of the class continued working on their individual projects. Several minutes of quiet conversation passed before Sarah rose from her seat to continue her facilitation walk around the room. She had only

gone a few feet when Rob pushed his chair back, stood, and walked over to one of the computers in front of the whiteboard.

Rob: (muffled) So is it here? (Pointing to the computer nearest his group.)

Sarah: I don't know if that one has internet access. (Turning her head.)

Rob: What? (Raising his voice slightly.)

Sarah: I don't know if that has internet access or not.   I'll pull it up on the big
          screen.

Walking over to the computer, Sarah pulled up a map of Europe on the whiteboard, then moved away to continue her facilitation walk around the room. She had only gone a few feet, when Rob's frustrated voice rose above the buzz of the classroom.

Rob: Do I have to draw <u>that</u>?

Sarah: Here you go. (Using her finger, Sarah traced the border of Germany
          projected on the whiteboard).

With his eyes, Rob followed Sarah's hand as she traced the map and then turned to watch her return to other students, slumping back in the chair as she walked away.

Rob: I can't draw that! (Spoken with frustration in the voice and loud
          enough so that Sarah heard the comment from across the room. He
          seemed to be saying, "How do you expect me to draw that?")

Sarah: Just draw the outline. (Said in an even tone, and a calm and
          reassuring manner.)

Rob: (inaudible mumble)

Sarah: (Once again Sarah walked over to the whiteboard and outlined the

border.) It's right here. Just get the basic outline of it and you can

label it. (Her response had an encouraging quality to it.)

Throughout the rest of the period Sarah returned several times to assist

Rob—checking on progress, helping him to think through his next steps as he

worked. When asked about this student after class, Sarah explained that she had

anticipated him needing help because he had been absent the previous day when

the class began the assignment. "He's a bright boy but his absences are interfering

with his learning," she said, adding, "I try to keep an eye on him because I know he

needs my help." The attentiveness exhibited with Rob, and the continuous

supportive facilitation given to all students, were characteristic of Sarah's daily

interactions with her students.

For Sarah, teacher-student relationships extended beyond traditional class

time. In the spring of her first year she tutored students and started a History Club.

Sometimes the tutoring occurred after school, and other times during Sarah's

planning period. That was the case one afternoon when a Hispanic girl came in

during Sarah's planning period. Pausing at the door, she apologized for the

interruption, and then explained that she had completed her work in another class

and received permission to come work with Sarah. With that, Sarah invited her into

the room and they worked together on a Language Arts essay for the remainder of

the period.

Meeting every couple of weeks, Sarah's History Club provided a space in

which to view film clips on social issues and to examine their impact on society. Of

the 19 students participating in the club, most were sophomore students who anticipated having Sarah as their Grade 11 AP history teacher the following school year. Sarah thought that this gave the students some idea of what they could expect in Sarah as their teacher. At the same time, these extracurricular activities presented her with an opportunity to get to know and build relationships with current and future students.

When asked what she learned about herself as a teacher during this first year journey, aspects of teacher-student relationships and Sarah's transition to the classroom stood out. She described how she was initially apprehensive about teaching high-achieving, AP students and the consequences of not keeping them engaged due in part because she, too, was an "AP kid" in high school who "could give a teacher grief if [she] wasn't being challenged" (interview excerpt, February 2011). With training and experience, however, she came to enjoy teaching her AP class and creating challenging learning experiences for them, and even developed a reputation as a "tough but fair" teacher. Upon further reflection, Sarah emphasized her teacher-student interactions, stating that "the relationships that [she] cultivated with [her] students became an integral part of [her] teaching." While she bonded with some class groups very early in the year, building relationships with other classes was more of a process, requiring time, reflection, and action on her part. Sarah elaborated on that process and its rewards as follows:

> By just treating kids as human beings, listening to their problems, giving
>
> them advice about college or their future, and individualizing feedback, I'm

building a relationship with them that will hopefully result in them giving

100 percent in my class. (Interview excerpt, October 2010)

As for the future, Sarah looks forward to working with her students, teaching more

thematically, taking on more AP classes, and continuing to improve both teaching

and learning in her classroom.

Unpacking students: Engagement, learning, and relationships. Sarah's

actions and mindfulness in her interactions showed her commitment to placing

students at the center of her teaching. She spent time getting to know her students

and understanding their particular challenges. This, and the way in which she

quietly and confidently walked around the classroom and guided students, led me to

characterize her as a smooth, unobtrusive, and discerning facilitator. Similarly, her

one-on-one, focused interactions with students revealed her as a thoughtful,

attentive listener. Because learning occurs within a social experience (Dewey,

1938/1997), the relationships Sarah established in the classroom with her students

are an extension of or a reflection of life relationships.

The teacher-student relationships that Sarah established in classrooms

reinforced the notion of students as the centerpoint of teaching. It brought to mind

Dewey's (1938/1997) assertion that learning occurs within a social experience as

students and teachers interact, not only with the curriculum, but with each other.

As she carried those experiences to out-of-the-classroom spaces through

extracurricular activities, Sarah's relationships with her students also became

extensions of, or reflections of, life relationships that frequently extend over

multiple landscapes.

The importance that Sarah placed on teacher-student relationships and the students' subsequent classroom engagement reiterates research findings (Cornelius-White, 2007) showing that person-centered teaching increases student classroom participation, satisfaction, and motivation to learn. When Sarah listened to the concerns of her students, and brought those elements into the classroom, she was strengthening the teacher-student bonds and the capacity to use the "energy of their connections to drive [them] through the content" (Christensen, 2008, p.65). The teacher-student interactions in Sarah's classroom, her mindfulness, and her deliberate efforts to build relationships with her students indicated the important role social interactions played in her beginning teacher experiences.

Researcher Reflections: Entering in the Midst

Reflecting on Sarah's relationships with her students and how her instruction centered on their needs evoked the realization that I was "entering in the midst" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20, p. 63). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) put forth the idea of "entering in the midst" as an important feature of narrative inquiry. They assert that when narrative inquirers enter classrooms or other contextualized situations to begin an inquiry they are, in reality, stepping into on-going narratives, or stories in progress. That is to say that the people at the center of the study (i.e. the teacher participant(s) and their students already have a history comprised of shared experiences and characterized by evolving relationships.

That sense of history and shared stories was certainly evident in the context of this study where Sarah and her students had been together long before I entered their space. The behavior of students as they entered and moved around the

classroom, the manner in which Sarah interacted and responded to her students, and the way in which students worked independently, sought her feedback, and deferred to her judgment, evoked a palpable sense that teacher and students had spent much time together working out how they would live and learn together within this school space. Once a term that I understood conceptually, "entering in the midst" became a tacit and almost tangible knowing. I recall the students' furtive glances when they first saw me come into their classroom—making feel a bit of an outsider, an interloper if you will.   However, Sarah's explanation that I was there to give her feedback seemed to alleviate any student concerns, as evident by the looks of relief on many student faces. Quickly, any tensions eased and students got about their business of learning as usual, leaving me feeling very comfortable in the space with Sarah and her students. Although my past experiences in classrooms and schools may have contributed to that comfort, it seemed to emanate more from Sarah's welcoming attitude towards me and her students' acceptance of me in the space than from the experience that I brought with me.   Entering into the on-going stories of Sarah and her students, I appreciated their shared history and recognized that their ever-changing stories would continue on after I left.

Mindfully watching the interactions between Sarah and her students took me back to my years as an assistant principal in another local inner-city high school, working with students about to transition into a new life phase. It even took me back to my early days as a bilingual teacher, helping immigrant students acculturate to their new surroundings while learning math, reading, science, and social studies and acquiring English at the same time. Being in the shared classroom space made

me wonder about the narratives that had played out between Sarah and her students thus far in the school year. My attention was drawn to the classroom environment as a concrete example of the presence of a collaborative history between Sarah and her students. Students were self-directed and did not bother Sarah with the simple things, like asking to use the stapler. Instead, their time was focused on learning, accentuated with easy dialogues between teacher and students. What steps had Sarah taken to create this learning environment? What challenges had she confronted?

Thoughtfully watching Sarah's interactions with students and reflecting on the routines she set in place resonated in my mind, evoking images of setting up my first classroom. I remembered visualizing how students would navigate and utilize the classroom space and recalled thinking through the many procedures that would occur during the day. It resulted in students being much more self-directed and taking ownership for our classroom. Simultaneously, it facilitated students feeling comfortable in the space because they were made aware of my expectations for how things would be done in the classroom and actively engaged them in maintaining the space that we shared and cohabited during school hours. Those memories brought on other recollections of students gathered at the end of the school year giving me solicited advice on how I could improve the following school year. Reliving my beginning story brought forward similarities between my personal teacher narrative and that of Sarah. While I did not know directly her initial experiences with students, I could in some way imagine them through the lens of my earlier experiences.

The easy flow and respectful ambiance of Sarah's classroom seemed to speak to the preparations that all teachers make in anticipation of receiving students into their classrooms; preparations that continue as teacher and students construct a communal understanding of how simple routines can help everyone move quickly into the meaningful (and fun) part of being in a classroom—learning, getting to know one another, building relationships, and growing. This same sort of anticipatory preparation was present in the classroom shared by Sarah and her students. The way that she greeted her students at the doorway at the beginning of each class, how she strategically placed student folders and supplies on a table near the entrance, and the manner in which the desks were grouped were indications of thoughtful preparation.

While I previously voiced that teacher-student relationships begin on the first day of school, considering the "anticipatory preparation" reminded me that these relationships actually begin long before students arrive. They begin when, much like an expectant parent, the teacher develops her curriculum and lessons, thinking through how to utilize the classroom space and materials to best facilitate teaching and learning. Having prepared the classroom to run smoothly, the teacher then has time to not only focus on teaching and learning, but also in getting to know her students and building relationships. It seemed Sarah had given much thought, time, and energy into creating a learning environment for her students and that I was witnessing the reward as evidenced in the amount of time devoted to learning and the space created in which teacher-student relationships could flourish through interaction, conversation, and the co-construction of knowledge.

Accountability: Expectations, Comparisons, and Consequences

*From time to time
my path is littered with tripping stones,
veiled by torments of test bubbles raining down,
forming landmines on the ground.
Nevertheless, I journey on.*

Excerpt from *Finding my Way* by Gayle Curtis
(See Appendix A for entire poem)

Coming into this inquiry, one of my concerns centered on the well-being of

teachers working and living in tension-filled environments as a result of high-stakes

accountability. While I vowed not to anticipate or to seek out accountability-related

tensions in Sarah's story, they naturally emerged as a significant feature of her first-

year experiences. It occurred three months into the academic year when California

High School administered the first of many common assessments leading up to

annual state testing. When I visited Sarah in her classroom that day, frustration

registered on her face and in her voice. "Look at this," she insisted, pointing to

blurry political cartoons that students were to interpret on the benchmark

assessment. "How do they expect students to read this? I guess I'll have to look for

the cartoons on the internet and put them up on the screen" (interview excerpt,

October 2010). As Sarah later related, her frustration over poorly constructed

assessments turned to disappointment when she received student test results.

Later, when I asked about the performance of her mostly minority and at-risk

students' on the benchmark, Sarah stated simply, "I'm really dismayed." Her less-

than-positive outlook and stooped shoulders seemed to express what her words did

not: I'm upset because my efforts did not produce the results I hoped for; all

teachers are expected to produce high scores on common assessments; and I'm a new teacher who is still learning. Although her students' scores demonstrated a satisfactory passing rate, they were in fact lower than those of other teachers in her department. What seemed equally disturbing to Sarah was that individual teacher class scores had all been compared in a campus meeting.

Sarah's demeanor improved markedly by my next visit. She had learned that other teachers conducted objective-by-objective reviews prior to the benchmark test, perhaps giving their students an advantage over Sarah's. Because she had not reviewed the material immediately before the benchmark test, Sarah felt that she had identified at least part of the reason why her students had not performed to the standards held by her and her campus. Also, her spirits may have improved because other teachers assured her that the benchmark tests were unimportant, stating that the real importance was how students performed on the annual state history test.

Subsequently, Sarah's campus appraiser (an administrator) criticized her teaching for including too much facilitation and, in the words of her appraiser, not "teaching what matters"—despite the high level of student engagement that was taking place in her classroom on a daily basis. In the appraisal, the supervisor suggested that Sarah follow the teaching practices of more veteran teachers, copycatting their use of lecture and work sheets to increase the consistency of scores across the campus. In discussing the situation, Sarah expressed her desire to select instructional activities that were interesting and at the same time required students to use their creativity and reasoning skills. She did not want to "just lecture" as some of the other teachers on her team did on a daily basis. This

interplay of a campus emphasis on student test results and teacher instructional decisions further heightened the tensions Sarah already felt about testing.

Despite the inner conflict, her evaluation of the benchmark tests identified a gap between how students applied knowledge and skills in the classroom and how they performed on benchmark tests. Reflecting on her analysis led Sarah to incorporate note-taking of key ideas "so that students have a foundation of information from which [to work]" (interview excerpt, November, 2010) and literacy strategies to help students who struggle with below grade-level reading skills. She also applied strategies gained through AP training to provide differentiated instruction in all of her classes to meet the needs of her students.

By the spring of her first year, Sarah was incorporating modified AP materials into her regular history class lessons, partly as a result of her students' request to have the same learning experiences as the AP class, and partly because Sarah wanted to present her regular classes with more challenging materials.   The lessons required students to read a text, write a reflection connecting the reading to their experiences, and then answer text-related questions. While the format of these lesson materials was different from state tests, they required students to utilize the same skills needed on the state history test later in the spring. As that date grew closer, the entire campus spent two weeks focusing on test-taking strategies and objective reviews to prepare students for high-stakes tests. These test preparations supplanted Sarah's attempt to teach American History to her students and curtailed her desire to focus on historical themes rather than on history course objectives.

Accountability tensions were a constant throughout Sarah's first-year

experience, sometimes more acutely so as after the first benchmark tests when her

student scores were compared with those of other teachers. Sarah best described

this on-going tension between her practice and the expectations on her practice that

flowed in from outside of the classroom when she shared:

> State testing is something that I feel is ALWAYS lurking in the back of
>
> my mind. It's the bar by which my performance will be judged and
>
> that thought doesn't leave my mind. (Interview excerpt, March 2011)

Unpacking accountability: Expectations, comparisons, and

consequences. In discussing current issues surrounding accountability, Dorn

(2007) wrote, "The dominant discussion of accountability leaves vague the goal of

accountability mechanisms. The improvement of schools is an insufficient goal

because accountability is fundamentally a political and not a technical process" (p.

161). Sarah's first-year experiences with the district and campus accountability-

related policies highlighted some of the ways in which policies and accountability

mechanisms make their way into teachers' classroom and brought to life what

Amrein and Berliner (2002) describe as the "unintended consequences of high-

stakes testing" (p.12). The incorporation of materials and activities that called upon

students to use the same skills needed for state exams indicated that Sarah was

knowledgeable about state test requirements and that she wanted to prepare her

students for the Grade 11 history exam. At the same time, the campus-wide

concentration on test preparation, which included Sarah's classes, showed how

high-stakes testing reduces student exposure to the curriculum (Taylor, Shepard,

Kinner & Rosenthal, 2003). Taking only the two weeks prior to testing into consideration, student exposure to curriculum at California High School was reduced by approximately ten days due to the campus required review of objectives and test-taking strategies. While the time dedicated to test preparation was an administrative decision, the situation raised concerns as to what parts of the curriculum were eliminated or marginally taught (Good et al., 2010) to accommodate test prep activities.

Other unintentional consequences were evidenced in the uncomfortable, stressful, and sometimes confusing experiences that Sarah encountered throughout the year. Having her scores compared to those of other teachers was a rude awakening for Sarah to the external pressure to produce results (high test scores) in an era of high-stakes accountability (Faulkner & Cook, 2007; Pedulla et al., 2003; Hamilton, Stecher, & Klein, 2002). Her supervisor's suggestion that she incorporate more lecture and worksheets to improve scores suggested the level of importance placed on test scores at California High. It also characterized a trend to teach fundamental content and use scripted teaching materials which lead to the deskilling of teachers (Apple, 1990) and the rejection of teacher authority and expertise. The criticism that Sarah received as a new teacher was a sign of the demoralization of our public school institutions that "squelch and marginalize its more energetic, more enthusiastic, or best-prepared members" (Payne, 2010)— including beginning teachers like Sarah.

Sarah is not alone, however, in feeling the pressures of high-stakes testing that lurked in the back of her mind as a constant reminder that her performance

would be judged ultimately on student performance. Craig's (2004) Eagle High

School principal Henry Richards likened the accountability system to a "dragon in

your backyard" (p.1230) that the school needed "to appease . . . or face the

consequences when it rears its fire-breathing head." Sarah's supervisor appeased

the dragon by pushing teachers to use lecture and worksheets. Sarah's way of

dealing with the dragon in her schoolyard was to forge ahead along the path that

she had chosen for herself and her students. In spite of the tensions and concerns,

Sarah embraced her beliefs and persisted in her efforts to engage her students in

interactive experiences and to build their awareness of multiple perspectives of

historical events.

Researcher Reflections: Finding my Place in the Inquiry

Coming into this inquiry, I had not anticipated feeling conflicted about

evidencing Sarah's experiences. I was wrong. On two occasions I struggled with my

role as researcher. The first situation arose when Sarah shared her "dismay" at her

students' test scores from the first benchmark test and the fact that her scores had

been compared to those of other teachers. The second occurred when she

experienced a critical incident in which a fellow teacher maligned California's

students and parents. In both situations Sarah was visibly shaken, as shown in her

voice, posture, and demeanor. She also seemed perplexed, not quite knowing how

to wrap her mind around her current circumstances. In one situation I was

concerned that Sarah seemed dejected and in the other I felt anger that Sarah had to

cope with a situation not of her making. In both, I was intensely concerned for

Sarah's well-being.

Each of these situations was shared by Sarah at the beginning of an interview. In each case, I immediately became uncomfortable with documenting our exchanges at times when I perceived her to be vulnerable. Each time, I ended the interview, turned off the recorder, and simply carried on a conversation with Sarah. In both situations, it seemed that who I needed to be at that moment in time was not a researcher—but my role was not clear. I had a sense of changing hats, of taking off my researcher hat and putting on one of coach or colleague or even friend. In essence, I followed my instincts, my experience, and my heart as to what needed to happen at the time.

My actions in these two situations caused me consternation as I began to doubt my actions. Had I done the right thing? Was I not in Sarah's classroom to evidence her experiences? Had I lost the opportunity to capture some unique insight into Sarah's every day lived experiences by turning off the recorder? For quite some time I carried the story of "changing hats" forward, attributing it to where I was as a researcher—a novice researcher in training, still adapting to my role as researcher.

The "changing hats" story raised questions about the role of the researcher and in particular the exchanges between researcher and teacher participant. It made me wonder about the imaginary boundaries surrounding what a narrative inquirer does. I began to consider the sensitive material captured in personal teacher stories and the balance researchers must maintain between delving into another person's lived story and honoring the researcher-participant relationship that is at the heart of bringing that person's story forward. It illuminated the

mindfulness that narrative inquirers must possess as participants share their lived and very personal experiences. Reflecting on this reiterated the importance of sharing interim and research texts with participants to negotiate, not only the meaning of the text, but the content of the text as well.

Eventually, I came to see my "changing hats" story as finding my place in the inquiry as a responsible researcher and co-participant walking alongside of Sarah. In neither of the situations had Sarah verbally expressed discomfort, but I had observed it. By prioritizing Sarah's well-being over the inquiry, I had acted instinctually from experience, and ethically and morally as a researcher. In both instances, I was able to revisit the situations with Sarah on another day, at which times she was open and straightforward about her experiences. Consequently, these experiences made their way into this research text, but only after sharing the research text with Sarah and receiving her approval. In doing this I felt that I fulfilled my obligation to take care in composing "a text that does not rupture life stories" in regards to Sarah (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 173) while concurrently taking care to show the reader how this story was lived and told within the inquiry.

Sarah's openness and my being present as Sarah lived these experiences, conveyed a real sense of coming to where she was in her teacher journey, of walking alongside her. I had become part of the inquiry, a co-participant; one who was continuously shifting between moving up close and stepping back with mindful reflection and wakefulness.

Critical Incidents: Unexpected, Unprovoked, and Unresolved

> *The barkers' calls crescendo, rise and fall*
> *as side shows materialize beside the road,*
> *lights and bells and whistles*
> *proclaim attractions row on row.*
> *Raucous distractions meant to lure me from my goal.*
> *I shake my head, I turn my back,*
> *I take a step—and journey on.*

Excerpt from *Finding my Way* by Gayle Curtis
(See Appendix A for entire poem)

Introduction to the Incident

In the spring of her first year, Sarah shared a critical incident that occurred during a campus teacher meeting, at which time derogatory remarks were made regarding California's students. This particular incident so bothered Sarah that it came up twice in our discussions and was also brought forward by her in a later university class discussion in relation to current issues in education. There were certainly other events that occurred during Sarah's first year that took her aback or brought about serious reflection (i.e., her appraiser's comments about her teaching, the public comparison of her students' scores on benchmark tests). This event, in particular, seemed to come out of nowhere, causing Sarah to deal with a situation that was completely out of her control and seemingly unrelated to where she was in her teaching and relationships with her students. After much consideration about the sensitive nature of what was said during the meeting, I concluded that that this critical issue helped to shed light on the complexities of the contexts in which teachers work; and more specifically illuminated tensions and personal struggles affecting the school climate in which Sarah worked.

In the spirit of full disclosure and respect for our relationship, I shared and discussed my findings with Sarah prior to their inclusion, which she agreed upon. It should be noted in the retelling of this event that the description of the incident and of Sarah's reaction is based on my participating teacher's account of the event. Additionally, the pseudonym of "Foster" is given to the teacher leader who reportedly made the remarks about students and no pronouns used that would reveal Foster's gender to protect this person's identity. The following description of the broader school district context explains the issues at play in the background of the critical incident. To protect the anonymity of the school district, details of the story that might identify the district have been somewhat obscured.

The critical incident context. To understand fully the context of the critical incident, one must look back several years to when the school district received a prestigious award to fund its value-added program. Designed after Tennessee's system, the school district's pay-for-performance program established bonuses for teachers based on the annual academic growth demonstrated by their students (Radcliffe, 2007). A few years later, the school district formally tied student performance to teachers' jobs by including value-added data to reasons for teacher contract non-renewal.

In the months before the incident, teachers at California and throughout the district became concerned about possible teacher lay-offs due to severe state budget cuts (KTRK, 2011). To offset the funding loss, the district superintendent's school board proposal outlined an increase in school taxes, school closures, and job eliminations, including central office workers, police officers, and almost 2,000

teachers. Although principals in the district had responsibility for funding allocations at their individual campuses, the full impact of budget reductions on schools and teaching positions was unclear. As a result, tensions, rumors, and speculations regarding program cuts, school closures, and teacher lay-offs abounded across the district.

The Critical Incident

Amid this air of student-performance-dependent teacher evaluations and uncertainty regarding teaching positions, the critical incident occurred during a scheduled on-campus teacher meeting with no administrators in attendance. According to Sarah, the purpose of the meeting was to discuss strategies for preparing students for upcoming state accountability tests. The following is a segment of my conversation with Sarah in which she shared the incident.

> Sarah: Since [state tests] are coming up, we had one, I guess an additional [meeting], one more than usual. It was standard stuff for the most part; talking about the budget cuts that everyone is afraid of; and upcoming [state test] and what's going to happen with that.
>
> Sarah: But . . . after, you know, <u>most</u> of the business had been taken care of, kind of at the tail end of the budget cut discussion. All us of have jobs next year, obviously. Our principal is working with that and he actually seems optimistic that we'll all have jobs.
>
> Gayle: That's good news, then, that you and the other teachers don't have to worry about positions being cut.

Sarah: <u>But</u> (drawn out) Foster went off the record and told whoever was

taking notes to stop taking notes and minutes of the meeting. And, uh,

kind of launched into a . . . I guess a diatribe against the school and

encouraging us to go seek employment elsewhere—outside of, not

just the school, but the district—and it was just a very negative

discussion from that point on talking about how our student

population wasn't exactly the norm that you would experience with

other students in other districts . . . that they were "abnormal" and

that, you know, based on who they are—we obviously have Hispanic

students—that the parents it . . . a lot of times . . . has to do with them,

too. If we were able to go somewhere else it would be "refreshing" to

us to see what a "normal" student is supposed to be like.

When asked to clarify the actual verbiage used during the incident, Sarah confirmed

that the words "abnormal" and "refreshing" were those spoken by Foster. She

further added that Foster used disparaging language when relating a story about a

special education teacher he knew, referring to children with disabilities as

"retarded."

Recoil and response. According to Sarah's interpretation of Foster's

comments, the implication was that when teachers work with minority students

from low socio-economic backgrounds or with students with disabilities, teachers

begin "to see them (the students) as being normal." From her viewpoint, the

insinuation was that working with special needs or inner city students somehow

detrimentally altered teacher perspectives. Sarah summed it up as follows:

Basically that our kids are not normal, that they deviate from the norm and

its problematic in that the longer a teacher stays in this school the more

these kids <u>seem</u> like the norm when compared to other students. You know

he didn't come out and say it...but i.e. students, white students...in the

suburbs. And that is basically what it was...And that's what I read into

it...that...you know... he was bashing our student population; and saying that

for our own sanity we should find employment elsewhere. (Interview

excerpt, February 2011)

When asked about reactions to the comments, Sarah explained that she

"didn't know what to do," so "[sat] there staring at [her] work," not speaking. Other

teachers in the room remained silent as well. Later however, Sarah received an e-

mail from one of her veteran colleagues apologizing; explaining that not all teachers

at the meeting felt the same way about their students and assuring her that the next

year would be more positive. The lack of immediate response to the comments and

subsequent e-mail communication seemed to indicate that the incident took all of

the teachers by surprise. It may also have been reflective of the overall school

environment, suggesting that Sarah was not the only one that did not feel safe

speaking up and expressing a different viewpoint about students.

For Sarah it played out as an awkward moment in which she took in what

was being said in disbelief, unsure of how to respond. Her position as a new teacher

may have further heightened her discomfort and reluctance to speak out against a

veteran teacher leader. Although disturbed that another teacher would use such

language when describing or discussing their students, Sarah's opinion of her students and her commitment to California High School did not falter.

Unpacking critical incidents: Unexpected, unprovoked, and unresolved.
Sarah's critical incident story revealed how unexpected events and hidden stories potentially play out in the school environment.   It exemplified the complex issues tied up in school cultures—the effects of teacher discourse, power roles, accountability policies, and hidden stories.

Examining this incident from the vantage point of teacher discourse, two aspects emerged as significant: 1) the connection between teacher discourse and teacher identity, and 2) the potential impact on other teachers, particularly novice teachers. Whether speaking in formal settings such as meetings or in casual conversations with colleagues and friends, a teacher's discourse is associated by the listener as being reflective of the speaker's philosophical and pedagogical approach to education. Fortunately or unfortunately, as teachers everything we say about teaching or students reflects back upon us through the listener's interpretation that what we say is an expression of our beliefs and practices. Our words may even return in the form of stories people give back to us. Those listener interpretations may have a stronger impact when we address novice teachers who are still developing their own educational beliefs and authoritative voice.   Although there was no evident push-back directed at Foster in this incident, the fact that Sarah was so taken aback by the remarks and the assurances made by another teacher that next year will be better lend credence to the impactful nature of teacher discourse and its connection with teacher identity (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004).

From an observer's perspective, the fact that such personal opinions were shared in an open meeting rather than in a private conversation also raised the issues of power roles in schools and how new teachers negotiate their position within that space (Good et al., 2010; Johnson & Kardos, 2002). As a veteran teacher and teacher leader, Foster used a position of authority (Carspecken, 1996) not only to share personal opinions, but also, as indicated by Sarah's description of a "diatribe", to lecture other teachers. From Sarah's perspective as a new teacher, it was not her place to correct a teacher with more experience and greater authority, which evidenced her external role of Novice/Play-Nice Team Member when she explained that she did not know what to do in the situation. All the while, however, Sarah returned consistently to her internal moral compass as Social Justice Champion for kids.

Looking deeper into the incident suggested the presence of hidden stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996) that neither Sarah nor I were privy to at the time or since. Although one can only speculate as to the hidden stories in Foster's life that motivated Foster to speak out in such a manner, the words shared and the district climate at the time of the event may provide some insight. Considering the educational climate focused on producing high student test scores that are then tied into teacher evaluations (Sanders & Horn, 1998; Sanders, 2002), and taking into account the possible impact of budget cuts on teacher jobs, a possible underlying meaning behind Foster's words emerged—teaching inner-city kids equates to lower test scores and lower teacher evaluations. Another potential hidden story related to campus norms and the staff's novice or veteran orientation. That fact that no one

challenged Foster's diatribe spoke to established standards of behavior in which new and perhaps younger teachers did not counter the authority of veteran teachers. At the time, 50.7% of California teachers had less than five years of experience in teaching and 66.7% had less than ten (see table 2). Although the percentage might imply that California's teacher culture was more novice oriented, this incident suggested that California's culture was oriented more toward the needs, concerns, and expertise of veterans.

The critical incident in Sarah's story illustrated the tensions and pressures experienced by teachers as they work within a high-stakes accountability field. It also evidenced the push-back projected by some teachers as they try to make sense of accountability-related policies and school practices.

Researcher Reflections: Moving from Field Text to Research Text

Sarah's critical incident became my critical incident as well, in that I wrestled with how to bring the related field text to research text. I even questioned whether I should include this episode in Sarah's story. When Sarah first told me about the situation, I found myself drawn into the incident alongside her. My first reaction was one of disbelief that a veteran teacher would air such negative and offensive opinions in a professional meeting. One might share these opinions in confidence to a colleague, and yes I have even heard them voiced in the teachers' lounge, but I was honestly surprised at such behavior in a campus meeting. My second reaction was one of disdain mixed with anger; disdain for Foster's less-than-professional remarks and annoyance that Sarah was forced to deal with a situation someone else created. Those feelings were quickly replaced with a desire to make sure Sarah was alright

and support her in whatever way she needed. Inside I felt a twinge of conflict between being the researcher documenting her experiences and wanting to coach or support Sarah. Once again, I found myself changing hats, turning off the recorder, and simply having a conversation with her.   On my next visit with Sarah, she returned to the incident, retelling the story, and sharing her reaction.

As I worked through translating this incident from field text to research text, it presented a multitude of questions and prompted a great deal of reflection. What do I do with this story? How do I translate this from field text into research text? What are the ethical implications for telling a story that is, in part, Foster's story? How can I fictionalize it in a way that protects anonymity yet still re-presents the story accurately? Is it really a story that I want to tell? Taking my problem to Dr. Mimi Lee, one of my professors, and Tim Martindell, a friend and colleague, helped me work through my dilemma. Mimi and Tim encouraged me to retell this story as it was an authentic account of working in education—after all, it is not uncommon to hear critical remarks in schools and critical incidents are a part of life. At some point in every teacher's career they must deal with negative remarks or opinions expressed by others. And while not all incidents are considered critical, teachers routinely deal with unexpected situations. Most importantly, this story was representative of teachers' realities. Talking over the situation with Mimi and Tim helped to validate in my mind that this story needed to be told.

Tim's questions about my disdain and anger related to the situation forced me to look inward. I was disturbed that a veteran teacher would put Sarah, a beginning teacher, in a situation in which she felt that she should have said or done

something when, in fact, the situation was none of her doing. At the same time, I was

embarrassed and a little ashamed of this story because it shined an unpleasant light

on schools and on teachers. Acknowledging my personal feelings enabled me to

shift my focus from inward, to outward. Similarly, Mimi's probing questions

regarding the campus and district environment helped me to step back and to

consider the situation within the context of recent past events in state and local

education. Mimi and Tim acted as critical friends and peer reviewers by offering

thoughtful feedback and posing questions that probed my understanding and

challenged me to rethink the incident from multiple perspectives.

　　　In my search for meaning, continuous questioning and reflection from

multiple angles allowed me to burrow deeper into possible hidden stories

underlying this incident. Shifting my perspectives and mentally moving backward

and forward through the research space aided the construction of this storied

research text and the contextualization of the incident within the recent budget

concerns that posed a real threat to teachers' job security at the time, as well as the

high-stakes accountability that turned student test scores back onto teachers and

their professional evaluations. This created a plausible backdrop and offered a

motivation for Foster's remarks while acknowledging that neither Sarah nor I really

understood what circumstances prompted the remarks. The sharing of my

experience in bringing this field text to research text acts as an exemplar in my

journey to become a narrative inquirer. It exemplifies what Clandinin and Connelly

(2000) meant when they wrote, "it is the responses to the questions of meaning and

social significance that ultimately shape field texts into research texts" (p. 131).

Knowledge Communities: Support, Commonalities, and Sustainability

I find the lessons learned repeating in my head,
echoing back to me in what is done and what is said.
I find fellowship with those whose paths weave in and out of mine;
whose confidence and knowing bolster mine—
when mine is hard to find.
So it is, as I journey on.

Excerpt from *Finding my Way* by Gayle Curtis
(See Appendix A for entire poem)

As Sarah continued her first-year journey, building a knowledge community (Craig, 1992, 1995b), or group of fellow educators with whom she could share, reflect, trust, and learn (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990), became essential to her professional growth and to sustaining the notion of how she wanted to teach. Sarah explained that although she gathered ideas from her campus team and shared activities with them as well, her team members seemed disinterested and unreceptive to what she had to offer. As a result, she characterized their planning meetings as "largely unproductive," (interview excerpt, November 2010) adding that the teaching styles of the group members (lectures and worksheets) were "not conducive to collaboration." In addition, Sarah's relationship with her campus-assigned mentor, who was a veteran teacher, did not extend past the required periodic classroom observations. In essence their interactions were a scripted mentorship that closely followed the sacred story guidelines of teacher expectations as set forth by the state teacher appraisal system. As such, Sarah received points for student participation, learner-centered instruction, student progress evaluation and classroom management, but no constructive and meaningful feedback that would stimulate her further reflections of her classroom practice. Sarah confided that she

felt the differences in their teaching styles (Sarah's including many hands-on individual and group activities and her mentor's relying primarily on lecture and worksheets), to some degree impacted their ability to build a relationship. Not finding a place to share her experiences within the relationships with her team or mentor, Sarah sought out other spaces to fill this professional void.

Ultimately, Sarah's knowledge community emerged in multiple places across her education landscape. At California High School, Sarah identified another teacher, Malik, who, like her, preferred hands-on learning experiences over lecture and work sheets. They shared stories of classroom experiences, collaborated on lessons, and ended up working together on the development of California's new Gifted and Talented program. While this relationship partially satisfied her need for collaboration and feedback, the fellow students and professors in her doctoral studies also played a significant role in her knowledge community. In particular, a class on current issues in education was a safe place in which she could share, discuss, and reflect upon her classroom and campus experiences with her advisor/mentor and university colleagues. According to Sarah, the class readings and discussions "heavily influenced [her] lesson planning" (interview excerpt, February 2011) and reinforced the importance of cultivating relationships with her students. Reading about other inner-city teachers' experiences in *City Kids, City Schools* (2008), and the creative ways that they connected the curriculum to their students' interests and realities, illuminated avenues through which Sarah could design learning activities around her student interests.

Many of Sarah's fellow teachers in the doctoral program shared her beliefs on education and therefore understood her approach to teaching. University classes, then, provided Sarah with opportunities to share stories of teaching experiences, to hear other stories, and to enter into reflective and informed conversations about those stories. Furthermore, Sarah explained that graduate studies continued to bolster her determination to engage students in critical analyses of multiple historical perspectives and world events.

As our relationship grew, I also became part of Sarah's knowledge community. From time to time during our conversations I found myself switching roles, taking off the hat of researcher and donning that of mentor so that we could talk over specific issues as colleagues. After sharing my preliminary findings with Sarah, she responded with the following message:

> Thank you so much for these wonderful insights from your observations! I can't say that I disagree with anything. I have been observed by my [administrator] a couple of times and received feedback but I don't think that it quite compares with what you have given here because of the entirely different nature of our interactions. Having someone who understands what you are trying to do and an understanding of your teaching philosophy before, during, and after the observation and in providing feedback really makes this more meaningful to me. (E-mail communication, November 2010)

Sarah's first-year experiences illuminated the challenges confronted by beginning teachers as they transition into school and the importance of feedback and support to sustaining new teachers. As illustrated by Sarah's story, beginning

teachers must negotiate a position or place within already established relationships

and school cultures (Gratch, 2001; Dembo, 2001), a process that may leave them

feeling isolated (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). Her story also points to the fact that

many new teachers want and need constructive feedback (Bullough, 2005;

Hargreaves & Fullan, 2010), and need to have a safe place in which they can share,

reflect upon, learn from, and ultimately restory their experiences (Craig, 1992,

1995b).

Unpacking knowledge communities: Support, commonalities, and

sustainability. The stark absence of meaningful campus mentorship or coaching is

evident in Sarah's story. Her mentor stayed within the prescribed script, fulfilling

her commitment by completing observations but never entering into a relationship

with Sarah and failing to provide meaningful feedback on Sarah's teaching or

interactions with students. Based on Sarah's descriptions of their exchanges, it

appeared that her mentor invested little time in developing a relationship with

Sarah, hinting that the mentorship role may have been more mandatory than

voluntary. Mullen (2005) explained that "mandatory mentoring is an oxymoron

signaling the presence of a hidden curriculum where teachers are *required* (italics in

original text) to mentor and make documented gains" (p.12). Such situations,

according to Mullen, may potentially lead to gains in school initiatives but may also

"conflict with the democratic integrity associated with the teaching and learning

enterprise." Mentorships fail to achieve the intended goal of supporting the growth

and development of a beginning colleague when they are treated as additional

duties as assigned rather than personal commitments that are acknowledged, valued, and financially compensated (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000).

When I began sharing my interim texts with Sarah at the end of the first semester she stated that it was the first meaningful feedback she had received; something she should have been receiving throughout from her mentor, appraiser/supervisor, or a colleague. Considering the make-up of California High School's teaching staff in terms of the professional culture, the classifications described by Kardos et al. (2001) gave some indication as to the lack of support for this first-year teacher. In the 2009-2010 school year, 50.7% of California teaching staff had five years or less teaching experience and 66.7% had ten years or less (see Table 2). This novice-oriented professional culture may have been an indication that California High School had a limited pool of veteran teachers available to act as mentors to beginning teachers. It also raised questions regarding the quality of those teachers and their mentor training.

Reflective and constructive conversations between novices and their mentors have the capacity to increase teacher professional knowledge and improve classroom practice (Wang, Strong, & Odell, 2004). Simultaneously, these conversations may potentially stifle novice growth if not delivered in a constructive manner and, more importantly, within a trusting relationship. Such relationships must be developed over time, requiring time commitments, not only by the novice and mentor, but also on the part of the school in providing ample time for the novice-mentor interactions.

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) remind us that beginning teachers are not finished with their learning when they come to our campuses. On the contrary, they come prepared with a host of knowledge and skills but must continue their journey of learning, gaining know-how through experience and supported by more experienced teachers, school administrators, and others. In Sarah's case, she found support through a knowledge community that included one fellow California teacher, university colleagues, and me, the researcher. This provided the space in which Sarah could share stories of her experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), discuss, reflect, and make sense of those experiences. Hearing the multiple perspectives of other teachers and seeing how her experiences connected to their stories, helped Sarah to make sense of her own experiences (Craig, 2007); and to interpret those experiences in a "fuller and more informed" (p. 621) manner. As Sarah reiterated, the interactions with her knowledge community helped to bolster her determination to teach according to her beliefs and became a determining factor in sustaining her desire to continue teaching.

Researcher Reflections: Being Wakeful to Layered Stories

In their discussion of being in the field, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explained that researchers "make themselves as aware as possible of the many, layered narratives at work in their inquiry space. They imagine narrative intersections, and they anticipate possible narrative threads emerging" (p. 70). Moving wakefully through this inquiry and mindfully through my field texts, I was able to act upon my tacit knowledge of layered narratives in lived experiences to lay

out narratives in Sarah's experience and imagine where narrative intersected or coincided.

In retelling Sarah's story of knowledge communities, for example, the many layers seemed initially unconnected and isolated stories in my field texts: Sarah's interactions with her team, relationship with her mentor, collaboration with Malik, and class conversations with her advisor/mentor and colleagues. Other narratives were interwoven with each of these seemingly disparate stories pulled from Sarah's experiences. The team interactions and lack of collaboration told a story of the school culture that showed preference to veterans over newcomers. Alongside Sarah's relationship with her mentor was a narrative of the demands put on teachers' time. Talking to Sarah I became aware of a narrative layer of compliance in that team meetings and mentorships were a campus expectation but there seemed to be little expectation for the quality of those interactions, suggesting another layered narrative of collaboration for compliance versus collaboration for professional growth, sharing, and developing an understanding of another teachers' constructed knowledge and practice. There was also a narrative of competing teaching styles, where Sarah preferred active hands-on learning with some lecture and her team and mentor preferred lecture and worksheets; a narrative that may have presented a barrier for both Sarah and her teammates. In contrast, Sarah's collaborations with Malik revealed a narrative of coaching a new teacher, and her university interactions one of continued nurturing of knowledge and understanding. Underlying these was a narrative layer of common philosophies or approaches to education. In regards to the four initial narratives, I have provided only a sampling

of the layered narratives related to Sarah's knowledge community story. There

were in fact many more narratives interwoven through these individual and

collective stories that I have not elaborated on in this reflection.

As I analyzed the narratives, deeper, somewhat hidden narratives emerged

as well: a new teacher striving to find her place in a new environment, the purpose

and challenges of collaboration, the role of relationship in mentoring, the isolation of

beginning teachers, and a new teacher's desire to grow. Thinking about where these

narratives converged seemed to indicate that their intersection was in Sarah's

transition into teaching. As I imagined this to be the common thread linking the

narratives, however, I kept going back to Sarah's repeated comments about wanting

and enjoying collaboration, of not receiving critical feedback and grateful when it

was given by way of my interim and research texts, of gaining understanding as she

listened to other teachers' stories of experience, and talking through education

dilemmas in class. These fragments seemed to be linked together in the desire to

have a community of learning in which Sarah could story and restory her

experiences, reflect and learn from others. Being wakeful to the layered narratives

in Sarah's knowledge community story required a constant awareness of what was

happening in the school, changes in school district policies and practices, current

issues in education, etc. It also involved what Greene (1995) terms "seeing small"

and "seeing big" (p. 10), continuously moving in close to narratives to understand

the intentions and realities of the situations and then stepping back to see how the

separate narratives connected individually with the broader education landscape.

Interlude

BEGINNING
• **Sarah's teacher narratives**
  • Curriculum-making
  • Students
  • Accountabiity
  • Critical Incidents
  • Knowledge Communities

PARALLEL STORIES
• **Gayle's researcher narratives**
  • Letting narrative threads emerge
  • Entering in the midst
  • Finding my place in the inquiry
  • Moving from field to research text
  • Being wakeful to layered stories

Figure 17 – Beginning parallel stories of teacher and researcher

In Movement I of this inquiry, the first collection of parallel stories of novice teacher and novice researcher have been shared and examined (see Figure 17). Sarah's beginning narratives offered insights into the complex lives of teachers and the environments in which they live and work. Her layered and contextualized experiences drew attention to teachers as curriculum-makers, who combine their personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), understanding of student needs, and knowledge of curriculum within the milieu of classrooms and schools. They highlighted the role of relationships in placing students at the center of instruction, revealed unintentional consequences of accountability demands, and examined an exemplar representative of unexpected, challenging situations that teachers must navigate. Finally, Sarah's beginning stories showed how novice teachers need and want safe places in which to tell and restory their experiences.

Accompanying Sarah's stories, my researcher stories explained how narrative inquirers purposefully allow narrative threads to emerge naturally and acknowledge the on-going qualities of the situated experiences they set out to study. They demonstrated how narrative inquirers find their place in the inquiry and become co-participants in the inquiry cognizant of their ethical and moral responsibilities. Finally, challenges of bringing field texts to research texts were shared and the researcher's attentiveness to layered narratives explicated.

Once again, I invite you to enter into the inquiry by following our continued growth and development as teacher and researcher. Movement II is the second collection of our continued parallel stories (see Figure 18). The stories examine the theoretical foundations and beliefs underlying Sarah's teaching, her relationships with students, her transformation into a veteran teacher, and the development of her teacher identity. Concurrently, my complementary stories describe the narrative tools of burrowing and broadening, share relational qualities of the inquiry, and consider personal growth and transformation as an inquirer.

CONTINUING
- **Sarah's teacher narratives**
  - Teaching
  - Teacher-student relationships
  - Transformation

PARALLEL STORIES
- **Gayle's researcher narratives**
  - Burrowing and broadening
  - Living a relational inquiry
  - Becoming a narrative inquirer
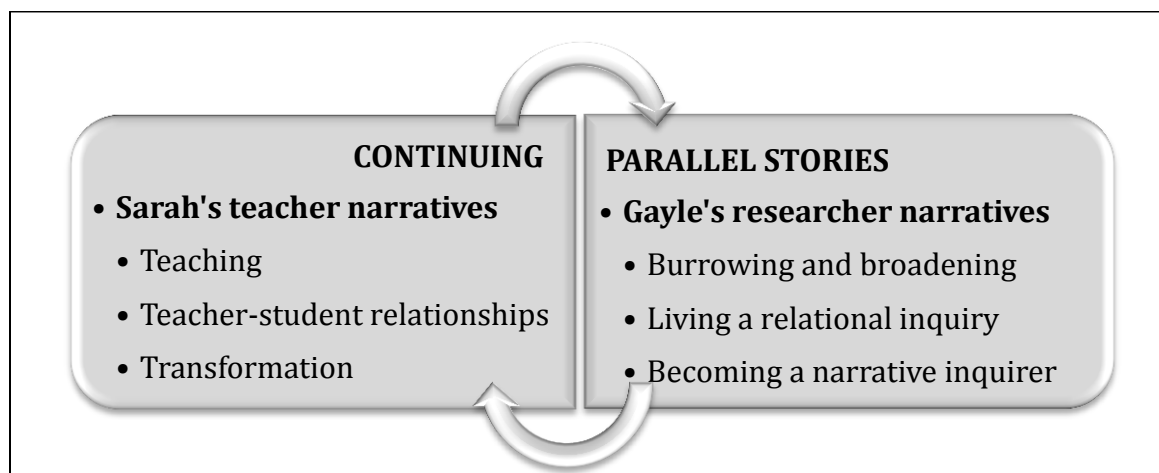
Figure 18 - Continuing parallel stories of teacher and researcher

Movement II: Our Continuing Stories

Teaching: Theory, Beliefs, and Personal Practical Knowledge

> *I choose not to revert—not to teach the way in which I first learned.*
> *And I choose not to pimp the textbook makers' point of view*
> *And in the process perpetuate indoctrination, discount agendas,*
> *And hide the stories of marginalized peoples.*
> *As for me, I shall not speak in scripted verse,*
> *In hollow verbosity of static and predictable terms.*
>
> *Instead, I choose to be footloose, to take a chance*
> *By leading students in a rhythmic teaching-learning dance –*
> *That thinking, doing, action dance—*
>   *a dance that moves, pushes, pulls, negotiates,*
> *A dance of dialogue, discussion, and debate—a dance that I facilitate.*
> *But one in which I choose to be a learner, too.*
> *A dance that pushes past the comfort zone,*
> *That seeks the hidden message, hidden truth,*
> *That seeks empowerment, transformation, change.*
> *A dance of knowledge, inspiration, and surprise,*
> *A dance I hope my students dance their whole lives.*

> Excerpt from *I Choose to Dance*, by Gayle Curtis
> (See Appendix A for entire poem)

Returning to California High School and Sarah's classroom, I anticipated entering into the midst (Clandinin & Connelly, 200) of the storied histories and current interactions of Sarah and her students. I wondered what changes I would see in Sarah's practice, how she had grown as a teacher, and what challenges she might be facing. I wondered about what sustained her, what kept her in the classroom and in education. As is common practice in high schools, Sarah's teaching assignments had changed annually moving from teaching a combination of regular and Advanced Placement (AP) classes for mixed grades levels in her first and second years, to teaching all AP Grade 11 history classes in her third. Exploring her third-

year experiences revealed practices and qualities carried over from her first year, as well as change, and professional and personal growth. Sarah's personal reflections in interviews provided access to understanding the beliefs on education and theoretical foundations that informed and drove instruction.

Re-entering Sarah's classroom three years into her career, I was struck by the familiarity of life and learning in her classroom. She continued to greet and welcome students at the door each period, and retained her routine of beginning each session with a quick warm-up activity before transitioning into a technology-integrated lesson with hands-on student activities. The classroom environment was reminiscent of Sarah's first year—engaged students, active learning, and comfortable, respectful teacher-student interactions. There seemed to be a familiar yet stronger rhythm (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986; Craig, 2012) in the classroom—a brief bustle of activity as students entered, smoothly transitioning into focused note-taking, questions and responses during warm-up and lecture, followed by an upsurge of activity and conversations around interactive learning activities. Although Sarah exhibited confidence as a first-year teacher, as a third-year teacher her actions and interactions reflected a relaxed and self-assured demeanor of one having experience and holding personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987). Looking deeper into her third-year teaching experiences brought forward both subtle and substantial changes in her practice.

In Sarah's first year in teaching, instructional time was diminished due to required test preparation activities such as the administration of benchmark tests and reviews of objectives prior to testing. For Sarah, these activities carried with

them "unintended consequences" (Amrein & Berliner, 2002) of personal frustration at loss of instructional time, as well as a degree of demoralization when student test scores by teacher were made public in the school. Strongly objecting to the loss of instructional time due to benchmark testing, Sarah fought to opt out of benchmark testing that California continued to administer during her third year in keeping with district practices and expectations. She was able to negotiate that position successfully because previous test scores for her students were high. Although there was some push back due to the fact that overall campus scores on social studies tests lowered as a result of her students' non-participation, with the support of her department chair she was permitted to forgo benchmark testing. Consequently, it increased her instructional time with students.

As in her beginning year, Sarah continued to deconstruct and reconstruct the curriculum, a practice that grew out of her graduate studies. She explained her rationale as follows:

I draw a lot from my training in graduate school . . . the different multicultural theories that I had to study. First off, it was eye opening as far as . . . examining white privilege and what white privilege means when teaching minority students in an inner city school like California. (Interview excerpt, February 2013)

She went on to say:

My approach to teaching comes from this notion that education is politicized—innately . . . education is a political act—innately. You can't ignore that like we do so often . . . so it's really up to the teacher to be

conscious of this, to deconstruct curriculum for the underlying political

agendas, and try to reconstruct it in a way that's going to be more

representative of the needs of the student. That can be either the content

needs, or it can be the hidden curriculum needs. There are several

approaches, even within that, that I try to take. (Interview excerpt, February

2013)

Sarah explained that her practice and lesson development was informed by

research on teaching in multicultural settings, such as Gay's (2010) work in

culturally responsive teaching and Valenzuela's (1999) notion of additive versus

subtractive education. Her practice was also influenced by Duncan-Andrade's

"multicultural pedagogy, as opposed to a multicultural curriculum, which [involves]

adding a broader variety of voices into what is studied" (interview excerpt, March

2013). Whereas she utilized strictly primary source materials rather than state

adopted texts during her first year, she began using the state texts to "expose

students such as [hers] to the same materials as white, middle-class students"

(interview excerpt, March 2013). She added that spending time analyzing the

curriculum and developing lessons in her first two years gave her an instructional

foundation on which to construct new lessons or augment existing ones, allowing

her to "dig deeper into the curriculum" in her third year (interview excerpt,

February 2013).

On a typical day, learning began as always with a brief warm-up activity

projected on the whiteboard as students entered. These activities commonly

included short paragraphs to be read and from which students identified unfamiliar

vocabulary. A change in practice was evident in that warm-up activities consistently reviewed previous curriculum, reinforcing prior learning. Additionally, Sarah read the texts aloud, inserting explanations of potentially unfamiliar words, rather than allowing students to read independently as she had frequently done in her first year. This subtle change was not only a way to read through text quickly, according to Sarah, "It [was] also a way of constantly integrating literacy skills" (interview excerpt, February 2013) in response to the needs of her students.

Daily lessons reflected her theoretical foundations and beliefs regarding education. They also retained familiar qualities in that Sarah routinely integrated technology to present curriculum in a story-like fashion, extensively utilizing primary source materials. Employing technology in her lessons allowed Sarah to quickly review or clarify previously presented information or concepts and to provide students with familiar clues or reminders in the process. Technology integration was also a way in which Sarah connected to her students, who were themselves relatively technology proficient. The lecture portion of Sarah's lessons was characteristically fast-paced and short, usually leaving more than half of the period for student instructional activities. Interjected into lectures were frequent questions posed by Sarah, linking previous curriculum to current content. In contrast to the first year when questions were directed to individual students, lecture questions were directed to the whole class and most often received a multi-student, if not whole-class, response. This allowed Sarah to check for understanding and reinforced prior learning. Students' routinely asked questions as well,

sometimes for clarification and other times connecting the lesson to current events or issues.

Discussing the lecture portion of instruction, Sarah shared that she felt she had become a better lecturer and facilitator through using questioning techniques to engage students in conversations. She explained:

I try to make the lecture as dialogical as possible . . . as Socratic as possible. I don't like [students] to be stagnant. It is a way to make sure that they are talking about the content as much as they can and to keep them engaged as actively as possible . . . It really starts with me relaying concepts from the past . . . connecting it to concepts they already know and asking questions . . . I try to draw out what they know and make it as much a conversation as possible. It's spiraling content just constantly. And that helps me reinforce what it is we talk about because these are really sophisticated, dense topics. Constantly spiraling and connecting the curriculum to what students know makes it more approachable, which is a priority. (Interview excerpt, February 2013)

The idea of dialogical interaction carried over to student learning activities, as well, in which students actively engaged in conversations with one another and with Sarah on a daily basis. In one lesson related to early twentieth century economy, for example, students gathered information from primary source materials (i.e., newspaper clippings, documents, political cartoons), then went to the text or internet (even their cell phones were permitted) to augment the information. Afterwards students formed groups to discuss and respond to a related scenario.

Their assignment was to determine a plan of action that, according to Sarah, could

not include the students "withdraw[ing] to the mountains of Montana and hid[ing]

out" (observation, February 2013). As opposed to assuming students knew how to

interpret alternative or primary source texts, Sarah learned from experience to

explicitly teach students how to draw information from primary source materials to

which they might find it difficult to relate. At the onset of the year, she led her

classes through an activity of analyzing and interpreting pop culture icons like a

picture of a cell phone, for example. Using familiar items that connected to students'

realities, they then discussed what the items suggested about the culture, the

economy, or the political situation. This helped students transfer their analytical

skills to the examination of alternate texts such as historical documents (i.e. political

cartoons, advertisements, articles, etc.).

Other student activities extended over several days, as was the case when

students created exhibit boards on the 1920s Jazz Age around self-selected topics

from a list of related events, prominent figures, inventions, and concepts provided

by Sarah. Correlated mini-lessons included library research, MLA citations,

paraphrasing, writing conventions, and display board construction. This project,

like others, included graphic organizers to help guide students through the multiple-

stepped process. As Sarah explained, "I've done this project since the first year, and

every year add a new graphic organizer based on areas that need improvement . . .

like study skills, vocabulary, or writing" (interview excerpt, February 2013). In this

project, students worked in pairs, collaborated on research, designed their display,

and developed final products which they ultimately shared in a gallery walk. On one

of the project days I observed and visited with students as they worked on the

exhibits. The following description of that observation is representative of a typical

day in Sarah's classroom.

After a short review on designing and developing a themed, informational

display board, students purposefully moved around the room to join up with their

partners, retrieve materials, or pull resource materials. Using graphic organizers,

students laid out their designs; adding squiggly lines inside boxes of what eventually

would be text, drawing miniature examples of photos to be included, and attention-

getting graphics (see Figure 19 for a finished exhibit).

Figure 19 - Student exhibit on the Scope's Trial

While students were hard at work collaborating in pairs on their exhibit

design, Sarah moved from group to group checking on their progress, quietly asking

questions, entering into conversations about specific portions of students' drafts,

and providing critical feedback. Most groups waited for feedback until Sarah moved

to their group; a few however, seemingly anxious to get her approval on what they

had done so far, eagerly made their way to wherever Sarah was in the room, talked

for a few minutes, and then moved back to their work areas. As I moved from group

to group, some students would turn and ask, "Do you want to see, Miss?" and launch

into an animated explanation of their projects. Mostly though, students engaged in

conversation with one another, searched the internet together, divided up tasks, and

discussed their work with their teacher.

Though maintaining a familiar rhythm to her daily routine and instructional

cycle, the repeated integration of literacy skills, new questioning strategies, and

reflective practices highlighted the changes in Sarah's practice since her beginning

year as a teacher. Reflective interviews provided insights into the beliefs and

theoretical foundations driving teaching and learning in the classroom.

Unpacking teaching: Theory, beliefs, and personal practical knowing.

Sarah's first story of teaching captured in Movement I showed how she became a

curriculum-maker in her first year of teaching, bringing together what Schwab

(1973, 1983) referred to as the commonplaces of curriculum—content, student,

teacher, and milieu. The deconstruction and reconstruction of the curriculum linked

to her theoretical foundations in social studies and hinted at a connection to her

interest in social justice. Burrowing into her continuing story in teaching, we heard

from Sarah her views on education and how her graduate studies influenced her

approach to teaching. Narratives of her daily classroom activities provided a look

into how theory was enacted in her classroom.

The learning environment in Sarah's classroom demonstrated how

classrooms develop a rhythm, or cycle, out of the daily routine and novelty of

changing learning experiences and interactions (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986). In writing about art and experience, Dewey (1934) suggested that the natural desire for both order and novelty in living creates a rhythm in the classroom. As Clandinin and Connelly (1986) explained:

> Rhythm, for Dewey, was found in the tension between order and novelty as "relationships that sum up and carry forward" (Dewey, 1934, p. 166).
>
> Rhythm, he said, is not expressed in the 'tick-tock" theory of movement from order to novelty and back again but is experienced in the energetic driving forward of the tick-tock cycle. (p. 377)

In Sarah's classroom, each of her seven classes echoed a similar rhythm, a specific "classbeat" if you will, filled with expected progressions of activities and accentuated with new learnings each day, that were then carried forward into the new interactions and learnings of subsequent school days.

Sarah's teaching story revealed how personal beliefs, theoretical foundations, and reflection shape teacher practice and influence teacher persistence. In describing education as an innately political act, Sarah not only shared her personal beliefs regarding education but provided some indication of the multiple I's that she brought with her to teaching or were developing as a result of her education and training (i.e., Sarah-who's-interested-in-politics-and-social-justice, Sarah-the-critical pedagogist, etc.) Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Day & Kington, 2008; Gee, 2001; Olson, 2000). The reference to her graduate studies as the source of her theoretical foundations illuminated the role that teacher preparation programs (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, 2012; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2010; Ben-Peretz, Mendelson, & Kron,

2003) and continued higher education play in shaping teachers' practices. For example, in Sarah's reference to employing strategies drawn from Duncan-Andrade's (2008), this suggested that she was also drawing on Delpit's (1992) assertion that the achievement gap in education in the U.S. is due in part to teachers' neglect in exposing children of color and poverty to the same materials and at the same level as their white, middle-class cohorts; thereby failing to prepare these students for college. Her strong commitment to her theoretical foundations further suggested that her beliefs on education, equity, and social justice may have influenced her desire to continue teaching.

Changes in Sarah's questioning strategies, repeated inclusion of literacy skills, and the way in which she introduced interpretation of primary source materials suggest that she routinely engaged in reflective practices to improve her practice. They illustrated the influence of critical reflection on teacher development (Thompson & Pascal, 2012; Ovens & Tinning, 2007) and suggested that Sarah engages in what Vinz (1997) termed "un-knowing" (p. 139). She wrote:

> I think of *un-knowing* (italics in original), giving up present understandings (positions) of our teaching to make gaps and spaces through which to (re)member ourselves as we examine the principles behind our practices, as a way to articulate our theories in practice, or transform pedagogical principles and purposes in to new becomings. (p. 139)

The influences of personal beliefs and theoretical foundations on Sarah's practice, along with changes brought about reflection, reminded us that new teachers are not

"finished products" (Feiman-Nemser, 2013, p. 11) but are in the process of becoming (Vinz, 1997).

Layered into Sarah's lesson development was the hidden narrative of the district's AP program in that along with content objectives, the curriculum included instructional objectives of rigor, advanced content and higher-order thinking skills. Classroom activities demonstrated how Sarah addressed those objectives through challenging activities in which students employed higher order thinking. By spiraling the curriculum and enacting a dialogical approach, she continuously kept the challenging content in front of the students as they constructed knowledge and meaning. Additionally, Sarah's routine conversations with students about the curriculum demonstrated a transactional, interactive approach to teaching (Freire, 1970/2010).

Significant in Sarah's third-year story around teaching was the elimination of benchmark testing which increased instructional time, and consequently, most probably decreased the sorts of accountability-tensions that she experienced in her first year. She felt strongly enough about the loss of instructional time to take on a campus and district expected practice associated with test preparation. This situation provided a glimpse into Sarah's convictions and determination as a teacher because she could have potentially been reprimanded for non-compliance. It seemed to emphasize Sarah's willingness to become vulnerable in order to bring her classroom environment back to the teaching-learning balance she desired (Kelchtermans, 1996, 2005). The fact that she was given permission to opt out of benchmark testing because her previous year's student test scores were high

suggested that external directives and demands on teachers' practices may be lowered when teachers are judged to perform at a high level as based on student test scores (Nichols, 2011; Abrams, 2004). The support of her department chair in this situation implied that there was at least some degree of campus support for Sarah's approach to teaching. Diminished accountability tensions, supportive school context, and her ability to negotiate the situation to her advantage most probably contributed to Sarah's positive attitude toward her school. These aspects related to Sarah's teaching appeared to have influenced her decisions to remain in the classroom and at California.

Through observations and interviews the subtle and overt changes in Sarah's practice emerged, highlighting the roles of reflective practices in teacher development. Exploring her teaching also indicated that Sarah was developing personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987) and gaining narrative authority (Olson, 1995; Olson & Craig, 2001) through experience. Finally, her story revealed how teachers' beliefs on education shape their approach to teaching and may influence their persistence in education.

Researcher Reflections: Burrowing and Broadening

This inquiry has been a lesson of sorts in burrowing, in repeated digging deeper into Sarah's story in response to lingering questions and new wonderings that arose through her lived experiences. Consequently, it became a lesson in broadening as well because I needed to constantly step back to consider the importance of the questions I was seeking to answer and the meaning I was attempting to construct. Half-way through this inquiry, I anticipated having

completed my research into beginning teachers' experiences. Sarah's stories re-presented in Movement I, however, provoked more questions than they had answered. There was a realization that I had only grazed the surface of Sarah's storied beginning experiences. It left me considering the affective side of teaching—emotions, beliefs, values, attitudes, motivations, and even stereotypes—and how those aspects play into teachers' lives, their relationships with colleagues, students, and parents, and how they influence teacher persistence in education. My questions left me wanting more. I recognized that constructing knowledge from her situated experiences meant burrowing into her beliefs, values, motivations, and other considerations. These included features of teaching such as vulnerability, the development of teacher identity, and the complex and dynamic way in which countless narratives intersect within the lived stories of teachers.

This took me back to the literature to delve deeper into the research on teaching and back to Sarah to hear more of her stories so that I might understand how she constructed meaning from her experiences. The process gave me the sense of stretching out the research and then folding it back upon itself (Keyes & Craig, 2012). It illuminated the reflexivity of narrative inquiry and highlighted the inherent joining of burrowing and broadening—two analytical tools I had previously conceptualized as separate and distinct.

My new understanding is that burrowing carries with it a reflexive quality in that researchers must question their questions. Why is this avenue of inquiry important? Does it relate only to my participant's experiences or to my personal narrative or lack of knowledge? What does it say about the context of my

participant's experiences? In what ways does it relate to the experiences of other teachers? What does the research, and through it the experiences of other teachers, say about my participant's experiences? What does the comparison of experiences tell us about how teachers' experiences change over time or in different contexts?

The questioning process and associated return to research and return to the participant exemplify how researchers continuously move through the three-dimensional research space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It also creates a sense that the researcher is not moving through the space alone, but carrying the inquiry with him or her, stretching it out, if you will, by relating it to other research (broadening) and then bringing the inquiry back to itself with newly acquired understandings. In this way, the notions of burrowing and broadening seem to unite as counterparts that complement one another like a vocal harmony complements and enhances a melody.

One of my personal strengths that I bring to any situation is that I am a learner. Of importance is the driving desire for tacit knowledge in learning—I not only want to know intellectually, I want to understand internally; a process only accomplished through personal experience. Burrowing and broadening are just one example of the way in which I have developed a tacit understanding of narrative inquiry as a personal experience method of inquiry and what it means to be a narrative inquirer.

Relationships: Students, Conversations, Emotions, and Watchfulness

> *I choose not to be a teacher distant and aloof, disconnected, unconcerned.*
> *I choose not to be the "him" or "her" that calmly broadcasts what is learned.*
> *And I choose not to ever build what one might call a "teacher-student wall",*
> *But rather dare to share myself—*
> > *my views, emotions, challenges, doubts, and all.*
> *I choose instead to be the present "I" in my students' eyes,*
> *To speak with candor, without bounds, to teach without the sonorous sounds*
> *That moderate, suppress, oppress, and carry on the middle ground.*
>
> *I choose not to deem my students burdens,*
> > *or empty vessels in need of learning.*
> *Instead I choose to see the social, feeling, knowing,*
> > *growing learners that I teach*
> *As filled with talent, possibility, and rich individuality.*
> *I choose not to view kids' parents as the enemy,*
> *Or relegate these guardians to the role of "them."*
> *Instead, I choose to recognize first teachers, carers, givers—*
> *Important aspects of my students' daily lives.*
> *I choose to form relationships, parent-student-teacher partnerships,*
> *To understand storied histories, to honor family heritage.*

> Excerpt from *I Choose to Dance*, by Gayle Curtis
> (See Appendix A for entire poem)

During her first year of teaching, Sarah shared that "by just treating kids as human beings, listening to their problems, giving them advice about college or their future, and individualizing feedback," (interview excerpt, October 2010) she was building relationships that she hoped would "result in them giving 100 percent in her class." From her third-year perspective, she recognized the degree to which, as a beginning teacher, she had been dependent upon teacher-student relationships just to teach. The demands of transitioning into teaching (Dembo, 2001; Feiman-Nemser, 2003), developing lessons from scratch, managing multiple responsibilities (van Hover & Yeager, 2004; Craig, 2001), and navigating her way through daily teaching left little energy to address student misconduct. As a result of the relationships she had with her

students, there were markedly few student disruptions, thereby enabling her to focus on instruction.

By her third year, teacher-student relationships remained integral to the knowledge constructed by Sarah and her students within the classroom space, but had taken on a more layered characteristic and shifted away from a dependence on relationships to deliver instruction to an understanding that for some students, positive relationships with teachers are a motivation to learn. As Sarah explained:

> I think that relationships are very important and really make the difference in whether or not some students will take your class seriously or how much work they put in. Some kids are intrinsically motivated. Some will do it for you, because they feel like they need to. (Interview excerpt, March 2013)

The way in which she spoke about students and the school hinted at her satisfaction in working with the students at California High School. For example, when student teachers (most of whom had no experience in urban, minority schools) recently observed Sarah's classroom, one commented on being surprised at finding such a high degree of rigor, teaching quality, and student engagement at California. It seemed to suggest, in part, that California High School, its teacher, and its students went unnoticed in the district. "It seems like we fly under the radar here at California, which is fine with me," Sarah shared (interview excerpt, March, 2013), adding, "I feel that we are no different from suburban schools. California is a great school."

Following Sarah through her day offered insights into the multiplicity and dynamics of her relationships with students and into her perspective on teaching at California. As Sarah customarily facilitated student work by walking around the

room and leaning in, engaged students easily responded to her questions and

eagerly sought her opinion on their work and progress. As students worked, she

guided their work with brief comments, questions, and encouragements directed to

individuals: "Be sure to use all of the display board space," "Will your reader know

why this is important?" and "You pulled some really good information together"

(observation, February 2013). Discussions were relaxed, focused, and respectful,

hinting at positive relationships that motivate student engagement and enhance

learning (He & Cooper, 2011; Baker, 2006; Patterson, Roehrig, & Luft, 2003). From an

instructional perspective, Sarah felt that through experience and reflection she had

become better at identifying students' learning gaps and "pinpointing the specific

needs of students" (interview excerpt, February 2013). Consequently, she took up

what she described as a "more activist role" in teaching by explicitly teaching some

skills and concepts directly, and felt she was better able to "differentiate instruction"

accordingly. Sarah went on to describe how her questioning strategies also

connected to student homework and encouraged students to complete their

homework.

> [Questioning] helps to reinforce that if you do work outside of class you are
>
> better able to participate. There are some kids that get motivated when they
>
> can participate in class and be constructive with it. You know, they feel really
>
> good when they know the answer . . . But they are also discovering that if
>
> they do their homework they understand and do better on their classroom
>
> work. (Interview excerpt, March 2013)

Sarah's retelling of students' reactions after recent AP exams suggested that students were not only learning but feeling positive about their learning and themselves. The following interview excerpt showed her pride in her students' accomplishments and suggested personal satisfaction in her teaching:

It was a real watershed moment for me. For the first time, they came out of the exams feeling like they had done well, like "I can really do this!" In previous years, that was not the case. Students came out of the exams not knowing how they had done . . . This year they were confident they had done well! (Interview excerpt, February 2013)

During transitions and lunch periods, however, brief chats often turned to movies, television programs, school activities, and cell phones, revealing a more personal side to Sarah. Friendly banter accentuated conversations between teacher and students. Like the time when Sarah and I were talking about her lesson during a transition. Leaving the room, a young man quipped, "It's not always about *you*, Miss." "I know. It's all about *you*, ____," replied Sarah with a slight smile on her face (observation, February 2013).

Occasionally, the banter made its way into instructional time, as when a student described a flapper as "a boisterous woman," and after pausing for a moment added, "like Miss" (observation, February 2013). The wave of friendly chuckles that followed suggested that students caught the irony in the comparison of soft-spoken Sarah to a "boisterous" woman. "Very funny," Sarah acknowledged, "But, yes, a flapper was considered by some to be a boisterous woman," and continued the lesson without missing a beat. The easy banter not only added a bit

of levity to the classroom environment in which knowledge was being constructed around difficult concepts, it also demonstrated Sarah ability to bring aspects of her personal character into the relationships with her students.

The lunch hour at California, or what I referred to as "lunchtime with Sarah" in my field notes, brought forward other features of teacher-student relationships. On a daily basis, students filled her classroom—some staying the hour and others for only fifteen minutes or so. Students were self-directed and non-disruptive as they finished homework, received tutoring, ate lunch, or quietly visited with a friend. (One day, for example, I counted 37 students moving in and out of the classroom during the lunch period, all of whom required no direction from Sarah.) The lunchtime atmosphere suggested that she had established norms of behavior and created an atmosphere in which students felt comfortable and safe. It also revealed how she consistently made herself available to her students. While Sarah routinely ate lunch at her desk, students took the opportunity to turn in homework, request an assignment extension, or inquire about their grades. Others sought advice from their teacher or shared concerns.

One afternoon, for example, a girl tearfully related that her college financial aid application had been denied and she would not be able to attend college as planned. Calmly, Sarah asked simple questions about the young lady's home situation, revealing that her parents had separated and her father was no longer contributing to the family's finances. Within a few short minutes, Sarah helped the student draw out a plan of action—make a phone call, talk to someone directly, ask

how you can reapply, and then resubmit the application. The young lady left with a plan in her hands and a hopeful look on her face.

On another occasion, a young lady talked with Sarah about a current serious situation. The Sunday before, two former California students (a girl and a boy) had been involved in a tragic car accident in which the girl died and the boy was seriously injured. As the boy's friend, Sarah's student shared her concern and explained that she was tired after spending evenings at the hospital. Sarah talked quietly with the young lady for a few minutes, inquiring after the young man, discussing the girl's feelings, and reminding her that counselors were available if needed. Afterwards, Sarah and I discussed the impact of such sensitive situations on teachers.

> Sarah: I try to not think about the tears and focus on what's really going on with my students. It can be draining, though. It takes an emotional toll. You never know what to expect.
>
> Gayle: So, are there boundaries to your relationships with students?
>
> Sarah: Sure, there are boundaries, I've been thinking about that a lot lately. For example, I don't usually discuss with students that I'm a single mother. But I did share with one student because it related to her situation and what she was undergoing at the time. But there are boundaries. It's something I've been thinking a lot about recently, especially the emotional boundaries. It's difficult though because you want to be there for your students. (Interview excerpt, February 2013)

These layered interactions with students revealed the multi-dimensional aspects of her relationships, necessitating her to take on varied roles as teacher. Sarah described her many relational roles as:

> Instructor, facilitator, surrogate parent, big sister, social worker, adult role model, etc. It's such a complicated role and all of the clichés are true . . . that we wear so many hats. Different kids need different things and part of the challenge is in knowing who needs what, when, and how. (Interview excerpt, March 2013)

Continuing to follow Sarah through a typical day, took me to afterschool activities with students. On a scheduled basis, Sarah invited her students to watch movies and to enter in conversations around current issues or to participate in off campus events. For example, approximately 20 students attended a bilingual education forum sponsored by her University's social studies department and even asked questions. Since many of the students were bilingual (Spanish and English speakers) and some participated in bilingual education programs in their earlier years, the issues surrounding bilingual education related to their personal experiences. Extra-curricular activities such as this provided students with the opportunity to see Sarah in different settings, and enabled her to continue building relationships with her students.

Sarah's third year revealed the complexity of teacher-student relationships—the many roles they entail, the motivation they inspire, and the affective aspects they involve. Personally, she considered relationships with students a meaningful and rewarding part of being a teacher. She elaborated through the following story.

It's probably one of the most gratifying as well. Just this week, the kids' math

teacher and I were talking after school with a few students. We were all

discussing politics and the kids were asking us questions, which they really

enjoy doing as we are both pretty knowledgeable, have different points of

view, and often argue about it in front of them while taking the time to

explain it as we do. Towards the end, the kids began to point out that doing

things like this with them is why they enjoy our classes so much. They feel

like we go above and beyond just teaching them and that we're willing to

take the time to "educate" them rather than just sticking to something more

limited. (Interview excerpt, March 2013)

She continued:

I really felt quite gratified hearing this from the students. It's not that I liked

hearing how much they enjoy my class or my company but *why* they enjoy it.

It's not about being liked. It was the respect that they felt for someone taking

the time to ensure that they understood something that really was quite

abstract and [who] was talking with them as an equal.

Unpacking relationships: Students, conversations, emotions, and

watchfulness. Sarah's relationships with students demonstrated qualities shown to

be beneficial to students' transitions into different grade levels (Baker, 2006) and

improved student motivation (He & Cooper, 20011; Patterson, Roehrig, & Luft,

2003). Among these were the ways in which she differentiated instruction, created

a relaxed learning atmosphere, and revealed aspects of herself to students through

humor, conversation, and technology integration. Her instructional strategies

implied that underlying teacher-student relationships was a desire to affect change in student learning and in their preparations for the future.

Sarah's continuous focus on the process of learning, accompanied by her words of encouragement rather than overt praise of student accomplishments, suggested that Sarah had a growth mindset characterized by the belief that "everyone can change and grow through application and experience" (Dweck, 2008, p. 7). This was apparent in her interactions with students who needed additional attention and support. When talking with her student about financial aid, for instance, the student assumed that her hopes for college were dashed because her application for assistance had been denied. Sarah took a positive approach to the situation and was able to turn that around, however, by learning more about the girl's home financial situation and then drawing up a plan of action.

The narrative of relationships uncovered the rhythms of teaching (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986), expanding from her classroom into lunchtime and afterschool activities. It showed Sarah as a teacher willing to create opportunities in which she could interact with students in varied contexts and situations. The many roles that teachers adopt were brought forward in her classroom teaching, in assisting students with problems, and in supporting them in difficult situations. These interactions highlighted both the relational and emotional (Hargreaves, 1998; Elbaz, 1991, 1992; Denzin, 1984), aspects of teaching as Sarah's emotions were embodied in her practice, her response to students, and   with them.

Aoki (1989) proposed that teaching as curriculum-as-planned, that is strictly academically oriented, is actually a half-full pedagogy that to be fulfilled must be

paired with curriculum-as-life, or in other words the relational aspects of teaching. Sarah's attentiveness when interacting with students, her constant reflection on her students' situations, and positive attitude regarding their futures brought to life the sense of "teaching as watchfulness" (Aoki, 1989, p. 8) in a natural and authentic manner that exhibited "a mindful watching over, flowing from the good in the situation that the good teacher sees."

Researcher Reflections: Living a Relational Inquiry

The multiple roles that Sarah adopted in her relationships with students prompted me to consider the various relationships that have colored this inquiry; relationships that lend credence to the description of narrative inquiry as a relational method of inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Each has changed and become more meaningful, in part due to interactions related to this inquiry, and each has contributed to my growth as a narrative inquirer. Among these relationships are my relations with Sarah, my participant, and with members of the Portfolio Group (Gray, 2008), one of my knowledge communities (see also Craig, 2007). Furthermore, the relational aspects of the inquiry extended to considerations of my anticipated reader and into unexpected interactions with self.

My relationship with Sarah has been of critical and meaningful importance in this inquiry and in bringing her storied experiences to light. She was open, frank, and thoughtful in her responses to my many, many questions. Most importantly, she was an active participant who considered her participation in the inquiry as an opportunity to reflect on her practice and growth as a teacher. During her first year when she did not receive much feedback on her teaching, she expressed her

appreciation for my feedback, especially because I understood the theoretical

underpinnings of her teaching and what she was striving to achieve. More recently,

in response to my clarifying questions, Sarah responded in an e-mail, "As always,

this has been incredibly helpful for me in clarifying my experience for myself" (e-

mail communication, March 2011). Her comment is representative of the reflective

attitude and personal presence Sarah adopted throughout this inquiry. Another key

factor in our relationship was that Sarah—not in words but in actions—invited me

into her personal space, to walk alongside her, come up close to her situations, and

to share in her experiences. Sarah has also allowed herself to be vulnerable in my

presence, to see her sadness and disappointment with student benchmark tests

because her teaching had not lived up to her expectations and her dazed reaction to

a critical incident. Our relationship allowed me to walk alongside Sarah, come up

close to her situations, and to share in her experiences. In this way I was able to see

the intentionality and concreteness of her actions (Greene, 1995), which inspired

me to burrow deeper into the underlying beliefs that informed her practice. The

relational quality of our interactions made me constantly aware of the ethical

considerations in narrative inquiry, spurred me to reflect on my actions and

motives, and ultimately brought me to the realization that I was a co-participant in

the inquiry. Finally, our relationship illuminated the reality of Clandinin and

Connelly's (2000) assertion that narrative inquirers experience tension in moving

up close to participants and then step away to "see their own stories in the inquiry,

the stories of the participants, as well as the larger landscape on which they all live"

(p. 81).

For my part, I entered the inquiry from the stance that I am a teacher. Even now, as I consider myself to have developed into a narrative inquirer, I am at heart a teacher. In other words, I entered Sarah's personal and concrete spaces as one would approach a respected colleague whose practice may offer new insights and understandings. Along with my personal stance, I was always upfront with Sarah in the purpose of my inquiry and the extent of her involvement, so there were no hidden agendas. The fact that most of my interviews with Sarah occurred in conjunction with an observation helped to facilitate our conversations because it enabled me to relate questions directly to either an overt action in her practice or the embodied personal practical knowledge that came through in her teaching. Even when I went back to Sarah with clarifying or probing questions, those queries related in some way to an observation or a conversation that grew out of the observation. Finally, sharing my interim and research texts with Sarah was not only a way of negotiating meaning with her, it was a way of honoring the trust we had established. For example, I had Sarah read over the participant description because it included information regarding her personal life and I needed to assure that she was comfortable in disclosing such information in a potentially public format. As previously mentioned, these features of our relationship enabled me to re-present Sarah's experience in an authentic manner that reflected her voice.

The Portfolio Group (Gray, 2008), a group of teachers with whom I have collaborated since 1999, is one of my knowledge communities (Craig, 1992, 1995b), providing a safe place to share and restory my experiences as a novice narrative inquirer. Throughout this inquiry Donna, Michaelann, Tim, and Cheryl have

provided much needed feedback, often times simply lending a critical ear as I

articulated and worked through a particular dilemma or concern. Being open and

vulnerable with Donna, for example, has deepened our relationship and made us

closer, while managing related tensions and working on a Portfolio Group self-study

together gave us insights into each other's thinking and writing processes.

Michaelann's feedback was affirming and thought provoking with comments to my

interim texts like, "This is exactly what conversations with high school students are

like," and "Where are you in this? I'd like to hear more about your experiences."

They encouraged me to move forward and to dig deeper. Similarly, when debriefing

the critical incident with Tim, his questions prompted me to reflect in different

directions—inward, outward, backward, and forward. Cheryl's openness in sharing

her experiences and persistent questions as a narrative inquirer continuously

inspired me to immerse myself in my inquiry, and to keep searching for meaning

and understanding to my questions. In essence, the Portfolio Group acted as an

interactive support system in this inquiry that has contributed to my continued

growth and development as a reflective and wakeful inquirer.

As I moved closer to the research text, I began to imagine the possible

audience and readers of my work. This compelled me to consider and reconsider

how the stories presented in this dissertation related to the teacher stories in other

research, and to the experiences of teachers and researchers in the broader

education landscape.   Underlying this connection to the reader was an assumption

of an intelligent reader. With this in mind the pieces of narrative and exemplars

were presented in a manner that reflects as close as possible, the situated realities

or "lifelikeness" (Bruner, 1986, p. 11) of Sarah's experiences.   For example, quotes

from Sarah provided the reader access to her thoughts rather than my paraphrased

rendition interjected with personal researcher opinions. Similarly, some of the

classroom activities were described narratively to demonstrate how situations

unfolded. My aim was not only to develop a plausible and credible research text, but

also to create a space for the reader to enter into intellectually, emotionally, and

morally. My vision, therefore, was that of an intelligent reader; one that would read

my research from a thoughtful, knowledgeable, and experienced perspective.

Hopefully, the exemplars would also evoke questions on the part of reader that

cause him or her to reflect further on the experiences of teachers. At the same time,

exemplars and personal narrative interwoven in the research text added a layer of

transparency to my work allowing the reader to imagine or connect with my

thought processes of analysis and interpretation.

One of the unexpected qualities of being the researcher in this inquiry was

the involvement of self in responding to the field texts. The constant reading

through and reflecting upon field texts in preparation of the research text pressed

me to delve deeper into the literature pertaining to narrative inquiry, teacher

identity, affective qualities of teaching, and teacher experience. Carrying my

newfound researcher experiences with me into the readings provided a different

perspective from which to reflect upon the literature and illuminated new ways in

which the literature related to the inquiry. Experiences as researcher enabled me to

return to specific literature pieces with new understanding. For example, listening

to Sarah describe what she does in her practice, and why, gave me new

understanding of Mishler's (1990) depiction of interviews as problem-solving activities and Craig's (1997) method of accessing teacher knowledge by telling stories (see also Clandinin & Connelly, 1998a). I was not only utilizing the literature to explain my research or relate the inquiry to the broader landscape, the inquiry was shaping how I interpreted the literature, and vice-versa.

Another surprise was the extent to which Sarah's experiences would resonated with my personal teacher narrative. Her classroom preparations, for example, took me back to setting up my first classroom. Her discussions on Gay, Valenzuela, and Duncan-Andrade resonated with my theoretical foundations, enactment of theory, and experiences as a bilingual teacher. Similarly, her interactions with students evoked memories of working with students as an assistant principal in another inner-city high school. The inquiry even made its way into my journal writing and creative poetry, as evidenced in the poems included in this dissertation. Poetry created an outlet for my researcher experiences and my interpretation of Sarah's experiences, as well. Poems then became a form of interim text and functioned as an additional lens through which to consider Sarah's situated and relational experiences. For me, all of these experiences reinforced the relational qualities of narrative inquiry, providing a sense that I was not conducting an inquiry, that it was not something I was doing, but rather that it was something I was living (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Critics might contend that narrative inquiry is a naive or too interpersonal approach to research. I would argue the contrary. As I have learned through this inquiry, getting at the substance of an inquiry through narrative methods is a

complex endeavor involving extended research, authentic interaction with one's

participant over time, and intense reflective analysis and interpretation. Utilizing

narrative methods has enabled me to come up close to and bring forward Sarah's

experiences in a way not afforded by other forms of research, particularly

formalistic methods. Being in relationship was key.

Transformation: Reflection, Change, Challenges, and Vision

> *I choose not to be defined as a teacher highly qualified;*
> *Just for being certified, maintaining numbers on the rise.*
> *Instead I choose the term expert—as in teacher highly expert;*
> *Knowing that a tag or label is not what defines or enables,*
> *Knowing that the expertise is gained by years of passion, years of heart,*
> *By day in, day out, learning and reflecting, and practicing one's art.*

Excerpt from *I Choose to Dance*, by Gayle Curtis
(See Appendix A for entire poem)

Sarah's pathway to teaching was a somewhat indirect route, the direction of which was affected by personal interests, family situations, and graduate studies. Interests in politics, history, and current social issues led her initially in the direction of journalism. Changing family situations shifted her path to teaching, and consequently to graduate studies and secondary social studies teaching. Stepping into the classroom, her reflective practices and beliefs on education became central to Sarah being able to navigate, or "undergo" (Eisner, 1988, ix) challenges of daily situations, respond to students' needs, implement changes in her practice, and envision her future. Although she considered teaching to be a temporary career in the beginning, her interactions with students shifted her thinking as she "[saw] the results of [her] labor [and] to some extent [the] small impact that [she has] made in the lives of kids" (interview excerpt, April 2013).

Asked about her growth as a teacher, Sarah recalled the challenge of having to work alone to create lessons for an AP course in her first year because no other teachers offered support or guidance in teaching the difficult course. Consequently, she developed the course curriculum on her own, learning as she went along. "The second year was easier," she explained, because she "knew the expectations of the

course and knew where [she] wanted to go in teaching the curriculum" (interview

excerpt, February 2013). Through the process of continually deconstructing and

reconstructing the curriculum Sarah developed a deep understanding of what

students are expected to know and do. She described the personal practical

knowledge gained as a sense of "knowing-in-doing and knowing-in-asking" (Schön,

1983) as she engaged students in conversations around the curriculum and current

events. Two particular areas of growth that stood out for Sarah were delivering and

differentiating instruction. She felt that part of her instructional growth was due to

learning different strategies for spiraling the curriculum through questioning or

activities. According to Sarah, she has "become better at pinpointing the needs of

each student." Through extensive reflection, re-evaluation, and alteration of her

teaching practices Sarah has transformed as a teacher, as evidenced in the learning

that takes place in the classroom and in her students' performance on state and AP

exams.

Unexpected learnings included "patience" (interview excerpt, February

2013) in working with freshman students adjusting to the high school context and

the realization that students respect and respond to "safe environments" by striving

harder to learn. Sarah also learned about herself as a teacher and instructional

leader during her first year. She explained:

> I learned about myself as a leader the first year. I felt like I failed kids, that I
>
> didn't push them. As a result, I felt that I didn't give them what they needed
>
> even when I was doing well as a teacher. (Interview excerpt, March 2013)

That personal assessment has changed according to Sarah, recalling her "watershed moment" when students shared how they felt confident they had done well on their recent AP exams. It was a turning point in that Sarah felt her teaching had made a difference in what students were able to do and in the success they would have in the future. Sarah's "watershed moment," engaging students in learning, and seeing their reactions to being academically successful shifted her reasons for being in education. Sarah described her initial interest in teaching as "content driven" but gradually altered her thinking and motivations in response to seeing her students learn. "Teaching seemed to come naturally to me . . . not what I expected. I realized that I could be a good teacher . . . that I could affect change" (interview excerpt, February 2013).

Sarah's campus relationships have changed over time as well. In her first year she experienced a degree of isolation in that there was only one teacher on campus with whom she regularly collaborated and discussed teaching. Her community of knowledge base at California has expanded to include teachers from various content areas, all of whom share similar teaching styles reflective of their individual theoretical foundations. Expanding her collaborations with other teachers outside of her community of knowledge was an immediate goal for Sarah as she went forward from her third year in teaching. It carried challenges, however, in that collaboration would require building new relationships with some teachers and rebuilding relationships with others, such as her first year team members. Those relationships were strained due to the team's unreceptiveness to Sarah's input and the differences in teaching styles. "I am quiet and reserved; and I am

young. I get the sense that they feel I have an elitist attitude" (interview excerpt,

March 2013) because of her strong convictions about teaching. Moving forward,

Sarah considered the attitudes of others toward her as a challenge in re-establishing

relationships.

Sarah's immediate goals for the future were to continue to build up

California's AP program by increasing the consistency of instructional rigor and

expectations and improving vertical and horizontal alignment. She took a step

toward that goal when she presented to the staff on study skills which included the

need for explicit instruction of study skills, the benefits to student learning, and a

plan for consistent teaching of these skills. A potential challenge in continuing at

California was the retirement of her principal at the end of the school-year (Sarah's

third year), creating ambiguity in regards to the degree of support Sarah will receive

from a new principal. Another leadership role that Sarah took on this year was

mentorship. She mentored a pre-service teacher completing student-teaching at

California and hosted approximately 20 university students who observed her class

in conjunction with their classwork. As such, Sarah acted as a role model, not only

for teaching history, but also for teaching in inner-city schools with high-minority,

high-poverty students.

Her long-term goal was to use the knowledge gained through her graduate

studies and personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) developed

through practice in a position outside of the classroom. She elaborated:

My graduate degree is coming to a close. I'm exploring the possibility of

leadership within the district…I want to help other teachers and not just

work with students. Still, I know it will be difficult for me to leave the classroom…Long-term, I would like to become some sort of instructional leader such as a dean of instruction. I want to work to build programs that work. (Interview excerpt, April 2013)

In her consideration of taking on the challenge of a campus instructional dean or developing a magnet program, Sarah recognized areas in need of improvement within the district. She also acknowledged deficiencies in some of the "solutions being offered" (interview excerpt, April 2013). Sarah felt that these positions would afford her the opportunity to affect change on a broader scale and to shape the education discourse. She expounded:

I still feel like this is a time where there is a need for ideas and where people are receptive to ideas. It's just a matter of putting yourself in the right place. There's a lot of skepticism towards traditional schools of education . . . so I think we need to be smarter with how we start these conversations instead of just launching criticism, which halts conversation altogether. I feel that this could possibly be done better and more productively as an insider with a strong foundation in theory. I think this more global knowledge could be a greater asset that could potentially help temper the discourse locally if I am ever able to get to a point where my voice can be heard.

Sarah's long-term goals suggested the end of one chapter and the beginning of another as she planned to move out of the classroom in hopes of affecting change on a larger scale. Her beginning stories of novice teacher were marked by challenges, growth, and transformation; and changed her rationale for being a

teacher. This story of reflection, change, challenges, and vision brought a close to Sarah's novice story, uncovering her transformation as a veteran teacher and providing a preview of stories yet to come in her career as a teacher.

Unpacking transformation: Reflection, change, challenges, and vision.
In reflecting on her early-career experiences, Sarah's comment that teaching seemed to come naturally to her was a self-assessment with which I concurred, as based on my experiences as a teacher and school administrator. She seemed to be a natural-born teacher. At the same time, she dedicated much time, energy, study, and reflection to improving her practice. Sarah exhibited a desire to continually grow and to become the teacher she envisioned for herself. In this way, she seemed to strive daily to be her best-loved self (Craig, 2011), a concept of teacher identity that recognizes the narrative qualities of teacher experiences, thereby implying that teacher identity is personal as well as interpersonal. That is to say that Sarah's vision of who she wanted to be as a teacher was inherently connected to her students, colleagues, and the broader professional landscape.

As the culminating story in Sarah's novice teacher experiences, this story highlighted the growth and transformation of her professional life and personal attitudes after three years in education. Faced with multiple challenges in her beginning year, Sarah persevered, driven by a desire to affect change in education even though she considered teaching to be a short-term career. The degree to which she gained expertise and shifted her attitude toward teaching as a personal career choice were influenced by her theoretical foundations and beliefs in education and, perhaps unexpectedly, by her interactions with students and

personal satisfaction in making a difference in their learning and their lives. The ways in which she faced her challenges, learned, grew, and transformed suggested that Sarah possessed a great deal of personal determination, resiliency to vulnerability, and commitment.

Sarah's decision to step out of the classroom was intriguing in consideration of her view of education as a political act. While her desire to change the discourse that occurs at the level was admirable one, it raised the issue of competing philosophies of education and conflicting purposes of education that she will encounter at the district level. There are certain to be push back and tensions in her future as she ventures forward in this direction.

Ultimately, the sharing of her short- and long-term goals revealed Sarah as a one with a personal vision for her life and career. Furthermore, it demonstrated her willingness to take on the risks of new challenges—confronting past difficult relationships, taking on a leadership role, and challenging the education system. Although her future was but a vision at this point in Sarah's story, her persistence in education was inspired and supported by her gained expertise, personal convictions, and resolve.

Researcher Reflections: Becoming a Narrative Inquirer

As a teacher and musician, musical metaphors have always seemed a natural way of thinking and talking about teaching. Classroom teaching was like being the leader in a jazz band, able to take the musical lead but also willing to step aside and let students take the lead. And like the jazz rendition of a written score, there are interludes of improvisation and inventiveness made possible by experience and

theoretical foundations. These are the teachable moments when a teacher moves the lesson in an unplanned direction in response to student questions or unexpected trains of thought, and then skillfully brings it back again. Learning what it means to be a narrative inquirer has been much like learning a new instrument: learning to read the music, practicing the placement of my fingers until the notes come naturally, rehearsing various tempos and volumes, exploring the limits of my instrument, and developing sufficient proficiency to play with my own expressive style.

Coming into this inquiry, I drew on my foundations in narrative inquiry gained through school portfolio-making, action-research, coursework, and wide-ranging professional readings, particularly narrative inquiries. In addition, I gained extensive insights into the processes of narrative inquiry through my work as a research assistant. That said, taking on the role of researcher in this inquiry was a learning and growth experience.

Throughout the inquiry I was able to remain true to my desire to not be driven by a script that I carried with me or laid upon Sarah's storied experiences, but allowed the inquiry to emerge in natural, unexpected directions. At the same time, I allowed myself to imagine possible directions the inquiry might lead as a way of exercising and expanding my reflections. Questions served as a driving force in leading me forward to new lines of inquiry and into deeper understandings of Sarah's experiences as she grew as a teacher. Puzzles, conundrums, and concerns made my reflective practices more reflexive as I turned the inquiry back upon myself, my beliefs, and my motivations. As such the inquiry served as an

exploration of self that affirmed my desire to work with teachers for the purpose of and satisfaction in taking part in their development.

Along the way I developed personal practical knowledge regarding what it means to do a narrative inquiry and to be a narrative inquirer. It confirmed that the relational qualities of narrative inquiry resonate with me professionally, practically, and personally. It also further strengthened my resolve to continue inquiring into the lives of teachers.

The experiences in this inquiry made me consider whether or not in the future I would engage in other methods of research that are not closely related to narrative. While I possess the intelligence, skills, and capacity to carry out such research, I realize now that it would not engage my personal practical knowledge, imagination, creativity, interests, and beliefs about teachers in the same way as does narrative inquiry. Most of all, after walking alongside Sarah and working in harmony with her through the course of this inquiry, I no longer think of myself as a novice but rather as a narrative inquirer.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Summary

The two collections of stories of novice teacher and novice researcher re-presented and explored in this inquiry converge as harmonic counterparts, with multiple perspectives of a single narrative inquiry. Sarah's storied experiences took us from the challenges of a teacher entering education to one envisioning her future. My researcher reflections, shared with transparency, revealed the challenges and rewards of becoming a narrative inquirer. Multiple resonances echoed between the teacher and researcher stories as each one of us moved through this inquiry and made progress toward actualizing our best-loved selves (Craig, 2011).

Some readers may consider the focus on one teacher and one researcher to be a limitation to this inquiry. Admittedly, the stories shared here were unique in that they conveyed personal experiences of Sarah as teacher and me as researcher. Additionally, the notion that Sarah was a natural teacher may suggest to some that her experiences may not resonate with the experiences of other teachers. However, the consideration of limitations does not diminish the time, energy, study, experience, and reflection that contributed to Sarah's growth and development as a teacher. These are factors or activities that all teachers may engage in to improve their practice. Similarly, the challenges and situations encountered by Sarah reflect those represented in the broad research literature focused on the lives of novice and veteran teachers. The same can be said of my researcher experiences, in that all narrative inquirers go through similar situations as they enter into existing situations, come alongside their participants, and search for the emergent threads in the lives of teachers.

Sarah's stories revealed challenges, growth and transformation. Her experiences accentuated the important role of teacher education programs in preparing teachers for the classroom and reinforced the need for induction programs that emphasize meaningful mentor-protégé relationships. They also brought attention to the need for campus environments that focus collaboration on *all* teachers' work and professional development. Her stories illuminated the difficulties new teachers face when negotiating their place in new contexts while still meeting the demands and expectations that their jobs entail. In this way her storied experiences revealed the influence of school cultures on successful novice transitions into education. Additionally, her stories highlighted how pressures of high-stakes accountability directly impact the lives of teachers, at times placing them in situations in which they question their abilities and professional identities.

Peering into Sarah's classroom through narrative renditions of her daily activities showed how teachers become curriculum-makers and enact theory in practice while building relationships and making a difference in the lives of students. It provided insights into how teachers engage students in meaningful learning experiences, create positive learning environments, and differentiate instruction. From Sarah's experiences we learned how teachers bring their personal selves to their work, along with their beliefs and convictions related to education. Her stories uncovered multiple dimensions to teaching, including the necessity to adopt numerous roles, the emotional involvement in teaching, and the important place of relationship in teacher and student success. Finally, Sarah's overall

narrative indicated that personal beliefs, openness to feedback, resilience, and determination can be significant factors in teacher perseverance in education.

Accompanying Sarah's teacher stories, my novice researcher stories were re-presented in the form of a parallel position as I walked alongside Sarah. My reflections demonstrated the complexities narrative inquiries entail and brought forward the fluid qualities adherent to narrative inquiry. It revealed the relational aspect of narrative inquiry as instrumental in enabling the inquirer to get close to and build meaning from teachers' lived experiences. Reflections emphasized the wakefulness of narrative inquirers as they move mindfully and attentively through the three-dimensional research space. From a personal perspective, the reflections permitted me an opportunity to bring my personal narrative to the inquiry and to share my storied experiences with my readers with transparency.

Together, the parallel stories of Sarah, the teacher, and me, the researcher, resonated with concurrent and complementary themes (see Figure 20). Each of us in our own way enacted theory by drawing on our theoretical foundations and personal beliefs. We encountered challenges and situations common to other teachers and researchers; experiences that reflected the emotional and relational qualities of teaching and narrative inquiry. Similarly, we both engaged in critical reflective and reflexive practices that improved our practice. These resonances revealed the consonances and dissonances in Sarah's and my storied experiences, further accentuating the link between teacher and researcher in this inquiry.

Each enacted theory in practice

Encountered challenges common to teachers and researchers

Experiences revealed emotional and relational aspects of teaching and research

Each engaged in reflective and reflexive practices

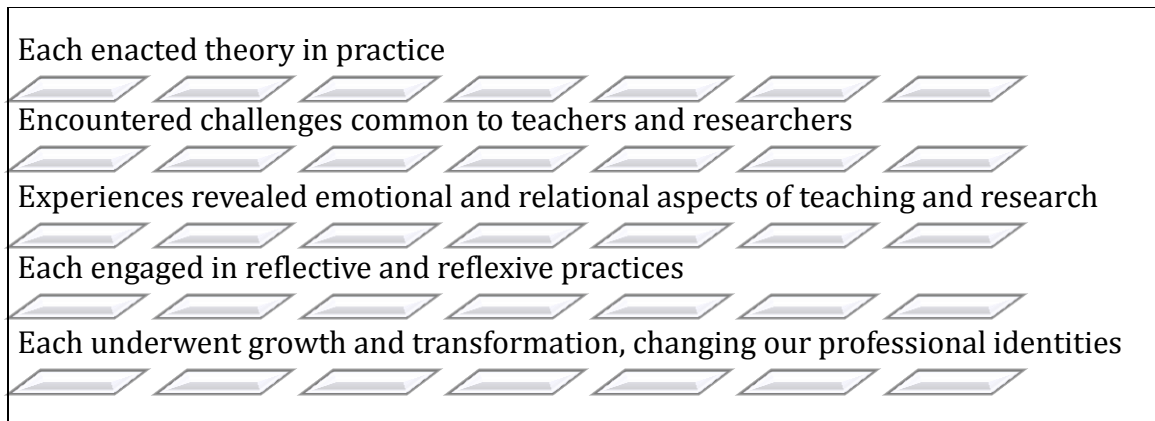Each underwent growth and transformation, changing our professional identities

Figure 20 - Resonances in the parallel stories of teacher and researcher

Midway through this inquiry, I shared how Sarah's beginning narratives had offered insights into the lives of teachers while simultaneously evoking many questions about the internal and external influences on teachers' practice and persistence in education. Now at the end of this inquiry, I find myself in a similar position. The inquiry has augmented my knowledge of the complexities of teachers' experiences, and the moral and ethical dilemmas encountered across the landscapes in which they live and work. It gave me a deeper understanding of how teachers' beliefs, motivations, and theoretical foundations facilitate the formation of teacher commitment and resolve. At the same time, Sarah's experiences leave me with many questions regarding the professional growth of teachers and their continuing formation of teacher identity and striving to live out their best-loved selves. Moving forward, I hope to continue following Sarah's experiences in teaching to see if her new role of leadership takes her out of the classroom or if changing situations allow her to stay in the classroom while taking on a larger leadership role. Another area of future research lays in the notion of the best-loved self, a concept of teacher

identity that was briefly explored in this inquiry but one that would require further burrowing and extended time.

As a result of this inquiry, we hold and carry forward new understandings and personal practical knowledge gained over time and evidenced in our transformation from novices to veteran teacher and narrative inquirer. Emerging from our parallel stories is the realization that neither Sarah nor I are the same people as when we set out on this inquiry. Moving alongside one another in this reflective space allowed us to come together and, in some small way, to be part of each other's individual growth and transformation as we press toward a future as yet unknown.

The stories of our lives are meant to be retold,
meant to come alive again, meant to be re-known.
The layers of our narrative through the years unfold
in endless ways of knowing when exploring the retold.

Sometimes it's in living that paths align and intertwine;
And sometimes differences collide in tentative terrain.
Though tensions push and pull away and commonalities unite,
It's left for each one to decide which road, which path to take.

Sometimes in the telling of lessons learned and wisdom earned
a golden leaf is overturned—a treasure in disguise.
Then someone reads between the lines of what was said and what was heard;
and somehow gems of truth emerge enriching soul and mind.

Sometimes in retelling, when pain is less and joy is more,
we see a meaning lost before, clearly in new light.
With present lens and rearview sight reflection leads a soul to grow
with countless, deeper ways to know, when journey is the prize.

Sometimes in reliving, replaying landscaped histories,
hidden stories, mysteries, join voices to our song.
The who we were and who we are, join in resonating harmony,
creating a new melody, of who we will become.

Stories by Gayle Curtis, March 2010

Afterword

The Best-Loved Self

Personal story, situations and contexts
self-directed agency, curriculum-maker lens
personal practical knowledge
self and expert with knowing and sensibilities
teaching through showing and personal interaction
naturally gravitating toward the best-loved self.

Personal history, non-replicable, self-moving living thing
product of education, product of self-made choices
debate, deliberation, decision
translating reflections into actions
testing reflections, actions, and outcomes
practices and consequences, strengths and reflections
discretionary power, enactment, and active engagement
illuminating the best-loved self.

Fountainhead, agent,
engaging in the practical, interacting in complex milieus
the teacher commonplace, organic, interactive, mentor, guide
model, ally and participant
face-to-face and dwelling with and laboring alongside
amid the learning process with narrative authority
-personal practical knowledge in action-
conveying ideas and images to liberate not captivate
learning to live together
coming to know the best-loved self.

Personal narrative
of agency, autonomy, identity, and moments of choice
self-education, dialectic reflection and intelligent rebellion
practice, repertoire, self-image and change
strength and natural sources within
a sense of self in the midst of it all
free and resonating
navigating, advancing and improving
ephemeral, passionate, shadowy and significant
high quality and satisfying life
learning to be the best-loved self.

by Gayle Curtis

* Inspired by 'Teacher Education and the Best-Loved Self", (Craig, 2011) a key-note address by Cheryl J. Craig, Ph.D. at the 2011 ISATT conference, Braga, Portugal.

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Appendix A

Invitation

Come.
Come and enter in,
into the telling and retelling of a story—
Her story, your story,
mine, theirs, and
our story.

Come and join in,
into the knowing and re-knowing
we encounter quite profoundly
through the unwrapping and unfolding,
through the unspooling and unrolling
of those stories yours, and mine, and ours.

Come and lay your story next to mine.
Lay it out against the landscape;
lay your story next to hers, and his,
lay your story next to our story.

Come and know where stories push and pull
and sometimes knot and even bind;
know where themes emerge, and threads align,
and know where ribbons intertwine.

Gayle Curtis, April 2011

Excerpt from Finding our ways: Narrative journeys of doctoral students. Paper presentation at American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA., (2011) by Curtis, G., Malik, Sandra J., Seiki, S., Driedger Enns, L., Nelson, J., Reid, D., Leavitt, D., Filipan, R. .

Finding my Way

Finding my way
along the twists and turns has not been easy,
yet I tirelessly, determinedly,
venture on along the path before me.
Sometimes people, plans, and purpose gel as events unfold
recalling the reasons why *this* road is the path I chose.

From time to time
my path is littered with tripping stones,
veiled by torments of test bubbles raining down,
forming landmines on the ground.
Nevertheless, I journey on.

The barkers' calls crescendo rise and fall
as side shows materialize beside the road,
lights and bells and whistles
proclaim attractions row on row;
Raucous distractions meant to lure me from my goal.
I shake my head, I turn my back,
I take a step—and journey on.

I find relationship in those I guide and teach.
Enveloped in a sense of watchfulness
I wait in hopeful anticipation
of the goals that they will reach.

I find the lessons learned repeating in my head,
echoing back to me in what is done and what is said.
I find fellowship
with those whose paths weave in and out of mine;
whose confidence and knowing bolster mine—
when mine is hard to find.
So it is, as I journey on.

Gayle Curtis, July 2011

I Choose to Dance

I choose not to be defined as a teacher highly qualified;
Just for being certified, maintaining numbers on the rise.
Instead I choose the term expert—as in *teacher* highly expert;
Knowing that a tag or label is not what defines or enables,
Knowing that the expertise is gained by years of passion, years of heart,
By day in, day out, learning and reflecting, and practicing one's art.

I choose not to be a teacher distant and aloof, disconnected, unconcerned.
I choose not to be the "*him*" or "*her*" that calmly broadcasts what is learned.
And I choose not to ever build what one might call a "teacher-student wall",
But rather dare to share myself—my views, emotions, challenges, doubts, and all.
I choose instead to be the present "I" in my students' eyes,
To speak with candor, without bounds, to teach without the sonorous sounds
That moderate, suppress, oppress, and carry on the middle ground.

I choose not to deem my students burdens, or empty vessels in need of learning.
Instead I choose to see the social, feeling, knowing, growing learners that I teach
As filled with talent, possibility, and rich individuality.
I choose not to view kids' parents as the enemy,
Or relegate these guardians to the role of "them."
Instead, I choose to recognize first teachers, carers, givers—
Important aspects of my students' daily lives.
I choose to form relationships, parent-student-teacher partnerships;
To understand storied histories, to honor family heritage.

I choose not to revert—not to teach the way in which I first learned.
And I choose not to pimp the textbook makers' point of view.
As for me, I shall not speak in scripted verse,
In hollow verbosity of static and predictable terms.
Instead, I choose to be footloose, to take a chance
By leading students in a rhythmic teaching-learning dance –
That thinking, doing, action dance—a dance that moves, pushes, pulls, negotiates;
A dance of dialogue, discussion, and debate—a dance that I facilitate.
But one in which I choose to be a learner, too.
A dance that pushes past the comfort zone,
That seeks the hidden message, hidden truth,
That seeks empowerment, transformation, change.
A dance of knowledge, inspiration, and surprise,
A dance I hope my students dance their whole lives.

<div align="right">

By Gayle Curtis, December 2010
(A response from the trenches to Jonathan Kozol's *On being a teacher*, 1981)

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Stories

The stories of our lives are meant to be retold,
meant to come alive again, meant to be re-known.
The layers of our narrative through the years unfold
in endless ways of knowing when exploring the retold.

Sometimes it's in living that paths align and intertwine;
And sometimes differences collide in tentative terrain.
Though tensions push and pull away and commonalities unite,
It's left for each one to decide which road, which path to take.

Sometimes in the telling of lessons learned and wisdom earned
a golden leaf is overturned—a treasure in disguise.
Then someone reads between the lines of what was said and what was heard;
and somehow gems of truth emerge enriching soul and mind.

Sometimes in retelling, when pain is less and joy is more,
we see a meaning lost before, clearly in new light.
With present lens and rearview sight reflection leads a soul to grow
with countless, deeper ways to know, when journey is the prize.

Sometimes in reliving, replaying landscaped histories,
hidden stories, mysteries, join voices to our song.
The who we were and who we are, join in resonating harmony,
creating a new melody, of who we will become.

Stories by Gayle Curtis, March 2010

The Best-Loved Self

Personal story, situations and contexts
self-directed agency, curriculum-maker lens
personal practical knowledge
self and expert with knowing and sensibilities
teaching through showing and personal interaction
naturally gravitating toward the best-loved self.

Personal history, non-replicable, self-moving living thing
product of education, product of self-made choices
debate, deliberation, decision
translating reflections into actions
testing reflections, actions, and outcomes
practices and consequences, strengths and reflections
discretionary power, enactment, and active engagement
illuminating the best-loved self.

Fountainhead, agent,
engaging in the practical, interacting in complex milieus
the teacher commonplace, organic, interactive, mentor, guide
model, ally and participant
face-to-face and dwelling with and laboring alongside
amid the learning process with narrative authority
-personal practical knowledge in action-
conveying ideas and images to liberate not captivate
learning to live together
coming to know the best-loved self.

Personal narrative
of agency, autonomy, identity, and moments of choice
self-education, dialectic reflection and intelligent rebellion
practice, repertoire, self-image and change
strength and natural sources within
a sense of self in the midst of it all
free and resonating
navigating, advancing and improving
ephemeral, passionate, shadowy and significant
high quality and satisfying life
learning to be the best-loved self.

The Best-Loved Self by Gayle Curtis (see Appendix A)

* *Inspired by 'Teacher Education and the Best-Loved Self'', (Craig, 2011) a key-note*
address by Cheryl J. Craig, Ph.D. at the 2011 ISATT conference, Braga, Portugal.