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Examining Identity Of Novice Teacher Educators: A Self-Study

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EXAMINING IDENTITY OF NOVICE TEACHER EDUCATORS: A SELF-STUDY

by

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for the degree of

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This dissertation, submitted by Laura Brudvik in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done, and is hereby approved.

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This dissertation is being submitted by the appointed advisory committee as having met all of the requirements of the School of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota and is hereby approved.

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Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

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Date

PERMISSION

Title: Examining Identity of Novice Teacher Educators: A Self-Study

Department: Teaching and Learning

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

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Laura Brudvik
November 30, 2016
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"The role of a creative leader is not to have all the ideas; it's to create a culture where everyone can have ideas and feel that they're valued."

-Sir Ken Robinson

To the teacher educators. Keep the light burning.

ABSTRACT

Novice teacher educators can provide valuable insight into the question of professional identity and how it informs practice. Collaboration through interviews using self-study highlight how the experiences of their novice teacher educator years contribute to their identities. The self-study method provides an integrative approach, bridging research and practice, with the goal of ultimately improving practice. This self-study identifies specific qualities possessed by teacher educators who are former classroom teachers, and analyzes those qualities to determine possible benefits to teacher education. A corollary study is a self-study of my personal construction of professional identity as a novice teacher educator. The self-study method provides a direct avenue from which to explore possible answers to the questions; how have my unique experiences shaped my professional identity, and how do those experiences contribute to the well-being of my students and colleagues, and how do lived experiences of the classroom teacher shape identity as a teacher educator? Most importantly, how can these lived experiences help rather than hinder to enrich the teacher education program as a whole? Responses are coded and categorized using Wenger's (1998) Modes of Belonging model. Careful consideration is given to each response, to see how and when the novice teacher educator crafts an identity. By understanding how their identity are defined, it is the researcher's hope that the knowledge gained brings confidence and competence to novice teacher educators.

Key Words: novice teachers, teacher identity, teacher educator, secondary education,

Modes of Belonging, mentorship, collaboration

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Who's there?" (Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 1, Line 1).

When the vigilant Bernardo calls out into the blackness, Shakespeare's Elizabethan audience would have sharpened their senses and strained to hear the answer. "Who's there?" It is likely that at some point in their lives, most educators have read, seen, or even perhaps taught the Shakespearean play, *Hamlet*. But have they given consideration to the opening line: "Who's there?" Have they thought about their identities as teacher-educators? Have they studied what factors come together to shape those identities, and to inform their practices?

Teacher educators are unique: "Teacher educators constitute a group of teachers with a special role in the education enterprise: they prepare future teachers. Is this special role the basis for a distinct professional identity?" (Ben-Peretz, Kleeman, Reichenberg, & Shimoni, 2010, p. 114). Izadinia (2014) argues that teacher educators do in fact have a distinct professional identity. In the review of literature on the topic, she identifies an increasing interest in the concept of teacher identity. The study finds that both self-support and community support influence teacher educators' identity, and that teacher educators contribute lived experiences that constantly influence identity in

the background. The illustrated figure explains the activities that support teacher educator identity.
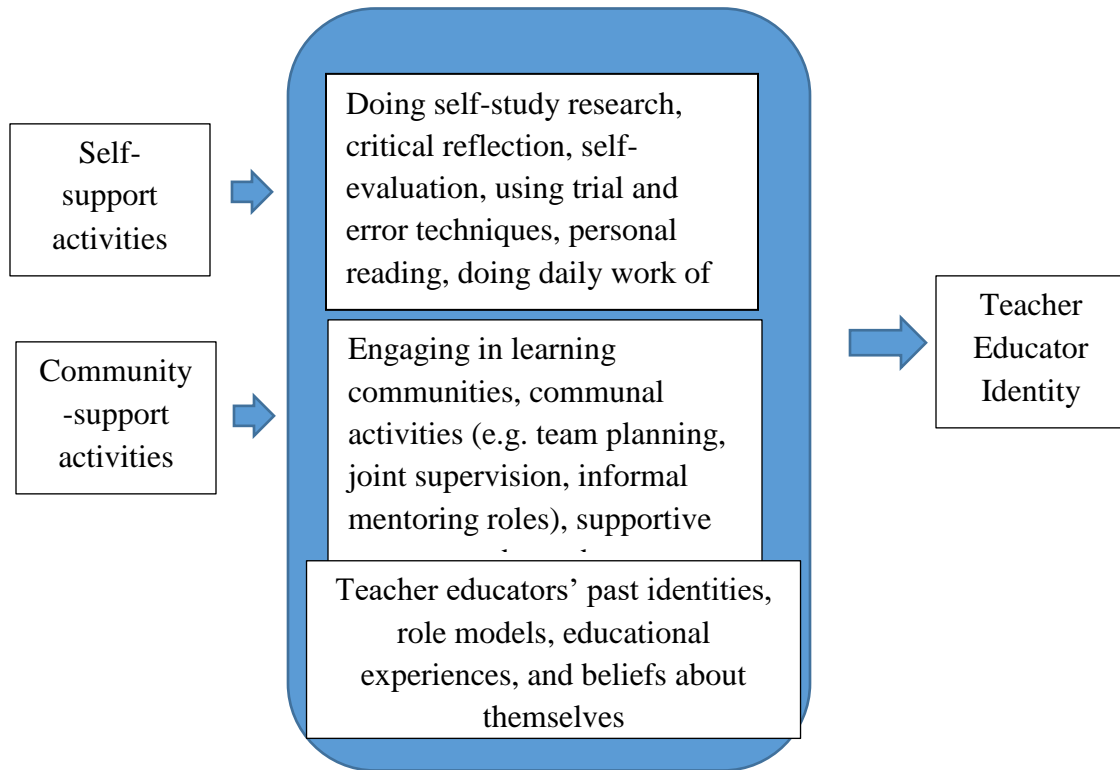
Figure 1. Factors influencing teacher educators' identity development.

The figure presents several qualities resulting from two distinct sources of support activities. The activities and qualities produce one teacher educator identity. Past experiences and beliefs must not be forgotten and also contribute to the identity of the teacher educator. This process is multi-faceted and complicated. Saito (2013) and Dinkelman (2011) agree that constructing multi-dimensional identities is no easy task, and Dinkelman extends his description of complex teacher educator identities by

pointing out that those identities are claimed by the educators themselves, and also given to the educators by the roles and institutions that frame the profession.

Novice Teacher Educators

I am a novice teacher educator and I believe the real work of understanding one's teacher educator identity begins in the novice years. Novice teacher educators are faculty members who have been in the field for one to six years. Some novice teacher educators have transitioned from K-12 educators to teacher educators. Their identities face potential shifts and changes. For the purpose of this paper, the terms novice teacher educator and new or beginning teacher educator will be used interchangeably. The terms "professional identity" and "identity" will also be used interchangeably. What does current research say about novice teacher educator identity?

Teacher educators are not simply "teachers." Most have experience in a K-12 setting, and certainly that experience contributes to an identity, but new and unique needs surface for novice teacher educators. An assumption exists that competent school teachers will automatically be proficient teacher educators, but this assumption does a disservice to new teacher educators as they may have specific needs that are not being met (Williams & Ritter, 2010). Saito (2013) notes three types of struggles experienced by novice, former K-12 teacher educators: the need to formulate and develop a new identity, to adjust to a new working environment, and to engage in research activities. Knowles and Cole (1994) and Pinnegar (1995) concur with Saito that these struggles lead to "a sense of isolation" (p. 193).

Adjusting to a new environment is challenging on any front. The post-secondary arena offers a more isolated approach to teaching. Gone are the teams of K-12. Teacher educators are given more academic freedom. This can be liberating, but intimidating. In addition to new freedom, teacher educators are often expected to conduct research in their field:

> The amount of literature on teacher educators' professional identities is minimal, but available sources suggest that the development of a personal pedagogy for teacher education and the development of scholarship are two key elements on the identity of teacher educators. (p. 416)

Williams and Ritter (2010) and Izadinia (2014) agree that there has been little research regarding the needs of new teacher educators, and that even though there has been a heightened interest in the concept of teacher educator identity, the topic is still under-researched. Dinkelman (2011) depends on his own practice and experience to inform his stance on the importance of teacher educator identity. His extensive work with the teacher educator self-study community gives him considerably more experience with teacher educator identity than is typical among those in the field.

Self-Study Research

The added complexity of the roles of teacher educators and how those roles contribute to their professional identity can be explored through self-study. In Lunenberg, Korthagen, and Zwart (2011), ten teacher-educators agreed to participate in a self-study project, dedicated to researching the identities of teacher-educators. The

project focused on supporting the participants when conducting research. The facilitators disclose that one participant decided to quit the project. He is identified as a young teacher-educator who deemed that participating in a self-study was too much for his level of development, so he quit. The remaining subjects of the self-study ranged in age from forty years old to fifty-seven years old. This presents a potential gap in research. Beginning and novice-teacher educators are under-represented in current research.

Lunenberg et al. (2011) concluded that "conducting self-study research supports the development of teacher educators' professional identities" (p. 417). The participants, on a follow-up questionnaire, showed that "they had developed a research perspective, kept up to date with the literature, and continued to collect data, and to write" (p. 418). Self-study is a practical and effective way to learn about the identity of the novice teacher educator, and can enhance confidence, and therefore improve practice.

Need for the Study

Izadinia (2014) conducted a "thorough analysis" of available literature on existing tensions and challenges faced by teacher educators. Her purpose was to reduce said tensions, and also to better recognize the process of identity formation in teacher-educators, and how it can be facilitated: "The tensions experienced by teacher educators toward constructing their professional identity seem to be still unresolved" (p. 427). She raises three research questions:

1. What challenges and tensions do teacher educators experience during their
   academic induction?

2. What factors influence the development of teacher educators' identity?

3. What might high quality induction programmes of teacher educators entail?
(p. 428).

Izadinia (2014) focused only on teachers' professional identities. Reviewed studies fell into the last ten years and originated in North American countries. Fifty-two articles were chosen after an analysis of applicability, and a limitation is that her focus is on teacher educators' identities. A related topic is professional development, and while there are connections between teacher educator identity and professional development, her review focuses strictly on articles concerning teacher educator identity.

Beginning and novice teacher educators are occupied with constructing their professional identities following the transition from K-12 educators to teacher educators. Izadinia (2014) goes on to cite studies exploring teacher-educator identity "during academic induction or introduction to academia" (p. 429). This still leaves a population of teacher-educators out of consideration. Novice teacher-educators, with approximately five years of experience at the post-secondary level are still under-represented in current research.

There tends to be a vast wasteland between practitioners and research. Teachers in the field often find formal studies in education to be out of touch with their own

personal practice. Research seems so separate from actual practice. This conundrum presents a need for teachers to feel more connected to their own studies. Novice teacher educators can provide valuable insight into the question of professional identity and how it informs practice. Collaboration through interviews using self-study will highlight how the experiences of their novice teacher educator years contribute to their identities.

<div align="center">**Research Purpose**</div>

This study explores how novice teacher educators construct their professional identity. A corollary study is a self-study of my personal construction of professional identity as a novice teacher educator. Times of transition can be full of turning points. In their study of transition, Bullock and Ritter (2011), wrote that data from their study indicate turning points, which challenged the authors' prior understandings of a situation, in other words "being at a loss." Turning points share the following characteristics: Transition to being a teacher educator involved an effective element; new teacher educators face a problem of practice. Collaboration or help from a critical friend is present, and since data is "bounded by the action-present, there is still time to take action on the problem" (p. 175).

Bullock and Ritter (2011) focused on identity problems faced by new teacher educators, as opposed to problems with developing pedagogy: "Powerful and pertinent self-studies have defining characteristic of teacher-educators coming to understand their own practice differently as a result of engaging in self-study" (p. 174). This self-study project uses narrative and inquiry to explore the identities of new teacher educators with

considerable success. Self-study using narrative and inquiry is also useful to explore the identities of novice teacher educators.

A self-study of my personal construction of professional identity as a novice teacher educator is also included in the research. The self-study method provides a direct avenue from which to explore possible answers to the questions; how have my unique experiences shaped my professional identity, and how do those experiences contribute to the well-being of my students and colleagues, and how do lived experiences of the classroom teacher shape identity as a teacher educator? Most importantly, how can these lived experiences help rather than hinder to enrich the teacher education program as a whole?

As with other practitioner research, collaboration is important in self-study. Collaboration with respected colleagues resulted in increased interest in the method: "Collaboration in self-study enhances learning and understanding…" (Elijah, 2007, p. 252). Productive discussions with colleagues and mentors generate ideas for exploring, explaining, and defining experiences through self-study. In her article published in *Perspectives in Education*, Samaras (2014) notes that, "Although self-study is a personal inquiry situated in one's professional practice, it is the audience and dialogue of critical friends that enables perspective taking" (p. 117). This perspective is crucial to the design and process of the study.

Samaras (2007) argues personal history self-study research shows how student reflections and role playing help students to understand humanity in ways that come alive and make sense to them. The concepts are within grasp when students are able to

write personal accounts on education-related topics, collaborate, and share their results: "Personal history can be used to transform our relationships to ourselves, to our students, and to the curriculum" (p. 933).

In her personal narrative accounts of entering teaching, Rice (2011) uncovers several plotlines about why students chose to become teachers. Her self-study uses narrative to reveal plotlines explaining "the complexity of the becoming a teacher question" (p. 151). Her work with teacher candidates and her discussions with colleagues fueled her curiosity into teacher identity and how teachers position themselves. Certainly collaboration and discussion is invaluable in the area of education.

Dinkelman (2011) discusses the importance of a collaborative working group, dedicated to identifying and solving problems in teacher education practices. Membership in such groups is a reminder that teacher educators "have a hand in crafting identities in context, in practice and over time" (p. 314). At the conclusion of their project, Lunenberg et al. (2011) determined that "self-study research supports the development of teacher educators' professional identities" (p. 417). For the purposes of this project, self-study is used to examine the professional identities of novice teacher educators.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study include the following four questions, which also will include the answers to questions specific to the researcher's experience. The

research questions were first answered by the researcher in a journal format, to eliminate influence by other participants in the project.

1. How do novice teacher educators describe their perceptions of professional identity and teacher identity?
2. How do teachers' K-12 experiences shape their teacher identities?
3. How do novice teacher educators' experiences shape their teacher educator identities?
4. How does novice teacher educator identity shape or impact practice?

Conceptual Framework

Several concepts concerning identity are taken into account for this project. The work of Dinkelman (2011), Bullock & Ritter (2011), Saito (2013) and others are referenced. E. Wenger (1998), provides three modes of belonging. He discusses identity in terms of "belonging to communities of practice" (p. 173).

Figure 2. Modes of Belonging (Wenger, 1998).

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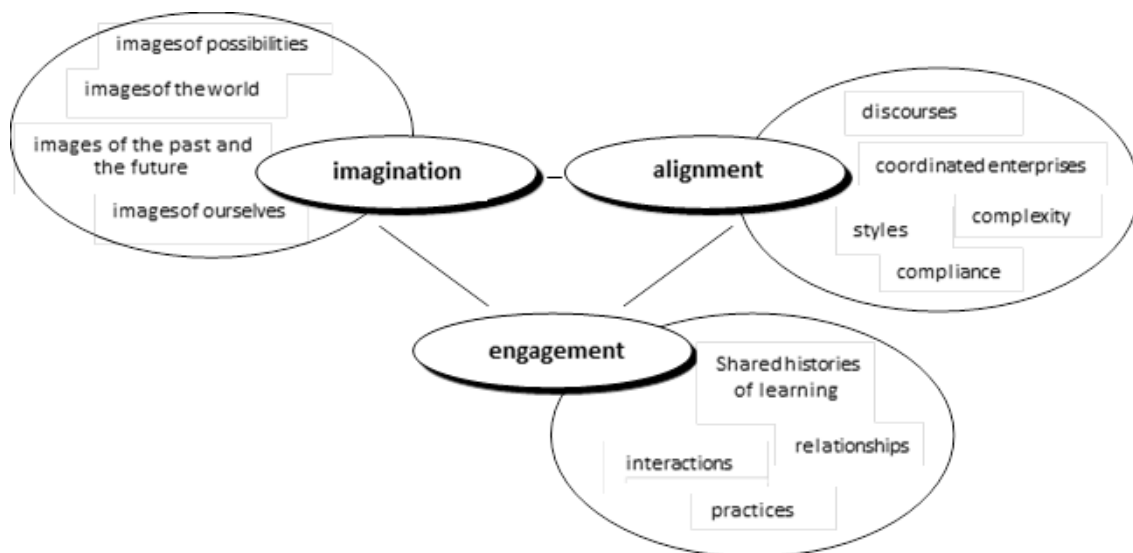
This concept is used to organize and analyze the teacher-educator participants'

responses to questions regarding identity.

Wenger (1998) describes engagement in a three-step process, which includes:

1.　　The ongoing negotiation of meaning

2.　　The formation of trajectories

3.　　The unfolding of histories of practice

These three processes take place together, and make engagement become "a

mode of belonging and a source of identity" (p. 174). Engagement is notable because of

its bounds, or limits. The concept of limiting something may be perceived as a negative

factor. There are only so many places in time and space that an individual may be at any

given moment. There is a limit to the tasks that can demand the engagement of one

person. However, these bounds, or limits, may also be seen as a strength. It is within

these bounds that individuals shape and strengthen the connection to the chosen tasks

and relationships.

Engagement can be narrow. When an individual is truly engaged, competency

can become so second-nature, so transparent, that no other viewpoints or new ideas are

considered. New practice may be limited because "one is too engaged to pursue a new

(possibly better) practice" (Wenger, 1998, p. 175). Complacency and comfort may get

in the way of using engagement to further explore identity.

According to Wenger (1998), "Imagination is an important component of our

experience of the world and our sense of place in it" (p. 176). Wenger goes on to define

imagination as expanding oneself by going beyond time and space to create new images of self and world. Imagination is to hold a pumpkin seed on a spring morning, but to envision autumn, with pumpkin pies and jack-o-lanterns, and frosty candle nights. Imagination is attending a musical production and recognizing oneself in the encountered difficulties of a character.

Wenger's imagination favors the creative process of producing a new identity, as opposed to a more fantastical point of view. Imagination goes beyond engagement to produce images of the self. This limitless quality is powerful, but one must be careful to avoid stereotypes. For example, most stay-at-home moms love to keep house and garden, so if one wants to work in the house and raise children, one must embrace cleaning and gardening.

Through imagination people can connect themselves to the world while considering other perspectives and other meanings, and while doing so construct an identity. Caution must be taken. Imagination can be "disconnected and ineffective, and based on stereotypes that create assumptions of certain practices" (Wenger, 1998, p. 178). Imagination can also become wild, and detach identity to leave an individual in a state of discontent. Because of these risks, imagination is a delicate act of identity, and can cause an individual to lose touch with "the sense of social efficacy by which our experience of the world can be interpreted as competence" (Wenger, 1998, p. 178).

Alignment is similar to imagination in that it does not hold the confinement of engagement. The process of alignment transcends time and space to form a connection to something bigger than oneself. Alignment creates a bigger picture on a more

coordinated scale than imagination. This mode is perhaps the most organized of the three modes of belonging. Alignment takes identity development to the next level. It is possible for one to be engaged with others in a community of practice without knowing or caring about the broader goals of that faction; "Individuals may be connected with others through imagination and yet not care or know what to do about it" (Wenger, 1998, p. 179).

In spotlighting the effects of one's actions, alignment is an essential part of belonging. Alignment concerns directing energy and therefore concerns power. It can create an "unquestioning allegiance that makes one susceptible to delusion and abuse" (Wenger, 1998, p. 181). According to Wenger (1998), "engagement, imagination, and alignment each create relations of belonging that expand identity through space and time in different ways" (Wenger, 1998, p. 181).

1. I have argued that engagement has a bounded character.
2. Because imagination involved unconstrained assumptions of relatedness, it can create relations of identity anywhere, throughout history, and in unrestricted number. Of course, not all of these relations are significant.
3. Alignment can also span vast distances, both socially and physically. It will tend to be more focused than imagination since it entails an investment of personal energy, which cannot be split indefinitely (Wenger, 1998, p. 181).

A sense of belonging is the cornerstone to constructing professional identities for novice teacher educators. Engagement, imagination, and alignment help to define the development of professional identities:

> If beginning teacher educators are to learn and construct new professional identities, then it would appear from Wenger's argument that engagement in the practices of the community and the development of supportive relationships are essential aspects of beginning teacher educators' professional learning. (Williams and Ritter, 2010, p. 81-82)

Benefits of Study

In her literature review of teacher educators' identity, Izadinia (2014) provides a table detailing the challenges and tension faced by teacher educators (p. 430).

Table 1. External challenges and internal tensions faced by teacher educators

Real World Challenges	Emotional Tensions
1. Not having proven research skills; how to engage in research	1. Difficulty in acquiring an identity as a researcher
2. Not having information and understanding of assessment terminology, making procedures; how to teach content and strategies and how to deliver lectures	2. Doubt about self-identities as an academic
3. How to develop organizational knowledge; expectations to transfer skills and knowledge from school; changing support networks; lack of knowledge of how system works; lack	3. Feelings of being de-skilled, exposed, vulnerable, marginalized and new

of understanding of structure of HE (higher education)	
4. Changing roles and assuming an expanded and more visible position	4. Feeling uncertain within themselves; fighting with inner self
5. Teaching loads; not knowing what the expectations are; emergent research demands	5. Considerable levels of stress
6. How to make professional connections with other teacher educators; how to negotiate new professional relationships with students	6. Sense of loneliness; failure in establishing academic credibility

These challenges have been identified with regard to teacher educator identities, and provide a solid base for study. Teacher educator professional development and the perspectives of novice teacher educators were not examined. This self-study specifically explores novice teacher educator identity, and intends to divulge the specific challenges associated with professional identity formation at that point in time. There are numerous benefits for novice teacher educators with regards to this self-study. Dinkelman (2011) finds that a study of preparation of teachers in the USA leads to a "widespread personality crisis, if not a downright inferiority complex" (p. 310).

Perhaps out of a desire to improve practice at their local, departmental level, teacher-educators keep their focus narrow. Reflection and discussion grows confidence and educators as with Dinkelman (2011) report that they learn the most about educating pre-service teachers, by collaborating with others in the same field. His study incorporates and encourages reflection and collaboration, with the ultimate goal of

using a well-established identity to work toward better practices in teacher-educator programs. There are implications that benefits could extend beyond the teacher-education realm, and spill into other divisions on college campuses. The inquiry, reflection, and collaboration involved in this specific self-study aspires to achieve for novice teacher educators what Dinkelman described as the ultimate goal of using a well-established identity to work toward better practices in teacher-educator programs.

Reflexivity Statement

I am a novice teacher educator with six years of experience educating pre-service teachers. The research questions are first answered by me, in a journal format, to eliminate influence by other participants in the project. The answers are then analyzed along with the responses provided by the other teacher educators. The following is a personal narrative from the journal:

When I first became a teacher educator, I felt great excitement with the idea of independence. Textbook selection, curriculum design, flexible meeting hours: these options were new to me. K-12 teachers do not enjoy that kind of freedom. With new independence comes uncertainty and isolation. My position perpetuated this feeling of isolation for a number of reasons.

1. *I was hired in the English department, not the Education department. Since I only taught one education course (Secondary English Methods), my curriculum planning and topics discussions revolved (primarily)*

around teaching English and composition courses. It was understood

that (the English teacher) took care of Secondary English Methods.

2. *When I moved into my quiet, quaint, one hundred-year-old office on*

    campus, I left behind a (family) of twelve English teachers. My

    colleagues and friends were there to provide support and advice at a

    moment's notice. Our office was a large, square room full of English,

    Social Studies, and Foreign Language teachers. It was buzzing with

    energy, ideas, and fun. Cubicle partitions provided no communication

    boundaries. There was always something going on, something new to

    learn.

Not all novice teacher educators will have felt, so acutely, these feelings of
isolation, so I must check that bias when conducting and analyzing interviews. My
university teaching experiences are also unique because of the setting. The campus has
a rural setting and is not a research university. There is no research or publishing
component to the job description. Other participants who teach at research universities
will have potential obligations to contribute to the field by publishing articles and
presenting at conferences. And finally, I am a teacher educator, but technically only
teach one teacher education course. My division is Liberal Arts. Technically, I teach
English courses, and one teacher education course: Secondary English Methods. This is
unique to my job, so I must remember that when interpreting the data from participants,
and when studying the data of my self-study.

Definitions

Beginning Teacher Educator: A teacher-educator with less than three years of experience educating pre-service teachers

Novice Teacher Educator: A teacher-educator who is a former K-12 teacher, with at least three years of experience educating pre-service teacher

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Overview

This literature review covers information pertaining to teacher identity, teacher educator identity, novice teacher educator identity, and the self-study research method. Skills and studies are highlighted with the goal of explaining the need for further studies in the area of novice teacher educator identity.

Teacher Identity

So who is a teacher and what does one do? Teachers are public servants. They are proverbial "do-gooders." They have a great responsibility and burden; they must prepare the next generation of Americans for an ultra-competitive work environment, and an unforgiving real world. Goodlad (1984) writes about the four purposes of schools: academic, vocational, social and civic, and personal (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 172). Good teachers must address each of these topics with energy and skill. Certainly experience and practice helps teachers to better develop these four areas, but even a beginning teacher must be able to recognize the importance of teaching from each of these perspectives.

Academic Knowledge

Scholars agree that teachers need to have a deep knowledge, or understanding of their subject and how to make it accessible to others (Shulman & Shulman 2004). This seems like common sense. A teacher should have a command of his or her subject area. Concerning course content, "…decisions about what gets taught in teacher education matter" (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 395). Also important is how the teachers are taught: "Research suggests that when learners begin with a sense of the whole and are helped to see how ideas are connected and related, it deepens their understanding and allows them to integrate and use more of what they learn" (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 397). NCATE and other accreditation bodies require that teacher education programs develop a framework of a shared understanding of program goals, with faculty-wide support.

Darling-Hammond (2005) asserts that, in the past, teacher education programs "have been criticized for being overly theoretical, having little connection to practice, offering fragmented and incoherent courses, and lacking in a clear, shared conception of teaching among faculty" (p. 391). To combat the dreaded "too much theory" label, successful teacher education programs implement clinical experience. Students should log time in schools, but opportunities for learning in and from practice should be provided in the teacher education classroom as well. bell hooks (2010) explains the concept of engaged pedagogy: "It is assumed that every student has a valuable contribution to make to the learning process" (p. 21). This type of risk-taking benefits teachers and students. It breaks down barriers and instead lays down a strong foundation

for learning success. In hooks' (2010) book, *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*, in the chapter "Teachers against Teaching" she addresses the importance of a "common goal between teacher and students: a desire to find relevance, and a desire to be engaged in course content" (p. 117). It is important to have the academic background, but hooks is trying to tell the reader that it is even more important for teachers to possess the leadership qualities to provide an enriching learning environment, where students learn, not only about books, but about life.

Vocational Knowledge

hooks (2010) warns of the dangers of a dominant culture when she says, "We are not all equals in the classroom. Teachers have more power than students" (p. 114). Darling-Hammond (2005) reminds us that "it's not about the teacher" (p. 172). What a fine line to walk. A good teacher must be able to assert authority when necessary, but not inhibit student growth by implementing rigid criteria for scholastic success. Collaboration in the school setting is one way to prevent the autonomous, stand-alone, dictator-type teaching style.

Collaboration with other educators and intellectuals leads toward a more in-depth educational experience for students. As the age-old saying goes, "two heads are better than one." When both of those "heads" are critical and diverse thinkers, all who are involved are enriched. Additionally, in *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*, hooks (2010) describes in a chapter on "Collaboration" a working relationship that has helped her through professional life decisions. Her collaborator has provided support in areas where she lacks and she has done the same for him.

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New teachers need to know that they are not alone. Perhaps they are told this information, but they should be given powerful examples of collaboration. The hooks' book does this. Instructors at the collegiate level know and respect collaboration as much research, presenting, and publishing is done with a colleague or team. In K-12 settings, there may be an idea of collaboration, but teachers have so many time-sensitive, rigid timelines and an abundance of required school and state standards. There is often little time and/or attention paid to collaboration ideas.

Darling-Hammond (2005) and her colleagues lobby for collaboration to effect some much needed teacher education reform and a variety of models are discussed. In Chapter twelve, "Implementing Curriculum Renewal in Teacher Education: Managing Organizational and Policy Change," they seem to be sending a strong message that if teacher education programs are to improve to meet the diverse needs of today's schools, a shared focus must be embraced, and all entities with an iron in the fire best be willing to work together.

Social and Civic Knowledge

Teachers have been entrusted to uphold the ideals of democracy. They must have a strong moral compass, and strive to preserve the "cultural democracy of the school and community in which they teach" (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 173). bell hooks also speaks of the importance of democracy in her book, *Teaching Critical Thinking* (2010). There are challenges to educating this generation of teachers. Democracy is taken for granted in America today. No one feels the need to fight for the ideals of democracy. But there is great danger in this complacency.

The patriarchal, racist views present in education have been allowed to return to

the academia, simply because students and educators have ceased the fight to ensure

that the true definitions of a democracy are upheld. A dominant, conservative culture

attacked public policies like affirmative action and suddenly tides turned against

enlightenment. Popularity of private schools overtook public schools and the push for

teaching for testing enforced discrimination and exclusion. Segregation made a

comeback: "Progressive professors who had once pushed for radical change were

simply bought off. High status and high salaries motivated them to join the very system

they had once worked so hard to dismantle" (hooks, 2010, p. 15). This realization is

certainly alarming. Teachers must be realistic about this system of inequity, and possess

knowledge about how it affects the social and political settings of their schools.

Darling-Hammond (2005) calls this "the hidden curriculum" (p. 170). Course

content is important and of course subject area must be covered, but this hidden

curriculum of the specific school environment and the community cannot be ignored.

Teachers must be aware of the needs of the population they teach. For example, a

classroom in rural North Dakota will have a different cultural and social environment

than a classroom in urban Miami. Common sense sets these two situations apart, but

particular attention must be directed to this hidden curriculum, as one can be easily lost

in the mayhem of trying to cover everything in the school's required content list.

Personal Knowledge

The responsibility of trying to perpetuate the growth of strong, self-reliant,

respectful people in one's classroom is a bit overwhelming. In fact, creating a personal

education experience for a student seems right out of the notes of Dr. Frankenstein. Though difficult, this task must not be taken lightly: "New teachers are ethically responsible too" (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 174).

bell hooks (2010) shares some interesting insight on self-esteem. First, she speaks about the self-esteem of college-level teachers. She asserts that often times, college teachers have low self-esteem. Those who become college teachers are assumed to be smart, and therefore self-assured. However, hooks points out that many of them were berated by their own college professors and teachers along the way and may have developed a lack of self-esteem. This is interesting on many fronts, but perhaps the most applicable to teacher education programs and their candidates would be the idea that smart people automatically possess self-confidence. In order to ensure that beginning teacher educators address the personal growth necessary for their many responsibilities, the new teachers must eventually develop a possess a strong sense of self, and an awareness of where they have come from and where they are headed, in terms of teaching and in life.

Teacher Educator Identity

What makes a teacher educator? They are teachers first of course, so they must have a firm grasp on all of the skills previously examined in this review of the literature. A high priority is that teacher educators must be able to facilitate learning in unique and important ways. Teacher educators specialize in the preparation of future teachers. Their roles are complicated, and those roles are also numerous. The educators are lecturers in an area of expertise; they work to make the learning process assessable to

student teachers; they model and encourage reflective processes for their students; they aid in developing students' research skills. The "constant duality of roles, teacher and teacher of teachers, undoubtedly affects identity" (Ben-Peretz, et al. 2010, p. 111 & 113).

Ideal Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Educators

During their data analysis, Ben-Peretz et al. (2010) found that dedicated teacher educators must have a double commitment. That is, they must be committed both to their current students who are becoming teachers, and to those students' future pupils. The research participants of this study indicated that the formal definition of teacher educator as one who teaches teachers was not enough. The participants self-defined their roles as teacher educators as "those who view teacher education as the core force that shapes their career" (Ben-Peretz et al., 2010, p. 119). Again, the constant reality of the duality of roles was stressed, and valued above all else with regards to theory and practice.

Following their study on what teacher educators should know and be able to do, Goodwin, Smith, Souto-Manning, Cheruvu, Tan, & Reed (2014) reported that their respondents recommended teacher educator preparation should concentrate on four areas:

1. A strong foundation of educational theories
2. Knowledge about the field of teacher education
3. Intentional mentorship and apprenticeship in teaching and research

4. Mentoring around professional life in the academy (p. 293)

Most of the respondents in the above study identified as tenured or tenure-track professors. They participated in an online survey, followed by a qualitative, telephone interview. The majority of respondents did not initially identify as teacher educators: their reasons for pursuing teacher education varied from "luck," "happenstance," "being in the right place at the right time" (Goodwin, et al., 2014, p. 291). The interviewees all agreed that there was no explicit development of teacher educator skills or teacher educator pedagogies in their doctoral programs. Even the respondents who indicated their focus as teacher education from the beginning of their doctoral journey reported that "the professors in their program assumed they would learn what they needed on site" (Goodwin, et al., 2014, p. 291).

Respondents stressed the importance of teacher educators having a strong foundation of educational theories. This foundation is essential to help the teacher educator build a framework of practice to apply to the broader landscape of teaching contexts. For example, teacher educators may feel comfortable teaching a new course they have never taught before, because even though the topics are new, they may draw on their knowledge of educational theories and apply that knowledge to the new course.

Teacher educators need a competent understanding of the field of teacher education. Politics, although sometimes complicated and uncomfortable, must be understood in order for teacher educators to successfully navigate through the unstable waters of current educational requirements, and even professional relationships: "This understanding is important for the teacher educator, not only for her own personal

research and teaching practice, but obviously for the mentoring of pre-service teachers" (Goodwin et al., 2014, p. 293).

More help with research is needed. Respondents seemed to agree that a mentored or apprenticed type of research program would be beneficial for teacher educators. Research and publication are necessary for a faculty member's success in the field, and the field of teacher education is no exception. Connecting research and practice was noted as important by interviewees. Many reported feeling frustrated at the seemingly separate worlds of research and practice. The two need to be intertwined to realize relevance and importance (Goodwin et al., 2014).

The final skill needed by teacher educators, according to the respondents, was professional mentoring regarding the academy (Goodwin et al., 2014, p. 294). Tenure, committee work, the differences of teaching undergraduate and graduate students…these are a few of the challenging tasks that must be mastered by teacher educators.

Novice Teacher Educator Challenges and Professional Identity

Do these challenges affect novice teacher educators, and if so, how do the challenges affect their identity? During their first few years as teacher educators, Williams and Ritter (2010), report their biggest challenges to be: "making professional connections with other teacher educators and negotiating new professional connections with students" (p. 83).

Teachers teach students; that is a fact, but teacher education is different. Williams was "accustomed to being the provider of knowledge, but struggled to become the provoker of learning her teacher candidates needed" (Williams & Ritter, 2010, p. 87). Teacher educators must help their students prepare to see things from the other side of the desk, and to use their personal strengths to be the best (individually) they can be. The teacher candidates should be able to make sense of the world using their own faculties, not those of the teacher educator. Williams identified this challenge as a tension when developing her identity as a teacher educator. Ritter was also concerned about being an identity-sell-out. He did not want to discredit his career as a secondary classroom educator. He felt secure in his identity as a teacher, and was hesitant to title himself "professor." Following reflection, Ritter realized that collaboration with more experienced colleagues, especially in the area of research, helped him to develop his identity as a teacher educator (Williams & Ritter, 2010).

Professional mentoring and research assistance especially pertains to novice teacher educators: "Studies of the tensions and conflicts encountered by novice university-based teacher educators suggest a need for such membership and guidance prior to and during induction" (Goodwin, et al., 2014, p. 294). Though studies have indicated that novice teacher educators would most benefit from mentoring and research assistance, their participation in studies is limited due to feeling overwhelmed in their roles as teacher educators (Dinkelman, 2011; Saito, 2013). For example, one of the participants in a study by Lununberg, Korthagen, and Zwart (2011), was a young, beginning teacher educator. He began the project, but had to withdraw because he felt

that participating in the study, in addition to his work demands, was too much for a new teacher educator.

Saito (2011) asks:

1.   What problems confront novice teacher educators?

2.   What kinds of support programmes do they need? (p. 191).

Three problems facing novice teacher educators are: switching identities, adjusting to the work environment, and fear of research. Teacher educators who have experience as a classroom K-12 teacher may primarily identify themselves as teachers, while university faculty in other areas may identify mainly as researchers. In other words, retaining the teacher role is encouraged in the world of teacher education, but not so in other fields. However, difficulty does come with obtaining the new role of teacher educator. The new role must be multi-faceted (1) school teachers, (2) teachers in higher education, (3) teachers of teachers (or second order teachers), (4) researchers (Swennen, Jones, & Volman, 2010, p. 143).

Williams and Ritter (2010) also discuss roles and role-shifting. A novice teacher educator struggles to construct a new professional identity when switching from being an expert in classroom teaching to a novice in teacher education. The two researchers took different paths. Williams dug into teacher education research and studied methodologies for teacher education. Ritter relied heavily upon his classroom teaching experience to inform his career as a novice teacher educator. Though they followed timelines unique to themselves as individuals, Williams and Ritter both concluded that

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professional relationships with colleagues paved the way for confidence and competence as teacher educators.

As a novice teacher educator, Williams felt intimidated by more experienced teacher education faculty members. She felt inadequate and unsure that she could ever reach that level of expertise. Actually engaging in self-study research with these colleagues gave her confidence in the field, and a note commending her research work, penned by a more experienced teacher educator, solidified the importance of collaboration for Williams. Supportive relationships with colleagues assists professional learning and develops sense of self as a teacher educator (Williams & Ritter, 2010, p. 85).

Ritter echoed the sediment of collaboration. Both he and Williams cited Wenger's (1998) community of practice. Wenger asserts that people's status within a community is always shifting as they take on new roles. Learning from other, more experienced, teacher educators in the field is essential for the career growth of novice teacher educators. The status in a community of learning changes as a novice teacher educator works to reconcile the roles of classroom teacher and teacher educator.

Teacher educators must be facilitators instead of knowledge providers because of their role in preparing future teachers. Students studying to be teachers have life and professional experiences building up as they learn and grow in the field. Ritter noted that it is certainly better for those future students to use their own experiences to help grow their young identities as teachers, rather than using only the experiences of the course instructor. Novice teacher educators must work to find balance, a balance

between using their personal expertise, and challenging their students to find their own solutions (Williams & Ritter, 2010, p. 88).

It is not surprising that working with colleagues also lessens the novice teacher educator's feelings of isolation. Conversations about workload and university processes make collaboration with other, more experienced teacher educator faculty members useful for yet another reason. A sense of belonging encourages confidence and growth for the novice teacher educator (Saito, 2013, p. 195).

Many novice teacher educators have little or no experience with research because they were not required or encouraged to do so during their time as classroom teachers. Both Dinkelman (2011) and Saito (2013) note that teacher educators often end up behind their university faculty peers with regards to research. Other collegiate disciplines emphasize research in the field above teaching in the classroom. This is not the case for teacher educators as teaching is understandably the key focus, research the secondary focus. The self-study method allows novice teacher educators to hone research skills while improving practice. By collaborating with more experienced teacher educators, novice teacher educators gain confidence and competence in their field.

Self-Study Defined

"Self-Study involves a thoughtful look at texts read, the self as a text, the experiences a teacher had, people they have known, and the ideas they have considered" (Samaras & Freese, 2006, p. 12). "Self-study is a stance toward understanding the

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world" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. v). Human interaction is the basis for scholarship in the world of education. The self, (in relation to human subjects being studied), becomes a primary focus, with the purpose of gaining understanding in order to move ideas forward in education settings (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. v).

Foundations

Two major research paradigms influence self-study and provide the groundwork for current definitions of self-study: teacher inquiry and reflective practice. Prior to the 1980s, teachers viewed themselves not as researchers, but as vessels destined to put existing research into practice. Teachers did not reflect on their own practice, and practical and everyday theories and methods were considered unimportant. "A shift in thinking produced teacher inquiry, and action research" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 25-27). This shift transforms teaching, "Teacher inquiry is a vehicle that can be used by teachers to untangle some of the complexities that occur in the profession, raise teachers' voices in discussions of educational reform, and ultimately transform assumptions about the teaching profession itself" (Fichtman Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014, p. 6).

Cochran-Smith & Lytle (2009) provide numerous examples of inquiry in practice. In their writing, they refer to teacher inquiry as practitioner inquiry. They reflect on a ten-year time span between 1999-2009 and report that the trend toward nationally-based, high stakes testing and curriculum requirements was a poor environment for the growth of teacher/practitioner research. Despite the hostile environment, the researchers were pleased to report that the in-classroom research

practice had not disappeared, but grown in prevalence. Teachers seemed determined to take back their practice:

> Considerable evidence shows that, during the last decade, despite all the forces working against it, the practitioner research movement has continued to thrive in parallel with other initiatives that aim to democratize the locus of knowledge and power and thereby influence the educational opportunities afforded to children in urban, rural, suburban districts and other educational institutions across the country. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 34)

Like teacher inquiry, action research has directly influenced self-study. Action research is an organized inquiry conducted by P-12 teachers, teacher educators, and community reformers to make informed changes in curriculum and school improvement in respective categories. In the revolutionary educational time period of the late 1980s and early 1990s, teachers and teacher educators started to question their own practice. "Research became more inclusive and findings related to teaching came directly from the teacher's inquiries and wonderings" (Samaras & Freese, 2006, p. 27). The term "research" carries baggage that tends to scare practicing teachers. It brings to mind dimly-lit libraries, crunching numbers on calculators, and immense university settings. Fitchman Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2014) prefer to use "the term inquiry in order to personalize the process for teachers who have questions to investigate with the goal of improving practice" (p 8-9).

How do teacher inquiry and university-based research differ and which is more like self-study in nature? Teacher inquiry is used primarily to affect actions

immediately, directly in the classroom. Teachers conduct inquiries to answer questions about their teaching, to make changes in practice, or to re-affirm what actions they are already taking in their classrooms. The goal is to be the very best teachers for their students. This is directly related to self-study because of the personal, reflective nature. Teachers own the entire process. University-based research focuses work on "control, prediction, and impact; or on description, explanation, and understanding of various teaching phenomena" (Fitchman Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014, p. 9). Large, sweeping reform is the goal, instead of small, deep changes in classroom practice. University-based research is a panoramic view; teacher inquiry is a zoomed-in view.

History of Self-Study

The title self-study has a variety of uses. It describes individual student progress completing learning tasks. Another use of the term self-study involves the individuals' development of the concept of self and how it shapes one's personality. In early writings on the topic, there is one example "of an institution classified as self" (Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey & Russell, 2007, p. 8-9). In the aforementioned study, the university was the "self."

Self-study is now most commonly used in relation to teacher and teacher education practices. This definition has evolved from teachers themselves who have intrinsic interest in improving their practice. "Teachers are thinkers who constantly try to problem solve in order to improve student learning and overall classroom outcomes" (Fitchman Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014, p. 30).

Self-study became a more formalized method in 1992. A symposium of like-minded educators and researchers gathered to present papers and findings. These papers were critiqued by Fred Korthagen of the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands, because of his extensive work in the field of reflection. This group, identified as The Arizona Group, under Korthagen's guidance, worked together to push the boundaries of the perception of self-study as a practice. The participants provided "honest accounts of their struggles with student interaction, and their attempts to enhance learning about teaching" (Loughran, et al., 2007, p. 13-16).

At that time, the "Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices" had not yet been named. A major concern materialized during the symposium. Members of The Arizona Group were concerned about tenure and the acceptability of their research. What they recognized as a need, based on classroom experiences, was study of the relationships embedded in teaching and learning. It was unclear if the academy would recognize those concerns. Would pursuing such work impede their quest for tenure? Even with these valid misgivings about the recognition of their efforts, "the participants persevered and created a culture of questioning practice in teacher education programs" (Loughran, et al., 2007, p. 13-16).

Among these dedicated educators, there is a strong desire to help students better learn about teaching in another way than just telling them. Their "expanding commitment resulted in the formal name of Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) Special Interest Group (SIG) and in 1994; this title appeared in the American

Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference index" (Loughran, et al., 2007, p. 13-16).

A member of the Arizona Group, S. Pinnegar, and her colleague M.L. Hamilton, (2009) explains the origins of S-STEP: "Self-study methodology emerged at a time when what seemed acceptable by the academy did not answer the emerging questions about practice" (p. 1). Can practitioners question existing assumptions, and by doing so, contribute to the standing knowledge base of educational practice, or do such questions belong to researchers outside of the immediate experience? She goes on to assert that "the necessary question is not about who owns the research, perhaps the question should provide a definition of what the research is, that is the ontology of self-study as a methodology" (p.1).

Research in education shifted from a psychology emphasis to a cognitive science emphasis and as a result, researchers became more interested in student and teacher cognition than on effective practices. How do teachers think? How does that thinking affect practice? How does that thinking affect students? These questions sparked a shift in focus: "…The recognition of the authority of the researcher engaged in practice and the turn of the work toward an ontological frame bring a provocative texture to this scholarship" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 3).

Purpose of Self Study

Samaras and Freese (2006) identify three purposes of self-study: personal growth and development, professional growth and development, and classroom and

school improvement. Teachers constantly question their beliefs and practice. They wonder how their background, experiences, and cultural identity influence their teaching: "As teachers move through a self-study, they examine and begin to identify who they are as teachers" (p. 15). Professional growth and development occur with self-study. Manageable research that is immediately useful to teachers is possible with self-study. Teachers often feel overwhelmed with the demands of a job that requires much multi-tasking. Self-study is context-specific and allows teachers to focus on a specific inquiry with their practice. This builds confidence and encourages future self-study projects. Classroom and school improvement is a powerful purpose of self-study due to the idea of shared tasks. This purpose unites colleagues in common goals for the betterment of their practice. "Critical feedback is shared and support from peers generates new ideas and enhances performance" (Samaras & Freese, 2006, p.16).

The purpose of self-study is to improve teachers' personal self-practice in professional settings. Because of the goal of improvement, evidence of reformed thinking or transformed practice is necessary. These developments need evaluation to determine their impact: "Teaching and research in self-study are iterative and responsive" (LaBoskey, 2007, p. 858). Teachers are actively involved and engaged in personal and professional transformations. They are also able to contribute to established knowledge, and to raise their own, new questions. New, accepted realities or regularities are evidence of progress.

LaBoskey (2007) asserts that "self-study methodology is interactive at one or more points during the research process" (p.859). Even though sharing difficulties in

practice, and being open with teaching struggles can be difficult, Samaras & Freese (2006) discuss the importance of collaboration with colleagues. Even if problems seem too trivial, or too grand to tackle, practitioners must seek help to challenge or to confirm current understandings. This is a hallmark of self-study methodology. (LaBoskey, 2007, p. 859). Collaboration with other educators and intellectuals leads toward a more in-depth educational experience for students. As stated earlier, the age-old saying goes, "two heads are better than one." When both of those "heads" are critical and diverse thinkers, all who are involved are enriched.

The methodology of self-study uses many, primarily qualitative methods, which "provide us with opportunities to gain different and thus more comprehensive perspectives on the educational processes under investigation" (LaBoskey, 2007, p. 859). Work must be formalized to be made available to the professional community for further discussion, further testing, and judgement. "Self-study achieves validation through the construction, testing, sharing and re-testing of exemplars of teaching practice" (p. 860). Formalized self-study can take on different forms, as explained below.

In summary, LaBoskey identifies three components to self-study methodology: pedagogical strategies, research design, and design representations. Monitoring progress and re-affirming pedagogies is the teacher/researcher's responsibility. Pedagogy and research methods must be connected. The delivery mode for self-study results is not limited to written reports, simply because self-study questions may be searching for answers that are best explained by art-based or performance arts-based products. "Self-

study defines the focus of the study (i.e., the context and nature of a person's activity), not the way the study is carried out" (Samaras and Freese, 2006, p. 60).

As previously mentioned, various qualitative methods are used in self-study, and the method chosen depends on the purpose of the study: "These methods may include: personal history, developmental portfolio self-study, memory work, arts-based self-study and collective self-study" (Samaras and Freese, 2006, p. 61). Evidence gathered from each of these methods takes on different forms. Again, the major difference between self-study and other forms of qualitative research is the focus on "self."

Formal approach is a systematic way to explore one's practice with results made available to the professional community. This involves careful documentation and studying practice, and then making those results public through a formal presentation or publication. "Informal self-study approach focuses on self-improvement and addressing more specific issues with teaching and learning" (Samaras & Freese, 2006, p. 61-62).

Criticism of Self-Study

Practitioner research methods of all kinds, self-study included, serve as a map for teacher-study connections, but by their very definitions, they open the door to academic criticism. Practitioner inquiry has criticism and, "the criticism tends to be tied to fundamental ideas about what counts as research, data, knowledge, evidence, and effectiveness, and who in the final analysis can legitimately be regarded as a knower about issues related to teaching, learning, and teacher development" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 46).

The title, self-study implies that such a thing is valid, even with known subjectivity of the concept of self. There is also an invisibility of knowledge in regards to the self. How does one measure or count that knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 46)? Ironically, the "self" in self-study poses definition questions when it comes to credible, publishable research. Who is I? "At times, political interests are involved, and claims are made by "selves" concerned with a certain constitutive interest. Much discussion takes place over who should research educational issues and whose knowledge is worthy of publication" (Ham & Kane, 2007, pp. 120-121).

Self-studies may be perceived as selfish in nature, narcissistic even. Samaras (2002) uses the phrase 'narcissistic psychoanalytic self-analysis' to help explain that the real goal of her personal history self-study is not just a story, and definitely not self-serving in any way. The study is written on the hope that it may be useful to others. The personal history is study of herself in relation to her educational practices. "It covers personal and professional topics and an invitation to other educators to share common experiences, and learn from them to better practice in the classroom" (Ham & Kane, 2007, p. 116).

The self-study method is gaining momentum in the world of educational research. The accumulating body of experience being published and utilized by educators in the field is promising. "The commitment to publish represents a commitment to the method, and a desire to help a growing community of teachers navigate the ups and downs of an educational career" (Ham & Kane, 2007, p. 117). Samaras, Hicks, & Garvey Berger (2007) declare, "The variable, context-specific nature

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of every individual, multiplied exponentially when you think of collaborative

educational contexts, requires research that is as complex and multifaceted as its

subjects. We believe that personal history can expand the edges not only of teaching

and teacher education but also images of what research is and should be" (p. 934). Self-

study, though a young method, proves itself worthy of research in education and

research outside of schoolhouse walls.

Self-Study to Explore Teacher Educator Identity

Dinkelman (2011) states "many teacher educators who work in university

contexts find their professional lives split by two very distinct activities, research and

teaching" (p. 314). Teacher educators may find ways to combine the two activities by

conducting research through practice. They are also often supporting pre-service

teachers through stressful and difficult field placements. This clinical nature places

"demands on teacher educators that are not experienced by professors in other parts of

the university" (Dinkelman, 2011, p. 315). Teacher educators at the secondary level

may oscillate between their area of expertise (e.g. English), and the area of Education,

"…career- change students' students struggle to construct new professional identities-

and their need to reconcile the tensions between being experts in their other careers and

being novices in teacher education" (Williams & Ritter, 2010, p. 79). Maintaining

identity for each specific role can become a juggling act.

Often, educators are too busy with the demands of the job to spend time

reflecting on identity. This only makes reflecting more important. The pressures of

teaching in a new arena can lead to a sense of isolation for beginning, post-secondary

educators. "The team atmosphere of the high school staff is gone, and hierarchical power relations can cause problems for novice teacher educators and should be further studied" (Saito, 2013, p. 193-194). Notably, "Rarely is the actual day-to-day decision-making of teacher educators known by other teacher educators, let alone given thoughtful attention" (Dinkelman, 2011, p. 318). So where do novice teacher educators belong?

As previously mentioned Wenger (1998) explains identity through three modes of belonging:

1. Engagement- active involvement in mutual processes of negotiation of meaning

2. Imagination- creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from our own experience

3. Alignment- coordinating our energy and activities in order to fit within broader structures and contribute to broader enterprises (pp. 173-174).

Engagement is a "threefold process, which includes the conjunction of the ongoing negotiation of meaning, the formation of trajectories, and the unfolding of histories of practice" (p. 174). When this process comes together, engagement becomes a mode of belonging and therefore a source of identity (p. 174). Engagement with colleagues in collaboration settings goes farther towards "establishing the identity of a teacher education program than a written description or mission statement" (Dinkelman, 2011, p. 320). Wenger (1998) further explains by asserting that there are limits to engagement. One can only be in one place in any given time and do so many activities

at any given time with regards to defining one's identity as a sense of belonging. This quality has boundaries.

Imagination aligns with self-study in that it requires a deep understanding of one's own practices and then the ability to imagine what it might be like for others working in similar contexts of practice. Imagination is often thought to include only fantasy and magic, but imagination in the context of identity involves more connections to the concrete as a means to find one's place in the world. Wenger (1998) uses the example of teaching children where they live on a globe. This requires imagination and connection to self-identity. There are limits to this quality of identity as well because stereotypes exist. For example, "teachers choose the profession so they don't have to work in the summer requires imagining the reason for a personal career choice and connecting that reason to concrete knowledge of the profession. Imagination is not intended, in this instance, to help those using it as an identity-finding technique to understand the workings of the entire world; it simply creates a shared reality through mutual engagement" (p. 177).

Alignment is not limited to mutual engagement. It brings a focus to the other components of the Modes of Belonging: "Through alignment we become part of something big because we do what it takes to play our part" (Wenger, 2011, p. 179). This participation component is more structured than imagination because it is possible to feel connected through imagination, but not know what to do with that connection. Alignment explains teacher educators' actions on a daily basis. It explains why they prepare meticulously for classes and meetings with teacher candidates, and why they

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use different skills to ensure competence and knowledge at a faculty committee meeting. These identities are separate, but merge together because of alignment. The individual aligns with the bigger picture and creates a sense of belonging in doing so. Wenger (2011) makes a definite connection between identity and practice and the tri-faceted modes of belonging explain collaboration within specific groups, particularly in teacher education.

Dinkelman (2011) describes collaboration with close colleagues and collaboration with future teachers as a means to define teacher educator identity. "Creating with colleagues deliberate inquiry spaces centered on the actual practices of those who work together in the program is essential to the health of any teacher-education setting" (p. 320). Dinkelman (2011) goes on to comment on collaboration with future teachers. "More than my position in a research-intensive college of education, more than my relationship with colleagues, my teacher educator identity mostly exists in relationships with students…" (p. 321). Positive, beneficial interactions with pre-service teachers provide necessary steps toward sustained success in a college of education. Teacher educators must organize their identities to best serve their communities of belonging.

Saito (2013) cautions "…developing multi-faceted identities is not an easy task" (p. 192). He outlines problems faced by novice ex-practitioner teacher educators by identifying three main causes of distress. They are work environment, fear of research, and difficulty in changing identities. Teacher educators face curriculum changes when they transition from the secondary to the post-secondary environment. They may feel as

if they spend all their time preparing to teach classes as opposed to building necessary relationships with colleagues. These relationships are necessary to avoid feelings of isolation (Saito, 2013, p. 191-193).

Although there may be less emphasis on research and more emphasis on teaching in teacher education divisions, "novice teacher educators are not used to any research requirements and may feel overwhelmed and underqualified to complete such endeavors" (Saito, 2013, p. 193). Rice (2011) studied the early questions of becoming a teacher with her self-study, featuring narratives. Saito (2013) also recognizes that issues of identity may be struggled with early in the career. He highlights "a reflection approach for teacher educators, in order for them to form new identities. This reflective action aids in professional development" (p. 194).

Self-study is reflective in nature. In the article, "Constructing new professional identities through self-study: from teacher to teacher," two teacher educators, J. Williams and J.K. Ritter (2010), reflect on their transitions from classroom teachers to teacher educators. Williams (2010) reflects, "one way in which I found that I could nurture new professional relationships that increased my professional learning was through self-study" (p. 84). How do lived experiences of the classroom teacher shape identity as a teacher educator, and how can those lived experiences help (rather than hinder) to enrich the teacher education program as a whole? Self-study provides a viable method to explore the complicated nature of the identities of novice teacher educators.

Summary

The required skillset grows and changes when teachers become teacher educators. This growth and these changes are significant enough to affect identity. Exploring how novice teacher educators' identity is affected can be examined using self-study. The self-study method provides an integrative approach, bridging research and practice, with the goal of ultimately improving practice.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Theoretical Framework

Qualitative Research Design

Stake (2010) explains quantitative research as "thinking relying heavily on linear attributes, measurements, and statistical analysis," and defines qualitative research as, "thinking relying primarily on human perception and understanding" (p. 11). This study seeks to* perceive and understand the novice teacher educator's identity. The researcher aspires to understand possible connections between identity and practice in a novice teacher educator's experiences. The personal nature of the proposed research methods makes qualitative research design the best fit.

Constructivist Theory

This project is approached through the lens of constructivism. Maxwell (2013), says "epistemological constructivism is our understanding of this world is inevitably our construction, rather than a purely objective perception of reality, and no such construction can claim absolute truth" (p. 43). Novice teacher educators are a unique subgroup within the realm of teacher education. Former experiences in the classroom certainly help to define the teacher educator's understanding of the world, but Goodwin

et al (2014) suggests that to be a teacher educator is a "purposeful commitment" to a professional life, and a deep commitment, of teaching how "to teach" (p. 285).

This is a unique construction of the world, one that is specifically reserved for the teacher educator and the novice teacher educator as well. Constructivism best describes this research because of the identity study and the understanding that identities are constructed over time, in a variety of ways, depending on a variety of factors (Wenger, 1998).

Self-Study Methodology

Teachers interact with others on a daily basis. This collaboration is necessary to understand necessary improvements. Journals of interactions with colleagues and students reveal helpful insight when seeking to improve as a teacher. Texts from experts in the field provide a backbone for innovations. LaBoskey's (2007) framework for self-study is a perfect example of an expert text. Her work on this topic will help to drive my work and to give it a solid research design. It will be:

1. **Self-Initiated and Focused:** The goal of self-study is to improve practice and the institutional contexts in which those practices take place. Professional practice is the heart of what the practitioner knows. By using cycles of critical reflection on practice and the interaction and relationships with others involved in that practice, the researcher will discover and produce knowledge of that practice. It is local and contextual, but that is the strength. Because it is local and situated contextually, the knowledge has great value and will contribute to the practice of the researcher and to the

practice of others. It is essential that this kind of research results in evidence for reframed thinking in practice and a transformation of practice. In self-study of practice, the answer to "who" is doing the research and "who" is being studied is the self. However, since it is the study of practice, the self is not the only thing being studied. In being self-initiated and self-focused the study should also include the other(s) in the practice.

2. **Improvement Aimed:** The main definition of self-study is that it is the study of one's practice in order to improve it. One assumption here is that an improved understanding of a practice, and also a change in practice can lead to improvement. A second assumption is that no professional practice will ever be perfect, so improvement is always a goal. A third assumption is that two kinds of knowledge will be generated in a self-study. One is the knowledge that is present in the researcher doing the study, that is in the understanding, transformation, and reformation of the practices of the researcher. The second kind of knowledge is public knowledge of practice that can contribute to others' improvement of practice. Self-study of practice is improvement aimed, and through cycles of critical reflection, embodied knowledge becomes intellectually accessible.

3. **Interactive:** Self-study requires collaboration with others in the practice, with other researchers, with the data sets produced. Self-study researchers collaborate directly with colleagues in an effort to better understand and improve their practice. Self-study researchers collaborate with colleagues nearby and afar, many of whom are working on different professional

practice agendas. Self-study of practice researchers always interact with others who are the participants in their practice in the case of self-study of teacher education practices with future teachers. Self-study of practice researchers collaborate with a variety of "texts." These texts include professional literature in their area and the accounts of practice they produce as a part of data sets, but can include any kind of "text" that helps the researcher expand and re-frame interpretations, challenge assumptions, reveal biases, and triangulate findings.

4. **Multiple, Primary Qualitative Methods:** Self-study of practice researchers use whatever methods will provide the needed evidence and context for understanding in their practice. To develop an understanding of all aspects of self in practice and of the practice being studied multiple means for defining, discovering, developing, and articulating knowledge of practice must be employed. Thus, forms of quantitative research, action research, narrative inquiry, hermeneutics, phenomenology, as well as a variety of methods such as observations, interviews, surveys, artistic methods, journaling, field notes, ethnography, autobiography, and others might be used.

5. **Exemplar-Based Validation**: For the self-study of practice researcher the authority of their own experience provides a warrant for their knowing. Ultimately, for self-study as is true for any research, it is the "reader" who determines the validity of the research. Readers make that decision based on their judgement about the rigor of the research piece they are reading. Since self-study uses a variety of methods, self-studies of practices should at a

minimum utilize the guidelines for trustworthiness recommended by scholars who use those methods. Self-study of practice research like other inquiry-guided research establishes the validity of its claims through an exemplar approach to validation articulated by Mishler (1990). These exemplars are documentations of normal practice within a community. Validation is accomplished, according to Mishler (1990; see LaBoskey, 2007) when "the results of a study come to be viewed as sufficiently trustworthy for other investigators to rely upon in their own work. This means we make visible our data, our methods for transforming data into findings, and the linkages between data, findings, and interpretations. This requires that as scholars we much attend to the ways in which we represent our research on our professional practice to the research community as a whole" (pp. 817-869).

Research Purpose

The self-study model helps to explain the purpose of this research. The self-initiated and focused study is designed with improvement in mind. This research is intended to help novice teacher educators understand their unique identities and how those identities impact their practice in the classroom and in other areas of professional education.

Research Goals

The first goal of this study is to understand the unique identities of novice teacher educators, and how those identities impact practice of novice teacher educators. The second goal is to use the identity knowledge to improve practice for the benefit of students and colleagues, and for the novice teacher educators themselves. By understanding events in this local context, necessary improvements will directly impact the researcher's classroom and the teacher education classrooms of others.

Benefits of the Study

Novice teacher educators as a group are under-researched (Saito, 2013). It is possible that focusing on the identities of this specific group of teacher educators will expand the knowledge base of this time in the educational career. The knowledge gained from this study could improve practice for novice teacher educators, if they understand how their identity can contribute to success in their careers. The researcher strives to earn similar benefits in her career.

Participants and Context

Eight to ten novice teacher educators were asked to participate by the researcher and her advisor. Six, (including the researcher) agreed to participate. Participants must have had approximately five years of teacher education experience. They were contacted via e-mail to ask if they would be willing to participate in the project. Upon affirmation, subsequent e-mails were sent containing: an explanation of the project, and a copy of the consent form, in accordance with IRB number 201609-060.

The novice teacher educators were interviewed in two Upper Midwestern cities. The electronic interviews took place via e-mail. The face-to-face interviews took place in the general area of respective universities for the convenience of the participants. Four interviews took place at institutions of higher education, and one interview took place at a local restaurant.

Three of the participants teach in a medium-sized, research institution. One participant teaches in a small, private college. One teaches in a small, public institution. The researcher taught in a very small public university and just this year began a teacher education job at a small, private college. The teacher education department size varies and coincides with the size of each participant's institution of higher education.

Data Collection

Interviews

For this self-study, six former classroom teachers who have transitioned to teacher-educators were interviewed twice, once electronically and once in a face-to-face setting. Each participant was interviewed in a private setting. The following interview questions were used for the first, electronic interview. The interview was conducted via e-mail in order to give participants time to prepare thoughtful, data-rich responses.

1. When you meet someone new, and are asked about your career, how do you identify yourself? Explain why you identify yourself that way.

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2. Describe your career. What inspired you to teach? Where have you taught? At what level? How many years of experience do you have at each level?

3. Reflect on your transition from K-12 education to post-secondary education. Identify and describe two to three challenges you experienced around that transition time.

4. How have you been influenced by other faculty? Can you identify any mentors among faculty? Explain. Can you identify other faculty members who have not provided you with peer support? How important do you believe peer support to be in the post-secondary education environment? Explain.

5. Explain the process of connecting your area of concentration to teacher education. How does this process shape your professional identity?

Questions for the second, face-to-face interview are listed below. They were written with the intent of digging deeper into the identity of each novice teacher educator. Prior to the second interview, the participants were asked via e-mail to bring a meaningful item with them to the second interview, one that represents their personal and professional identities. The researcher and her advisor were present at all interviews. The first question was dedicated as a conversation starter since this interview was the first time the researcher and the participants met face to face.

1. Introduce your meaningful item. Why did you choose this item to bring today? Explain what it means to you and how it represents your personal and professional identities.

2. What are the top two difficulties you face as a teacher educator? Explain. What are your top two favorite parts about being a teacher educator? Explain.

3. Please identify your strengths as a teacher educator and your weaknesses as a teacher educator. Explain. Do you feel your strengths and weaknesses affect your students, future educators themselves? If so, how?

4. Describe a scenario when you have felt proud to identify as a teacher educator. Describe a scenario when you have not felt pride to identify as a teacher educator.

5. Do you feel confident as a faculty member? Explain.

6. Having a strong sense of identity and purpose is undoubtedly important for educators. Do you think it is any more important for teacher educators? Explain.

7. Compare this year to the very first year of being a teacher educator. How have you changed? Have you learned things about yourself? About your students? Explain.

8. What advice do you have for new teacher educators? What advice do you have for older/more experienced teacher educators? Are you an experienced teacher educator or a new teacher educator, or neither? If you are "neither" what advice do you have for the "neither" teacher educators?

9. What, in your opinion, should be stressed in the professional

    development of teacher educators? What are the needs?

10. What, in your opinion, should be stressed in teacher education programs?

    What are the needs?

Samaras and Freese (2011) remind the researcher that the "self-study research process is fluid. Changes occur and more questions may emerge as one is engaged in the research" (p. 88). During the face-to-face interviews, responses from the first interview were often expanded upon (with the participants), for clarification and to add more information to the initial responses.

Consent and Confidentiality

Participant confidentiality is of utmost importance. All field notes, interview responses, and any other artifacts use pseudonyms. No identification is given that could reveal participant, or university identity. There are minimal risks associated with this project.

Written consent forms were provided to all participants before data collection. The consent form was signed by each participant, the principal investigator, and the co-principal investigator. Each participant received a copy of the consent form.

All recorded interview data will be kept for a period of one year, and then destroyed. All recorded data, transcripts, and any other data will be kept in the researcher's locked office. Written documents will be shredded after five years.

Data Analysis

Since former classroom teachers who are now teacher educators seek a sense of belonging when forming their new identities, the interview responses were evaluated according to Wenger's (1998) Modes of Belonging:

1. Engagement- active involvement in mutual processes of negotiation of meaning

2. Imagination- creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from our own experience

3. Alignment- coordinating our energy and activities in order to fit within broader structures and contribute to broader enterprises (pp. 173-174).

Responses were coded and categorized using the Modes of Belonging model. Careful consideration was given to each response, to see how and when the novice teacher educator crafts an identity. Which mode of belonging is most important to the novice teacher educator's sense of identity? Does the researcher value the same mode when studying her identity as a novice teacher educator? Do these modes of belonging help to explain common themes that novice teacher educators use when developing their identity? If so, what are some of these common themes?

During the identity-crafting process, what are some needs of novice teacher educators that these modes of belonging help to identify? The answers to these questions will help improve the practice of the participants, the researcher, and of all novice teacher educators. By understanding how their identity can be defined, it is the

researcher's hope that this knowledge gained brings confidence and competence to novice teacher educators.

The researcher applied the modes of identity to the four research questions in order to determine how novice teacher educator identity is formed and how that identity informs practice. The researcher answered the interview questions in journal form prior to asking the same questions to the participants. For reference, the research questions are listed below:

1. How do novice teacher educators describe their perceptions of professional identity and teacher identity?
2. How do teachers' K-12 experiences shape their teacher identities?
3. How do novice teacher educators' experiences shape their teacher educator identities?
4. How does novice teacher educator identity shape or impact practice?

Validity and Reliability

Role of Evidence

Trustworthiness is essential in qualitative research and can be obtained by presenting credible claims supported by quality evidence. "Methods and procedures are essential for ruling out validity threats, even though they cannot absolutely guarantee validity" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 125). For this study, purposeful selection of participants, triangulation of data, evidence collection and storage, and member checking are methods used to accomplish validity.

In order to achieve "exemplar-based validation" (LaBoskey, 2007), all research methods are made visible, and linkages between data and findings are explained through the self-study process. LaBoskey (2007) points out that the reader determines the validity of the research. It is the researcher's hope that the reader benefits from this self-study, and finds validation and insight that can be used for professional practice and for life.

"Self-study validity involves multiple perspectives from critical friends in relation to one's own beliefs and actions" (Samaras & Freese, 2011, p. 49). The researcher will rely on communication with study participants and with her advisor, to serve as a critical friend, throughout the collection of evidence and the study as a whole.

Purposive Selection of Participants

Study participants are identified as novice teacher educators who teach at Upper Midwestern universities. The researcher and her committee compiled a list of possible participants who fit the criteria. Those teacher educators were contacted via e-mail to inquire about possible interest in participating in the study.

Triangulation

This study employs "a variety of forms of evidence, and collecting data from a variety of sources triangulates the data" (Samaras & Freese, 2011, p. 87). Written interview responses from participants, audio recordings of participants' interview responses, interview responses from the researcher in journal form, and notes and reflections from the researcher are used. Evidence that emerged from the first interview, (in some cases), was expanded upon or refuted by the second interview. Open

communication between participants, the researcher, and her advisor offered another level of triangulation by providing different perspectives.

Audit Trail

All evidence collected for this study is appropriately organized and stored. The second interviews were transcribed. Field notes/observations by the researcher were prepared during and immediately after the interviews. The researcher answered the interview questions in journal form prior to asking the same questions to the participants. Recordings will be destroyed within a one-year time frame.

Researcher Reflexivity

Becoming a researcher, especially for a person doing qualitative research, is partly a matter of learning how to deal with bias. All researchers have biases, all people have biases, all reports have biases, and most researchers work hard to recognize and constrain hurtful biases. They discipline themselves, they set up traps to catch their biases; and the best researchers help their clients and readers to be alert to those biases, too. (Stake 2010 p. 164)

This is an important assertion by Stake (2010). In order to work toward researcher reflexivity, bias cannot be denied; instead it should be confronted and therefore controlled. This research examines the identity of novice teacher educators. The researcher has personal experience as a novice teacher educator in a regional university. Even though experiences differ and universities have diverse working

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climates, these experiences must be considered when organizing and evaluating evidence.

The researcher's interview responses were completed before other participants were interviewed. This keeps bias in check, and helps to prevent unwanted input from the researcher during the interview process. Bias was also monitored during data evaluation activities such as coding, identification of patterns, and determination of results. Objectivity is essential and the researcher must not fall into the trap of assuming that others' experiences are automatically connected with hers because of shared characteristics.

Stake (2010) also warns of the "absence of subjectivity in qualitative research, because qualitative research is after all, the study of people. If subjectivity can add to the depth of perception, then it must occur" (p. 166). This is an important point for a study on identity. Identity trends can certainly be subjective and the researcher does not intend to get so entangled in a web of objective rules and regulations that intricate perceptions and observations are overlooked in findings.

The purpose of this study is to explore how the novice teacher educator forms a unique identity, and how knowledge of that process could improve practice. The researcher adheres to this purpose with the hope that all study participants, and all novice teacher educators, benefit from the findings.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the methodology used in this study. It outlined the research project, and the plans for interpreting and reporting data. Novice teacher educators, when interviewed, provide valuable information about their identities that could potentially benefit their practice and the practice of the researcher.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine how novice teacher educators form their identities, how those identities influence practice, and finally how this knowledge of identity could improve practice. The goal of this chapter is to explain the results of qualitative data gathered from two separate novice teacher educator interviews, field notes, and reflections of the researcher. This self-study, in which six novice teacher educators shared their views, yielded insightful information about the importance of belonging when developing one's identity.

The researcher applied the Wenger's (1998) Modes of Belonging to the four research questions in order to determine how novice teacher educator identity is formed and how that identity informs practice. The research questions are listed below:

1. How do novice teacher educators describe their perceptions of professional identity and teacher identity?

2. How do teachers' K-12 experiences shape their teacher identities?

3. How do novice teacher educators' experiences shape their teacher educator identities

4. How does novice teacher educator identity shape or impact practice?

Modes

Wenger's (1998) concept of Modes of Belonging was used to categorize the participant responses to the electronic interview and to the in-person interview. All interviews were carefully read, and each statement evaluated against the three modes of belonging.
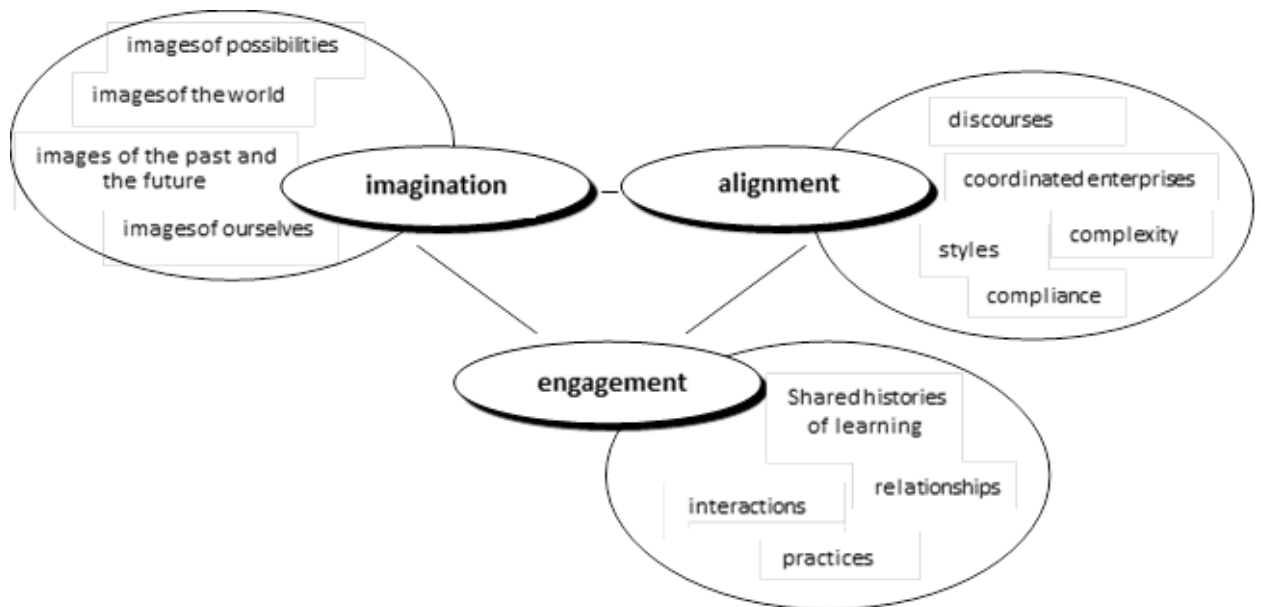
Figure 2. Modes of Belonging. Produced by Wenger (1998).

The research questions were created with Wenger's (1998) model in mind, and the researcher's field notes connected each research question to one or more of the three modes: (I) Imagination, (A) Alignment, or (E) Engagement.

Imagination: Through imagination, people can connect themselves to the world while considering other perspectives and meanings, and while doing so construct an identity.

Alignment: This mode concerns directing energy and therefore concerns power.

Engagement: The bounds of engagement help individuals shape and strengthen the connection to the chosen tasks and relationships (Wenger, 1998).

All six interviews, including the journal-type answers of the researcher, were examined and statements were labeled: (I), (A), or (E). Some statements fit into more than one mode, and therefore were labeled with more than one letter. Participants' similar responses were organized into categories. After careful analysis, four themes describing identity emerged which included the following:

1. **Context for Identity:** Titles, Balance
   - **Modes of Belonging:** Imagination (I), Alignment (A), Engagement (E)

2. **Mentorship/Collaboration:**
   - **Modes of Belonging:** Engagement (E)

3. **Contribution to Field:** Teaching Practice, Scholarly Practice
   - **Modes of Belonging:** Alignment (A)

4. **Conflict:** Inside Department, Outside Department
   - **Modes of Belonging:** Alignment (A), Engagement (E)

Theme 1: Context for Identity

Context for Identity is an important theme because it is so applicable to the novice teacher educators interviewed. All three modes of belonging: (I), (A), and (E) applied to various "contexts" of identity used by the teacher educators. Titles and Balance were the categories that emerged under this theme.

Titles

One novice teacher educator with two years' experience as a full time adjunct professor and three years' experience as a tenure track professor, weighed in on the different contexts of her identity (teacher, teacher educator):

It depends on who asks me or the context in which I find myself. If I'm at a conference, for example, where there are a lot of teachers, I tend to identify myself as a teacher too. They'll ask where, and I'll explain that I teach now at the post-secondary level, but tend to also feel a need to explain that I'm a former middle and high school teacher. When I meet someone I don't know, and they're not in the education world, I'll identify as a professor. Often they'll ask which department, and I'll say that I work mostly in teacher education.

She later explained that she wanted to feel "on the same level" as her K-12 language educator colleagues, so when discussing things with them, she refers to herself as a "teacher," even though she feels like they are really not on the same level. She wants to feel equal to the K-12 teachers, even though she believes they are not quite equal. She is on a higher level, but does not like to feel superior in any way.

Another novice teacher educator weighed in on the different contexts of her identity by noting:

For those outside of academia I often just say that I teach at University X or that

I work at University X. In part this is because I don't want to come across as

snobby and in part it's because I have found that those outside of academia

don't really know and/or care about all the different labels and rankings in

academia. It's funny though that sometimes when I introduce myself as teaching

or working at University X, I don't feel like I always get the type of response

that that deserves, which makes me sound snobby, doesn't it?!

Dictionary.com explains "level", as being in the same relative position, not in front of or behind. The desire for leveled communication rang true for all participants, perhaps due to a propensity for modesty and "Midwestern" categorization. Two novice teacher educators admitted they "don't like to talk about themselves," and/or "don't like to admit they do things well."

The researcher's reflections on context in relation to novice teacher identity had some similarities to the other participants' experiences. There is the "fly under the radar" comment that evokes the Midwestern modesty, the desire to be at the same level as everyone in the conversation, and of course the passion for teaching.

Self-Study Journal (Context for Identity)

I always identify myself as a teacher. I feel strongly about that I love talking to

people in any social situation. I want people to feel comfortable when talking to

me. I think the title "professor" evokes certain responses. People can feel

intimidated or turned off. People apologize for not being "good in school" or

people don't want to talk to me.

I am also intimidated by high ed. I don't know if it's my personality or what, but I like to fly under the radar. I am not a fan of academic recognition. My favorite response is, "I'm a teacher at a college in the education department. I get to "teach" teachers." I can't help but smile when I reveal this fact because I really love it so much!

When I applied to law school, the thought of changing my identity terrified me. No one likes lawyers. People like teachers, especially female teachers. Something about being a female lawyer scared me too. I don't like potential intimidation.

I really love teaching. I love it more than researching. So, identifying myself as a teacher, even though I'm in higher education, makes the most sense to me.

Just one participant identified as a researcher before teacher educator. His career has been grounded in research and he considers it to be integral to his teaching. "*Because my doctoral training included extensive and varied research elements, in addition to training as a teacher educator, I place significant value on being a researcher and actively incorporating research into my teaching.*" His situation was somewhat unique among the participants. He had a methods instructor who became a research mentor and as a secondary teacher, he conducted research that led into master's level work, and eventually doctoral work, all the while continuing to teach. He is confident in the research he contributes to his field, but discussed feeling limited in teaching practices because of his role as a researcher. He found teaching as a graduate student to be *"limiting" because, "I often had less than full control of my teaching."* Now, as a novice teacher educator, he maintains a balance between his subject area and

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teacher education, *"Rather than discipline-specific or isolated, [subject area), instead is multidisciplinary and integrated. Likewise, teacher education in my education in my mind involves marrying content and pedagogy with a host of other considerations."*

Balance

Maintaining a healthy balance of work obligations and personal life fits under the Engagement (E) mode of belonging because it involves practices, interactions, and relationships. The participants reflected on the Balance portion of context. Their identities changed or were affected as the addressed Balance. One novice teacher educator, who has twenty total years of experience in education with seven years in teacher education, spoke of finding balance by saying "No."

> *Coming from K-12, you're never allowed to say no. Then you go to higher ed and people are reminding me I should be saying no. But early on you just don't, regardless, especially as you made that transition… To whom do I say no? The chair? The dean? The president? The athletic director who is asking me to do things? That really stretched me in ways, my inability to say no, where I was doing a whole lot of things average. Which drives me nuts! I hate doing anything halfway, so that still becomes a challenge for me… Start building my portfolio for my tenured promotion and what not. I'm more selective but it's not a good thing to be saying no at this point…I think that linkage to that is time, finding that balance.*

The inability to say "no" in the K-12 setting plagued more than one participating novice teacher educator. One research participant described a feeling of helplessness when teaching high school. Not only did she have to teach a class in which she was not

comfortable, or familiar with the curriculum, she also felt pressured by the student population in that class. *"And one year, I was forced to teach a regular education junior English class, which was tough for me, especially having one of the assistant principal's stepdaughters in my class."*

Another participant talked about her identity as a "high-achieving person." Because of the large workload of her teacher educator position, she had to learn that, "*Sometimes being okay is good enough.*" She outlined the path to her current position. She liked teaching K-12 special education in public schools. Her master's degree and doctoral degree happened by chance. She did not plan her position as a teacher educator. An opportunity presented itself and she took it.

She was used to excelling in courses, but her teacher education job had her feeling a bit overwhelmed:

> *So one of my difficulties as we were talking about, is maintaining a demanding schedule. So, our teacher preparation program is pretty large and we have a lot of overlapping programs…The advising load is pretty heavy because I'm advising not just special ed., but elementary…Learning how to balance that I guess would be one thing I've learned about myself is that I can probably do more than I thought I could when I first entered the job.*

Her "heavy load" description was echoed by another participant. This novice teacher educator noted her balancing act with time:

> *Time is another challenge. For those who are outside of academia my schedule sounds great, as this semester I am only teaching three courses. But I am so busy. I don't feel like I ever have enough time to get everything or anything*

done. I don't know what to make a priority as everything seems like a priority. The tenure cloud is looming over me. I don't have enough time to just teach and go to meetings, let alone work on writing or research. I am ALWAYS behind on grading, which is bad for me and for my students. I have had complaints from students about being behind on grading; which makes me feel terrible and also reflects poorly on my evaluations. It makes me feel like a failure.

Unfortunately, the ticking clock of each day in academia affected many of the participants. One novice teacher educator commented that he could easily check out and watch Netflix every day, but that would be a career disaster! He must be a steward of all of the independent work time he is given in the higher education arena, because it differs so greatly from the overly scheduled work of K-12.

Self-Study Journal (Context for Balance)

I love the teaching part of teaching, but the paperwork, (correcting, recommendations, etc. …) …that takes me too much time. I know students are waiting for feedback and recommendation letters and such. I tend to spend too much time finding new ideas and trying them in class, and not enough time on feedback.

So…while they (students) are energized by the actual class time, they may be frustrated while they wait for their papers back. I have three kiddos at home and a dissertation, and sometimes grading takes a back seat. I've have to just accept that. I want to be the best at everything, but something had to give. At this point in my life (mid 30s), there is too much happening (family-wise) to be on-top of everything. I guess it teaches my students that teachers are real people with real

lives, and that time management will be a part of their lives and careers as well.

(Perhaps that view is through rose-colored glasses. They are probably really

annoyed!)

Theme 2: Mentorship/Collaboration

Mentorship and collaboration appeared in every single participant's interview.

Clearly these activities are of high value to novice teacher educators, or at the very

least, to the novice teacher educators participating in this study. Mentorship and

collaboration fall under the Engagement (E) Mode of Belonging because they include:

relationships, practices, interactions, and shared histories of learning (Wenger, 1998).

Five of the six participants described (in detail) the effects of mentoring on their

practice. For some, the mentoring came early:

I had a wonderful teacher educator for my teaching [subject area] methods

course. It was he who first introduced me to readings on the broader goals of

education and the nature of [subject area term] (a term referencing the

philosophical underpinnings of [subject area] as they relate to [subject area]

education.)

The positive interaction with a more experienced instructor influenced the career

and teaching outlook of this novice teacher educator. Another participant aspired to

teach and approach life in the same way as his colleagues in K-12 education. As a

young teacher, he was amazed at their ability to be, *"…this laid back and still get a lot*

done." Now, he feels pride to be working alongside many of his mentors in teacher

education. His advice to seek out mentors is metaphorical, but also direct:

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Teaching is like playing golf. Until you shoot an 18, you haven't mastered golf…And that's exactly what teaching is like…Always, always seek out those who have been identified as true masters of the craft and do anything you can to sit in the classroom, take them out for beer and wings, whatever. Just be a part of their class, pick their brains.

He does caution that teacher educators still stay true to themselves, but to seek out experienced mentors with the intent of improving practice and life in general. One other participant recommends seeking out mentors as well, but not necessarily departmental mentors.

Another teacher educator values her connections with mentors in a national organization for her field. She looks to those mentors for collaboration on projects, for affirmation on best practices, and to give her another identity as an educator. She does describe the foundation of support provided by a few members of her department. They collaborate on professional writings and celebrate each other's professional successes. She does not look for that sort of professional collaboration and mentoring support from all members of the teacher education department.

Two participants identified the need for mentors in their workplace. They both felt lost and confused as new faculty members, and specified struggles with items such as: navigating the tenure process, and "being the new person." One reflected:

I describe my first year as people speaking in Japanese as I didn't understand what was going on at all, but the end of my first year, it felt like people were speaking Spanish and I could pick up a few words here or there. At the start of my third year I feel like I have a better sense of what is going on, but not always.

This novice teacher educator went on to describe the desire for more peer support, but hesitation because of the competition amongst faculty. She did say that some members of her doctoral program have tried to start a "productivity support group" but have had little success thus far. She revealed, *"I am extremely insecure and could use some support, but I haven't found it yet."* She also mentioned the word *"failure"* four times in her interview. This demonstrated to the researcher, a sense of imbalance and concern. She states verbatim, "*What would help her would be some support.*"

The second participant who identified the need for mentors in the workplace talked about feeling "lost" during the tenure process. She is aware of her novice teacher educator status, and she mused, "*If I feel lost, having the advantage of being part of the department as adjunct or fixed term before tenure, I can't imagine someone who just comes from somewhere.*" She started a "little work group" for the "whole idea of mentoring." She explained:

> *I think that entering into a department that has lots of complex things like accreditation, maintaining licensure in the state, and as well as contributing to university things. All of these things are new right? New faculty. So I think that should be something that we support new teacher educators in as they enter the field.*

Self-Study Journal (Mentoring/Collaboration)

> *At my current job, (only two months old), I feel extremely supported. The department head is compassionate and dedicated to meeting the needs of*

faculty. Other faculty members are kind and helpful. Administration seems forward-thinking.

At my past job, I was all alone. I actually identified more with staff than with faculty, especially faculty in my own department. I didn't feel "smart" enough to contribute to the Liberal Arts faculty discussions, and felt overwhelmed by the "busywork paperwork" of the Education division. I was (and still am) close with one faculty member (young, forward-thinking.) Her academic confidence paired well with my confidence in the classroom. I have more years teaching experience, but I consider her to be a far more experienced academic. She publishes frequently and knows the ropes of academia.

Her peer support means so much to me. I don't have confidence at all when it comes to research and writing. Her encouragement helps my teaching and writing performance without a doubt. We also navigated tricky workplace scenarios together. I didn't feel supported by administration, but felt supported by her. Even though administration clearly holds the winning card, at times, her support was much more important because of the close, personal level, and helpful feedback.

Theme 3: Contribution to the Field (Teaching Practice and Scholarly Practice)

During interviews, all participants discussed contribution to the field in some way shape or form. Contribution to the field involves the alignment (A) mode of belonging, because alignment concerns directing energy, and so it concerns power. The process of alignment transcends time and space to form a connection to something bigger than oneself (Wenger, 1998). Contribution to the field fit into two categories for

the novice teacher educators: teaching practice and scholarly practice. Teaching practice refers to connections and views shared and/or gained in the classroom, and scholarly practice refers to connections and views shared and/or gained in the professional realm of academia, outside of the classroom.

Teaching Practice

Responses containing great enthusiasm came from each participant when discussing Teaching Practice. Participants' faces lit up, their smiles became wider, and most sat forward in their chairs when describing life in the classroom.

> *Oh gosh! The classroom. The interactions. The students. And all that's involved with that…I think just, just to hear from my students that they're so excited to enter this profession, that they feel prepared. That they enjoy whatever capacity in education they are. That, to me, gives me immense amounts of pride that I some way, shape, or form, even in the tiniest way I may have helped build that foundation to create that same sense of passion for this profession that I love so much.*

Other responses shared the above novice teacher educator's excitement. Two participants remarked that their evaluations almost always revealed a strong sense of student-teacher connection. Their teacher education students feel supported, and even though one educator lamented that she, *"wasn't an extrovert in the classroom,"* she still felt pride when explaining the connections she makes with students.

Another participant uses the success of her graduates to cheer herself up during times of career stress. She knows she has sent out some great teachers and that makes her tremendously happy. She stays current with national standards and trends so she

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"*knows what's going on in the world of education.*" Her students benefit from this because they display confidence and competence, even when dealing with other, more experienced teachers in their field.

The researcher also describes an affinity for classroom teaching, and values that as a solid contribution to the field.

Self-Study (Teaching Practice)

> *I feel confident in my teaching. I don't remember the last time I was nervous in front of a classroom full of students. I can plan ahead for a super-organized lesson, or put one together in 15 minutes, and I don't know if the actual presentation is any different. I genuinely love people and I love talking to people. Class discussions are a favorite of mine. I also love student-led presentations. It's so fun watching them move from one side of the desk to the other.*

> *I am passionate and excitable. I love to share insights with my students. I love hearing about their lives, their clinical experiences. I think my excitement affects my students. It wears off on them! Students in the past have shared in their evaluations that they are inspired and energized by my class. I think it makes them excited to teach, and that makes me happy!*

Scholarly Practice

One novice teacher educator was originally inspired to teach by her love for languages. Her path toward teacher education included inner city school teaching, graduate school, suburban school teaching, two years of leave, and back to middle and high school teaching in the Midwest. After just one year in the Midwest, she set her

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sights on higher education. She admits to feeling jaded about public education at that point, and she worries that she passed those negative feelings about teaching onto her own teacher education students.

She joined a professional organization and that membership helped her to remember her love for teaching. Her membership gave her support that she did not really have on campus, or at home. Being connected to other teacher educators in her subject area energized and inspired her. She encouraged her own teacher education students to join, and even helped them to present at a conference. It gives her great pride to see the contributions that she makes to the field, and that her students are making to the field.

> *And I took three of my students with me last year to an educational conference. They were just, it was just so cool to see them interact there and nobody could believe that they were undergrad students. They thought that they were teachers in the field because, you know, they could, they could carry on conversations about actual things going on in our field and they helped present and they were amazing and it was, it was just really, really rewarding. It was really fun.*

Her excitement for scholarly contribution is shared by one other participant. His excitement is more pragmatic. He places a very high value on scholarly practice. In fact, professional study and publication are integral to his identity as a teacher educator.

> *After teaching high school for a couple years I met other faculty who were in cohort graduate programs. While exploring my options I had a chance to meet the man who would become my graduate advisor and dissertation chair. [He] contacted me after an initial meeting, where we had discussed graduate school*

options…his follow-up included an invitation to come work on a 5-year funded

project that aimed to improve [subject area] teachers' content knowledge and

pedagogical expertise. For the next few years I worked, to varying degrees with

this project and taught courses in [subject area] pedagogy for in-service

teachers.

This participant continued to describe his contribution to his research field as the

most important part of his identity as a teacher educator. *"…the courses I teach, which*

now directly relate to me position as a [subject area] educator, situate me in a way that

students are inclined to view me as a resource."

Both of these novice teacher educators possess confidence when contributing at

a higher level in their fields. They derive great joy from observing the successes of their

teacher education students at this level as well.

Having a strong sense of identity and purpose is very important to one research

participant. She spoke about advocating for one's field, and contributing through

scholarly work or presentations, or offering professional development. She stated: "*So*

in that way, maybe it is important to identify what is your purpose for being here

beyond just your classroom teaching."

Other participating novice teacher educators discussed briefly the importance of

scholarly practice, but spent more time explaining their contributions to practice in the

classroom. Two participants only mentioned scholarship in the context of applying for

tenure. The researcher voiced honest feelings of inferiority on the subject.

Self-Study (Scholarly Practice)

> *I do not feel confident with scholarship. I think my career path has something to do with this. I have a BA in English, so one would think I'd feel confident in researching and writing, but I worked at a teacher college, so no research required. My former doctoral advisor did not encourage me to publish either, so I did not have support that way. I would like to grow more in this area. My dissertation project (with a supportive, new advisor) has really helped with my understanding of scholarship and research. I know it's not the best work ever, but the process has helped so much with my confidence. I now know I can do this side of academia and that's really exciting. I give all the credit to my advisor for giving me wings and gently supporting me until I found out I could do the work myself!*

The novice teacher educators involved in this project have clearly contributed much to the field, both inside and outside of the classroom. In order to arrive at a productive place in their careers, a place where they felt like they were contributing, many of the participants experienced (or are currently still experiencing) times of conflict.

Theme 4: Conflict (Inside Department and Outside Department)

Analysis of the data revealed that the participants encountered two main types of conflict: conflict inside of their teaching departments and conflict outside of their teaching departments. Conflict involves two modes of belonging: Alignment (A) because of the coordinated enterprises, complexity, and compliance issues in teacher

education programs and Engagement (E) because of the involved interactions, relationships, and practices. (Wenger, 1998).

Conflict (Inside department)

"*I was bullied by another faculty member,*" this admission was direct and heartfelt. One interviewee conceded that although, "*higher ed. is pretty cushy*" (compared to K-12), she felt severe apprehension and stress because of the conduct of someone in her own department. There were disagreements over curriculum, a power struggle, and at one point, even a door slammed in the face of the novice teacher educator. Other faculty aligned with the senior member, and as a new faculty member, the participant felt isolated. She kept to herself, concentrated on best practices and relied heavily on her connections with a national teaching organization. She reported that her department chair provided encouragement through the tough time, so she was not completely alone. The senior faculty member has since retired, and now her relations with the rest of the department are healthy. She feels relieved and is able to concentrate better on her students and their success.

In her interview, another novice teacher educator talked about being new and being the "*only new person.*" She felt alone and unsupported. Now, three years on the job, she is no longer technically new, but currently is, "*fighting against the mentality of 'this is how we've always done it' when I suggest change or question things.*" She admitted to feelings of jealousy when referring to other faculty members who started as teacher educators at the same time (this year). She views them as a cohort, where she does not have that peer support: "*I've been put into the role of being a mentor, in some*

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ways, as I am the only tenure track faculty member between them and the associate

professors. I am the test subject in many cases."

As a novice teacher educator, she is not comfortable in this role. She feels alone herself, and is still searching for personal and professional support from her department. Another participant made a short, yet poignant comment about department members:

> *There are those at both levels who have really made being a professional very*
> *challenging, and have almost made me leave the profession. Although I try hard*
> *not let negativity shape what I do, they have definitely created spaces that made*
> *it difficult to do my job and even come to my job at all.*

This comment is really quite serious, but the nonchalant presentation of it during the interview is worth noting. This participant is describing severe conflict, severe enough to quit his profession, yet his statement was followed with very little explanation. The researcher describes potential career-shifting conflict as well.

Self-Study (Conflict: Inside department)

> *The English department at [former school] was made up of two islands. One*
> *island favored strict grammar rules and no modification. The other island*
> *favored teaching grammar through writing and differentiated instruction.*
> *Faculty relationships were strained at times and when I left, I was either going*
> *to law school or to teach in a new environment.*
>
> *I got a job at [other school] and fell in love with teaching again. I felt like a*
> *member of a team. People were happy at work. Teachers loved teaching, they*
> *loved their students, and they were passionate about their curriculum. I am so*
> *thankful for that experience because it helped to reignite my passion.*

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In one case, conflict within a department prompted the researcher to treat new colleagues in an encouraging manner.

> *My very first year of teaching I was sitting in the English teacher's office area*
> *and a veteran teacher said to me, "Your first year, huh? I remember my first*
> *year; I didn't know shit! In fact, I didn't know shit for my first five years!"*
> *This comment offended me. I remember thinking, "so because I am a new*
> *teacher I have nothing to offer? I'm no good? How do I fix that? Just time I*
> *guess."*
> *I would NEVER say that to a new teacher or to a pre-service teacher candidate,*
> *but I guess the cynic wasn't completely wrong. I hadn't had many authentic*
> *teaching experiences when I started in the classroom. I learned A LOT the first*
> *five years. I guess that's why I'm so passionate about authentic experiences. I*
> *want my future teachers to get out of my class and think, "My experiences have*
> *prepared me for the "real" work of my classroom."*

Conflict (Outside of Department)

A couple of the participants discussed the educational system. One reported feeling such severe conflict with *"the neoliberal approach"* of *"cutting and not replacing"* that exists (according to him) in the educational system today, that he left his former position in favor of working in a different state. He *philosophically* disagrees with the system to the point of feeling bad after a day's work. He felt as if he constantly owed his students an apology for things beyond his control. He made a point to describe his conflict as having *"nothing to do with whom I'm around."* His conflict was most definitely outside of his department.

One novice teacher educator discussed conflict working with diverse learners. Her undergraduate experience left her with *rose-colored glasses* and she could not understand why her students (in a culturally and economically diverse school) were not responding to education in the same way that she had.

In total, the interviews with novice teacher educators yielded little with regards to conflict. In just two instances, the conflict was still occurring. In all other cases, the conflict occurred at an earlier part in the participant's career.

Summary of Interview Results

After careful analysis of data, and establishing categories, the researcher determines that the greatest category affecting the identity of novice teacher educators is mentorship/collaboration. Working with colleagues in classroom practice and scholarly practice, looking to colleagues for inspiration and encouragement, and providing inspiration and encouragement to others affects the identity. The lack of mentorship/collaboration also affects the identity of novice teacher educators. Participants spoke of isolation or confusion in the absence of mentorship/collaboration. In both instances, where mentorship/collaboration occurs and where it does not occur, the novice teacher educators' identities were certainly affected, as evidenced by the participants' numerous, candid comments on the subject.

Membership/collaboration can be described using the Engagement (E) Mode of Belonging. Wenger (1998) says engagement is limiting because of its bounds. One person can only be in one place at any given moment. Perhaps those limits are what define successful mentorship/collaboration. Connection and intimacy is essential.

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Engagement involves interactions, relationships, shared histories of learning, and practices. It is the most powerful mode of belonging for novice teacher educators, when considering the construction of their identities.

Chapter IV Summary

This chapter presents findings of the novice teacher identity project. Chapter contents categorize and explain the results, presenting four categories related to the conceptual framework model, The Modes of Belonging (Wenger, 1998). Of the four established categories: context, mentorship/collaboration, contribution to field, and conflict, mentorship/collaboration emerged as the category most applicable to the identity formation of the novice teacher educators in the study, including the researcher's identity formation, as evidenced by the provided self-study data. It may be concluded that engagement (E) mode of belonging, (the mode affecting mentorship/collaboration), is the most influential mode for novice teacher educators, shaping their identities either by its presence, or by its absence.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, ASSERTIONS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore how novice teacher educators shape their identities, and how those identities affect practice. The interviews of five novice teacher educators, researcher field notes, and self-study journals from the researcher yielded significant data from six total participants. A sense of belonging is important for teacher educators when constructing an identity. Using the conceptual model, Wenger's Modes of Belonging (1998), the researcher determined that novice teacher educators' create their identities through four main categories: context, membership/collaboration, contribution to field, and conflict. Of these four categories, mentorship/collaboration emerged to be the most impactful with regard to novice teacher educator identity development.

The objective of this chapter is to connect these findings with current research, to discuss recommendations for teacher education departments, to identify implications for further study, and to reflect on the project as a whole. Analysis of data provided answers to the research questions. They are interlaced in participants' responses.

1. How do novice teacher educators describe their perceptions of professional identity and teacher identity?

2. How do teachers' K-12 experiences shape their teacher identities?

3. How do novice teacher educators' experiences shape their teacher educator identities?

4. How does novice teacher educator identity shape or impact practice?

Discussion of Findings in Relation to Current Literature

In an effort to improve practice, the researcher embarked on a self-study, which focused on the identities of novice teacher educators. According to Williams and Ritter (2010) and Izadinia (2014) there has been little research published on the needs of new teacher educators. This study targeted teacher educators with one to eight years of experience in the field. The participants were also required to have secondary classroom teaching experience. Izadinia's (2014) literature review of teacher educators reported that novice teacher educators were under-represented in current research. The findings of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on these educators.

Context

1. How do novice teacher educators describe their perceptions of professional identity and teacher identity?

In an interview, one participant shared her beliefs on teacher identity, *"I truly believe that you've got a seed to be a teacher or not. I think you can enhance it, but if you don't have it you can't force it. We've all had teachers like that and all the kids*

know." This idea of an individual possessing a teaching presence was acknowledged by other participants, but not explained in the same detail. Another interviewee talked about the rush for her teacher candidates to identify as a teacher, *"They so want to be at year five before they've even student taught. Because they have that awareness. They have that understanding."*

Williams (2010) reports that the teacher candidates must make sense of the world using their own faculties, and not those of the teacher educator. So how does a teacher educator encourage the development of those abilities without inserting commanding control of the situation? One participant suggests, *"It goes back to respecting others and communicating, I've always done that well. That's been something that really has defined me…I feel that sort of compassion for my students as well."* He continued by adding that teachers are constantly giving of themselves toward their practice, and ultimately to their students. *"Teachers tend to be not so in your face, it is not so much about themselves. I mean it's definitely about everyone else."*

Another participant seems to agree with the idea of deferring credit on a job well done: *"So, I have pretty low self-esteem, but teaching is one area where I feel like I do a pretty good job. But, I'm pretty hard on myself about that."* This type of view of personal view of practice creates conflict for novice teacher educators as they have inner struggles that they have to deal with every time they step in front of students.

Conflict

    2. How do teachers' K-12 experiences shape their teacher identities?

Clearly, mentorship/collaboration is a factor in conflict for novice teacher educators. Saito (2013) wrote the team atmosphere of the high school staff is gone, and hierarchical power relations cause problems for novice teacher educators and should be further studied. The researcher reflects in her self-study journal about the side effects of feeling independent, the differences that create conflict for the creation of a desired homeostasis in the workplace.

One: I felt a bit isolated. A commuter for my entire career, I have always felt a bit removed from school culture, but at the post-secondary level, I was REALLY independent. I wasn't given a curriculum or suggested textbooks. Basically, my boss said, "good luck." This was a bit overwhelming, but also liberating. So DIFFERENT than a large, secondary school. In my K-12 school, I was used to my team. We worked together and played together. I loved the comradery. My colleagues at college weren't mean or anything, but we did NOTHING together…curriculum-wise, or socially.

I soon gained confidence with my course load. Ironically, the teacher educator (secondary English Methods course) was the course with which I had the most confidence. I felt close enough to the secondary classroom to be able to share insights and curriculum.

Two: I didn't feel smart enough to be a college professor. I was taking doctoral courses and doing fine, but was glad I worked at a small "teacher" college. Research and publishing are not required. This was probably a plus, but also a

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minus. I didn't feel pressured to publish and therefore didn't do it, so I didn't

gain any confidence there.

Other participants reflected on various conflicts encountered within their teacher education departments, and also outside of their teacher education departments. One participant described feeling like a "failure" (very insecure and in need of support) in her own teacher education department. hooks (2010) also discusses the self-esteem of college teachers. Time is often dedicated to improving the self-esteem of K-12 teachers, but this is not true for college teachers. Often perceived as all-knowing and confident, college teachers sometimes feel inadequate and self-conscious due to unpleasant interactions with their former professors, teachers and colleagues. In the case of this participant, she directly linked her feelings of failure to a lack of support from colleagues. Collaboration is important when it is occurring, or perhaps even more important when it is not occurring. Novice teacher educators are affected by its absence.

Another participant casually stated that negative interactions from colleagues have made him consider skipping work, or changing professions all together. Interactions of that nature with colleagues yield drastic consequences. The decision to leave the field is certainly an extreme reaction.

Other thoughts from a participant on the issues of K-12 education within teacher education included, *"The team approach for elementary is extremely mysterious to an outsider and even though I've observed I still don't fully understand how it works."*

Saito (2013) warns that developing a multi-faceted identity is not easy. Novice teacher educators can draw on their K-12 experiences to enhance practice, but they must be able to connect those experiences to their current task of preparing teachers. A participant shared, *"I would say that most doctoral programs don't have any 'how to teach postsecondary classes. In a way, perhaps it is redundant for teacher educators, if you've got K-12 teaching experience. But if you've taught Kindergarten and then you're teaching undergrads…that's different."*

Contribution to Field

The first two areas recommended for teacher educator preparation by Goodwin et al. (2014) include a strong foundation of educational theories and knowledge about the field of teacher education (p. 293). These areas are certainly important for novice teacher educator identity, and once again, mentorship/collaboration is an influence affecting the ability and effectiveness of being able to contribute to the field of education.

One participant's interviews included revelations about how she never intended to be a teacher educator. She was happy in her role as a teacher, not as an academic, but during graduate school she gained confidence from her studies and from her peers, and in her current teacher education department, she feels supported by her college because she was offered a tenure-track position before she had completed her PhD. Scholarship has become important to her. This was evidenced with her comment on the importance of scholarship, *"It is important not just within the department, but it's also important*

when you're out professionally as far as contributing to the larger field right? Through scholarly work or presentations or offering professional development."

Another novice teacher educator participant laments the loss of connection with younger students; but finds inspiration in her role influencing future teachers: *"In ways I can think about perhaps my influence will actually be greater in the long run because I can influence future teachers who will then impact kids."* Perhaps these reflections from another participant demonstrate the most positive, impactful manner of contributing to the field in a very comprehensive way, "*Usually on Monday mornings, alternating Mondays, I skype with a few colleagues of mine that are also new teacher educators. We talk about all kinds of things, whether it be teacher educator side of things or class prep, or backwards design, or research issues and progress."* He continues, *"We've kind of committed to keeping tabs on each other. We're all in different places. I think that having support is really important."*

Notable here is the effectiveness and importance of mentorship/collaboration when teacher educators construct their identity to make contributions to the field.

Mentorship/Collaboration

3. How do novice teacher educators' experiences shape their teacher educator identities?

Novice teacher educators in this study frequently described mentorship and/or collaboration. There were stories of supportive department heads and like-minded colleagues. Unfortunately, in some cases, participants lamented on the lack of

mentorship and/or collaboration. In the book *Teaching Critical Thinking*, hooks (2010) has an entire chapter on collaboration. She describes, in detail, a working relationship that has been a critical help in her major professional life decisions. Williams and Ritter (2010) cite Wenger's (1998) argument that engagement in the practices of the community and the development of supportive relationships are necessary for positive teacher educator learning.

In their study on what teacher educators should know and be able to do, Goodwin, Smith, Souto-Manning, Cheuvu, Tan, and Reed (2014) recommend teacher educators should be prepared in four areas. Two areas involve "intentional mentorship and apprenticeship in teaching and research and mentoring around professional life in the academy" (p. 293). One participant in this study talked about not just mentorship, but a formalized mentoring plan, designed to help new teacher educators. She described some confusion she felt as a new faculty member. Although her department was supportive, she feels that a more organized, pragmatic mentorship program would be more effective in helping new teacher educators. She feels so strongly about this idea that she offered to start a study group on the topic. Hot topics such as tenure and publishing were identified as areas where formal mentoring could help.

Another participant reflected, "*I've heard other people and talked to other people, newer faculty here and in other places, they find themselves overburdened with meetings. They can't get anything else done. The reality is that if you taught in public education you don't have a 40-hour work week anyway.*" This novice-teacher educator, who identified multiple times as a scholar who was approaching teaching from a

researcher's point of view, described his method for achieving scholarship. *"You have to be mindful and protect your time."*

The word cohort was used by the same participant to describe a group of graduate students who wrote papers, presented at conferences, and collaborated in reading groups. The cohort was founded by his graduate advisor; it was comprised of nine total scholars. The participant spoke with assurance when he said, "*One thing that I would like to kind of make at some point in the future is having a tight group of students like that because of how much they can accomplish. I know for me that is one of my personal goals."* Dinkelman (2010) reports that this type of reflection and collaboration builds confidence, and that teacher educators need that confidence to prepare preservice teachers.

Dinkelman's assertion holds true for the participants of this study. The participant who described several mentoring and collaborating situations in his career, both past and present, also demonstrated the highest level of confidence including confidence in his role as a researcher, and confidence in his role as a teacher educator. The participant who described feeling alone because of the lack of mentoring and collaboration in her department also shared that she is *"an insecure person."* She also added that, *"I haven't been publishing like I need to. So, I lack confidence. I'm definitely more of a teacher than a researcher. I'm not confident that I will end up getting tenure."*

Assertions

Analyzing the four categories derived from the data and their relationships to the conceptual model, Wenger's (1998) Modes of Belonging, yields three assertions about novice teacher educators.

1. **Teaching as a service profession:** All participants' responses included ways in which they desired to make a difference and/or serve their students and/or society. *"I'm not sure (what inspired me to teach), (I) didn't know what else to do, but wanted to serve others,"* reflected one novice teacher educator. One interviewee mused, *"So, although we dissect a number of issues in education that they will encounter, I help them to explore different situations and assure them that they are never alone-they can always count on us in the department, their fellow teachers…-if they don't know what to do, they are never alone."* Another participant voiced her views on teaching as a profession. *"I don't really feel like I chose to teach, but rather I was chosen to teach. I believe that you either have the seed to be a teacher within you or you don't; I guess that I like to think I had the seed within me."* The researcher's self-study touched on the topic of teaching to serve. *"…teacher-student connection is very important to me. I care for all of my students and strive to help them succeed. Professionally, I have an obligation to use my education to help them achieve their educational goals. Personally, I have an obligation to provide them with a non-threatening, empathetic educational environment."*

2. **Modesty:** All participants in the study, at one point or another, were hesitant to give themselves credit or praise for successful performance in teacher education. One participant cited regional explanations. He said he didn't like to talk about his achievements because of his "Midwestern" roots. During her interview, a novice teacher educator with a wealth of experiences and a tenure-track position mentioned that she "felt like a failure" and also had "failed" many times. A confident researcher, one participant confessed that he felt like his graduate school teaching wasn't real teaching. In the researcher's self-study journal she realized that it might be in her genetic makeup to wish to be unrecognized. *"I am also intimidated by high ed. I don't know if it's my personality or what, but I like to fly under the radar. I am not a fan of academic recognition."*

3. **A State of Arrival:** The respondents described their educational journeys and careers as novice teacher educators. Those descriptions contained illustrations of difficulties and frustrations, but all interviewees reported at least one instance of achievement of arrival at a career goal. One respondent claimed, *"I just started thinking, 'Wow! I'm doing things that are…that I was hoping to do!"* Another novice teacher educator said, *"Um…I, I do know my stuff. I stay on top of best practices…"* The state of arrival sneaks up on most. Here is one example from a participant, *"Even though when I first started I was concerned I wouldn't have enough experiences to share, I now realize that I do!"* Also included is the researcher's self-study journal was this statement, *"And now, I'm no longer a rookie, so sometimes people ask for my advice. This still shocks me, but every now and then I think, "Hey I know some things!"*

Conclusion One

After this study, the researcher is able to demonstrate the ultimate importance of mentorship and/or collaboration to the identity of novice teacher educators, and to draw the following conclusion, if mentorship and/or collaboration are present, a novice teacher educator is confident in their identity. Two novice teacher educator participants in particular really illustrated this conclusion.

One participant identified as a skilled researcher who became that way through the mentorship of his graduate advisor and through the support of other graduate students conducting research in his area. He also shared the mission of teacher education with these collaborators. He knows he has strong content knowledge and he talks about it. His interviews are confident, but not arrogant. He still possesses the modesty of the teaching profession by declaring at the end of the interview, *"Well I'm not the expert."*

Despite the modesty, he identifies as enthusiastic in the classroom, excited to share his love for his subject area and his love for teaching with his teacher education candidates. He takes his responsibilities seriously and understands the time constraints his novice teacher educator colleagues feel in academia. He does not, however, become so burdened by academic independence or time constraints that he feels like a failure. He is not insecure, at least professionally. As a teacher educator he feels, *"It is my job to push students and get them to the point where they can explain it coherently. They need to be comfortable and confident enough in what they have learned in order to*

teach." His confidence and competence, achieved through productive mentorship and collaboration, translates into the development of confident future teachers.

In contrast, another participant reports a severe lack in mentorship. A faculty member she originally considered a mentor just retired and she reflected, *"So that has been hard."* This teacher educator was hired without a cohort of consistent support. She was hired and feels alone in her teaching, in her journey toward professional writing, and ultimately tenure.

She wants to share her love of her subject content with her future teachers, but feels discouraged that they are not readers and many of them are reading books for the first time ever in her courses. She does value student connection as her strength but admits that the connection is damaged because she is always running behind and students do not receive timely feedback for their work. She also shared, *"I'm an insecure person. When thanked for my contribution and knowledge for a project, I respond with some uncomfortable comment."* She mentioned the word "failure" multiple times in her interviews.

All participants' responses showed that in the formation of novice teacher educator identity, the amount of mentorship/collaboration undoubtedly affected many areas. The presence of mentorship/collaboration was an important part of the development of a novice teacher educator's identity and success in the first years.

Certainly, this affects practice. Goodwin et al. (2014) calls being a teacher educator a "purposeful commitment" to professional life (p. 285). There is much at

stake. There is much skin in the game. The novice teacher educators in this study are all in. Mentorship/collaboration most definitely provides confidence-building support that aides in the formation of successful teacher educator practice: inside the classroom and inside the realm of scholarly research.

Conclusion Two

4. How does novice teacher educator identity shape or impact practice?

Self-study provides a productive avenue of research for a novice teacher educator to understand the formation of professional identity, and how an understanding of that process can improve practice. Williams and Ritter (2010) explain that self-study is reflective in nature and that it provides a way to nurture professional relationships and increase professional learning. The reflection process of this project certainly gave me, as the researcher, focus and understanding. Reflections of positive mentors and positive collaborations swam through my mind, the same way pangs of remembrance of being the only one on the island still sting.

Also helpful is a reminder from LaBoskey (2007) that self-study is improvement aimed.

> Improvement-Aimed: The main definition of self-study is that it is the study of one's practice in order to improve it. One assumption here is that an improved understanding of a practice, and also a change in practice can lead to improvement. A second assumption is that no professional practice will ever be perfect, so improvement is always a goal. A third assumption is that two kinds

of knowledge will be generated in a self-study. One is the knowledge that is present in the researcher doing the study that is in the understanding, transformation, and reformation of the practices of the researcher. The second kind of knowledge is public knowledge of practice that can contribute to others' improvement of practice. Self-study of practice is improvement aimed, and through cycles of critical reflection, embodied knowledge becomes intellectually accessible. (p.817-869)

It is the hope of the researcher that others will be able to use this information to strengthen and improve teacher education programs, and improve the professional and personal psyche of the novice teacher educators themselves.

My favorite response is, "I'm a teacher at a college in the education department. I get to "teach" teachers." I can't help but smile when I reveal this fact because I really love it so much! When I applied to law school, the thought of changing my identity terrified me. No one likes lawyers. People like teachers, especially female teachers. Something about being a female lawyer scared me too. I don't like potential intimidation. I really love teaching. I love it more than researching. So, identifying myself as a teacher, even though I'm in higher education, makes the most sense to me.

Recommendations

It is imperative to remember that Samaras and Freese (2011) report the self-study research process is fluid. It is with this fluid nature in mind that the researcher makes recommendations. At this time, the researcher believes that for the healthy

formation of a strong identity, designed to create the best practices in teaching and in research, the following recommendations are well suited to novice teacher educators:

1. Provide new faculty members with a mentor within the department. There are several helpful ways to achieve such mentorship, but data from this research suggests that this mentorship should be formal in nature. Both mentor and mentee should have a clear sense of focus for the goals of the professional mentorship. Department study groups should be given the opportunity to create an agreed upon and research-based format for such mentor programs. Within these mentor programs should be a platform for reflection that can be shared between mentor and mentee. Useful reflection topics could include: connecting subject area and K-12 experiences with the process of teaching future teachers, learning the tenure process, finding balance, managing time, and understanding how publishing works. Both parties could benefit from this collaboration. Experienced faculty benefit from new energy and new ideas and newer faculty benefit from professional experience and a broader view of academia.

2. Provide opportunities for ongoing professional collaboration. Again, faculty from all levels of experience benefit from working together. The much repeated adage of two heads are better than one certainly finds a home in teacher education departments. According to this data, novice teacher educators who have collaborated in the past, are currently collaborating, or planning future collaborations with colleagues inside or outside of their department, report feelings of confidence, satisfaction, and enthusiasm. Some of the participants found collaboration outside of their departments to be the most beneficial, while

others sought comfort closer to home by working with departmental colleagues.

In either instance, participants reported that collaboration, or the lack thereof,

directly impacted their confidence, their ability to perform, and their very

identity as a teacher educator. Teacher education programs must be aware of the

need for faculty to collaborate and professional development opportunities

should be available and accessible.

These recommendations are in step with the findings of Izadinia (2014),

previously discussed in chapter one. Her literature review reported on the challenges

and tensions that teacher educators face, and the table below is found in that study.

Table 1. External challenges and internal tensions faced by teacher educators

Real World Challenges	Emotional Tensions
1. Not having proven research skills; how to engage in research	1. Difficulty in acquiring an identity as a researcher
2. Not having information and understanding of assessment terminology, making procedures; how to teach content and strategies and how to deliver lectures	2. Doubt about self-identities as an academic
3. How to develop organizational knowledge; expectations to transfer skills and knowledge from school; changing support networks; lack of knowledge of how system works; lack of understanding of structure of HE (higher education)	3. Feelings of being de-skilled, exposed, vulnerable, marginalized and new
4. Changing roles and assuming an expanded and more visible position	4. Feeling uncertain within themselves; fighting with inner self

5. Teaching loads; not knowing what the expectations are; emergent research demands	5. Considerable levels of stress
6. How to make professional connections with other teacher educators; how to negotiate new professional relationships with students	6. Sense of loneliness; failure in establishing academic credibility

Participants in this study certainly identified with the real world challenges and emotional tensions outlined in Izidinia's (2014) table. Each and every item was discussed by most (if not all) of the teacher educators interviewed for this study.

One category rings in the researcher's ears, mentorship/collaboration. The presence (or absence) of these essential, identity-influencing actions address every single item on the table. For example, participants who reported feeling isolated lacked mentorship and/or collaboration with colleagues. Participants who expressed feelings of uncertainty about new roles and reporting to new people in an unfamiliar order, later spoke of mentors and/or collaborators in their departments who helped to show the way.

One participant described his strong background in research, and how that research connected so well with his practice. He then went on to describe his wonderful mentor, an instructor who encouraged him to conduct quality research, and demonstrated the fluidity of research in practice. All roads lead to quality mentorship and collaboration and teacher education programs must make this a top departmental goal each year.

Reflections

The researcher began this project by internally asking the questions: *Who am I? How did I become who I am and how does it affect my ability to be a competent novice*

teacher educator? How do others at similar spots in their careers identify themselves?

What does all of this mean for future teachers? What followed was a carefully crafted,

yet constantly evolving self-study of novice teacher identity. My intent was to selfishly

improve my practice by dissecting how other teacher educators used their sense of

purpose and identity to inform their own practice. Through the process of finding

current research, an applicable conceptual model, and meaningful data, my eyes were

opened to the possibility of being able to help other teacher educators with the results.

The interviews were candid and heartfelt. As I read through the words of the

participants again and again, I began to fully understand the importance of identity.

Identity is important for all people, but for teacher educators, who work with future

teachers each semester, a confident and competent self-assurance is paramount. The

effects of such a strong sense of self are generational. Our future teachers need

confident, competent teacher educators, and guess what…we are better when we work

together.

> *I think a sense of identity and purpose is important for any profession. Teaching*
>
> *is a service-profession that directly affects the future of society, so of course I*
>
> *think it's important that teachers know who they are, what they are doing and*
>
> *why they are doing it! On that note, I think it's even more important that teacher*
>
> *educators have a strong sense of identity and purpose because they must model*
>
> *the importance of self-awareness to the teacher candidates. Teaching is a noble*
>
> *profession, but there are so many hidden challenges. These challenges are often*
>
> *emotional and the self-reliant nature of the profession can leave teachers feeling*
>
> *isolated. Teacher educators must prepare the next generation of teachers by*

helping them to build a strong personal identity as a foundation for all of the

quick decisions to come.

Outside of the classroom, the current national climate is one of division and uncertainty. Sometimes overwhelming feelings of isolation set in. But the conclusions of this study provide a clear path intended to ward off the fearful darkness of uncertainty. Never fear, fellow teacher educators, we have each other. Through collaboration, we can access new possibilities for future teachers. The researcher is confident that teacher educators will use their big hearts to make the world a better place for all, although they surely will not accept the credit. In fact, at the conclusion of a face-to-face interview, filled with insightful reflections and observations on novice-teacher identity, one participant was thanked by the researcher for the commitments of time and knowledge. The participant's response? *"Oh! Gosh, I hope there is something you can use in all that!"* Indeed.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

E-mails to Participants

September 16, 2016

Greetings:

My name is Laura Brudvik and I am a doctoral student in Teacher Education at the University of North Dakota. I am asking for your consideration on a topic that is near and dear to my heart. My dissertation is entitled: *Examining identity of novice (secondary) teacher educators: A self-study*.

Would you be willing to complete a brief, electronic interview, and then meet with me and my co-investigator, Dr. Bonni Gourneau, for a follow-up, face-to-face interview (approx. one hour) on the topic of your professional identity? This project is on a tight time schedule and will not demand hours of your time. Only the fall semester will be used, so the electronic interview will be closely followed by the face-to-face interview. The interview process will finish in the month of October. The data will be analyzed for common themes and the results will be reported before the end of the semester.

Being a teacher educator requires a specific educational skill set. Post-secondary teacher educators who were formerly classroom teachers in the K-12, (specifically secondary) setting bring a myriad of experiences to their college classrooms.

I am interested in your diverse teaching experiences, and how those experiences help to shape your identity as an educator. My hope is that this better understanding of experience and identity will help to strengthen education programs, especially teacher education programs. I also seek to understand how my own experiences have shaped my identity as a teacher educator, so my self-study data will be analyzed along with the data provided by you.

If you are able to contribute to my research, please respond to this email and we can look at possible dates, and go over some specific interview protocol. There will be no compensation for participating in this study. Results are anonymous; pseudonyms will be used and you may stop this study at any time. A consent form will be provided for your review and approval at the time of the first interview. Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Laura Brudvik (co-principal investigator)

Dr. Bonni Gourneau (co-principal investigator)

Thank you so much for the e-mail interview responses. Now it is time to meet in person. I look forward to hearing more about your career as a teacher educator and how your experiences impact your identity. We will discuss your initial responses and then I will add some additional questions. The first face-to-face interview question requires you to bring a meaningful item to our meeting. It should be something that represents your personal and professional identities. I will ask you to introduce the item at our meeting.

My co-principal investigator, Dr. Bonni Gourneau will also attend these meetings. We can meet at a place that is convenient for you.

Here are some possible dates and locations:

 _____

_____

_____

Please respond with what works best for you. The interviews must be completed this month so that I can start analyzing the data, and report on the results. I am excited to share these results with you. Thank you again for taking the time and effort to work with me on teacher educator identity research.

Sincerely,

Laura Brudvik

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this project. We so appreciate your time and consideration. Your input is invaluable.

Sincerely,

Laura Brudvik and Dr. Bonni Gourneau, co-principal investigators

E-mail Interview Questions: Please answer the following, send back the responses in a return e-mail, and be ready to discuss your answers during our face to face interview.

1. When you meet someone new, and are asked about your career, how do you identify yourself? Explain why you identify yourself that way.

2. Describe your career. What inspired you to teach? Where have you taught? At what level? How many years of experience do you have at each level?

3. Reflect on your transition from K-12 education to Post-Secondary Education. Identify and describe two to three challenges you experienced around that transition time. Have you overcome those challenges? Explain.

4. How have you been influenced by other faculty? Can you identify any mentors among faculty? Explain. Can you identify other faculty members who have not provided you with peer support? How important do you believe peer support to be in the post-secondary Education environment? Explain.

5. Explain the process of connecting your area of concentration to teacher education. How does this process shape your professional identity?

Interview #2 (Face-to-face)

1. Introduce your meaningful item. Why did you choose this item to bring today? Explain what it means to you and how it represents your personal and professional identities.

2. What are the top two difficulties you face as a teacher educator? Explain. What are your top two favorite parts about being a teacher educator? Explain.

3. Please identify your strengths as a teacher educator and your weaknesses as a teacher educator. Explain. Do you feel your strengths and weaknesses affect your students, future educators themselves? If so, how?

4. Describe a scenario when you have felt proud to identify as a teacher educator. Describe a scenario when you have not felt pride to identify as a teacher educator.

5. Do you feel confident as a faculty member? Explain.

6. Having a strong sense of identity and purpose is (undoubtedly) important for educators. Do you think it's any more important for teacher educators? Explain.

7. Compare this year to the very first year of being a teacher educator. How have you changed? Have you learned things about yourself? About your students? Explain.

8. What advice do you have for new teacher educators? What advice do you have for older/more experienced teacher educators? Are you an experienced teacher educator or a new teacher educator, or neither? If you are "neither", what advice do you have for the "neither" teacher educators?

9. What, in your opinion, should be stressed in the professional development of teacher educators? What are the needs?

10. What, in your opinion, should be stressed in teacher education programs? What are the needs?

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