


January 2011

Making Meaning with "Readers" and "Texts": A Narrative Inquiry into Two Beginning English Teachers' Meaning Making from Classroom Events

Christi Underwood Edge

University of South Florida, christi.edge@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd>

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

Scholar Commons Citation

Edge, Christi Underwood, "Making Meaning with "Readers" and "Texts": A Narrative Inquiry into Two Beginning English Teachers' Meaning Making from Classroom Events" (2011). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*.
<http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/3722>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.

Making Meaning with “Readers” and “Texts”: A Narrative Inquiry into Two Beginning
English Teachers’ Meaning Making from Classroom Events

by

Christi Edge

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Secondary Education
College of Education
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Jane H. Applegate, Ph.D.
Patricia L. Jones, Ph.D.
Audra Parker, Ph.D.
Janet C. Richards, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
July 19, 2011

Keywords: Classroom Literacy, Teacher Education, Transaction, Experience, English
Language Arts, Reading, Critical Events, Story, Story World, Framework, Novice
Teacher, Understanding, Stance, Efferent, Aesthetic

Copyright © 2011, Christi Edge

Dedication

For “Helen,” “Amy,” and the many prospective and practicing teachers whom you represent: Thank you for allowing me to learn from you, for sharing your lives, your experiences, your questions, struggles, and your stories with me. I remain grateful, changed, humbled, amazed, informed, inquisitive, and inspired.

For my children, Aiden (age 5) and Eli (age 1) and the generation of learners you represent: You have been my teachers. You have shown me anew how we observe, sense, interpret, compose and communicate meaning long before we have words to label the world we read and compose. Alongside you, I have re-learned to walk and to talk. I remain amazed and inspired by your joy in learning, discovering, questioning, and creating.

Acknowledgements

Above all, my gratitude to John and Jane—

First, I thank my husband and best-friend, John, for your faith, love, patience, practicality, encouragement, and prayer. In “the beginning” when I was camped out on the fifth floor of the library writing my first paper on Rosenblatt’s works, you brought me pot roast and warm biscuits, gave me a hug, told me, “Get it done,” and encouraged me to stay and work until I did. Now, many papers, many years, two children, and two degrees later, you still sustain me and encourage me to never stop working. Your unwavering support, help, and love have bolstered me more than you know. Thank you.

My deepest gratitude and respect I offer to my mentor, Jane, who invited me to stay when I accidentally wandered into her doctoral seminar so many years ago. There, I discovered the works of Louise Rosenblatt, and through her, John Dewey and the many whose works connect to theirs. From Rosenblatt’s work, I gained a vocabulary to say what I had long sensed. Out of this, I eventually developed a line of inquiry that brought me to this study. From your guidance, I have grown more than I ever knew possible. I am grateful for your knowledge, flexibility, insight, questions, encouragement, practicality, balance, foresight, patience, faith, and appreciation for both the efferent and the aesthetic. In my explorations, you have been a much-needed ballast. Thank you.

I offer my appreciation and gratitude to my dissertation committee members Jane, Pat, Audra, Janet, and Jim (now retired) who gave me space to make meaning and who challenged me and supported me. I am grateful for your faith, flexibility, knowledge, encouragement, and attention. Thank you.

Thank you to Pat and the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project for providing me with the space of a summer, colleagues, conversations, texts, and blank paper. Through this professional development experience, I made meanings which facilitated a paradigm shift in my thinking about teaching and learning, writing, and reading. I also came to appreciate that life, like writing, is always “a work in progress.” Thank you.

I thank the many college of education professors, doctoral colleagues, and fellow researchers—particularly Joan, Jane, Pat, Jim, Audra, Valerie, Robert, Howard, Kofie, Jeannie, Anete, Sarah, Holly, Tara, Nina, and, especially Kate—who provided and shared spaces with me for discovering, wondering, connecting, questioning, postulating, envisioning, reading, composing, and working through drafts of thought through conversations and papers, who pointed me to tools and texts that informed my thinking, and who expanded their own horizon of possibilities to consider new ideas. Thank you.

Thank you to the “Critical Friends” writing group, Anete, Cheryl, Pat, and Kate, who facilitated my writing and thinking of many manuscripts of thought that have contributed to my thinking here and, no doubt, in the future. Thank you.

And finally, thank you to the many prospective teachers whom I have had the pleasure to teach. (Re)reading the transitional journey from student to teacher through your individual experiences, stories, questions, lessons, fears, writings, realizations,

metaphors, conversations, and moments of confusion, joy, triumph and pride has taught me much. Thank you.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
Abstract	x
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Focus of the Study	4
Statement of the Problem	4
Background on the Problem	6
On Knowing and Doing in Teacher Education	7
Theoretical Frameworks for Learning to Know and to Do	7
Three Persistent Problems in Learning to Teach	10
An Apprenticeship of Observation	12
Enactment	15
Complexity	17
Considering the Problems in the Context of Learning to Teach	
English	19
The Assumption of Reading and Writing the Classroom as	
a Text	22
Classroom Communication	24
Teaching as Reading and Writing	25
Synthesis of Background on the Problem	26
Statement of the Purpose	27
Theoretical Framework	28
<i>Classroom Literacy: Teachers as Readers, Writers, and Meaning</i>	
Makers	28
The Transactional Meaning-Making Relationship Between	
a Reader, a Text, and a Context	31
Transactional View of Experience	32
Reading as a Transactional Meaning-Making Experience	32
Narrative Mode of Reasoning	33
Significance of the Study	35
Research Questions	37
Definition of Terms	38
Beginning English Language Arts Teacher	38
Making Meaning	38
Event	39
Story	39
Context	39

Critical Event	40
Turning Points	41
Assumptions	41
Methodological Assumptions	41
Language	41
Limitations	42
Researcher Limitations	42
Researcher-Participant Relationships	42
Overview of the Study	43
Chapter Two: Discussion of the Literature	45
Context of the Chapter	45
Purpose of the Study	45
Classroom Literacy: A Theoretical Framework for Considering How Teachers Make Meaning of Classroom Experiences	46
Teacher as Reader	47
Teacher as Writer	48
Research Questions	49
Purpose and Overview of the Chapter	51
Making Meaning	52
Meaning as a Transactional Event	52
Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory	53
The Transactional Paradigm	55
Implications for Language	57
Triadic Signs	57
Selective Attention	58
Implications for Social Relationships	59
Application to the Reading Process	59
Pragmatist Philosophical Context for Making Meaning	60
Meaning-Making as an Event	64
The Reader	65
Linguistic Experiential Reservoir	67
Stance	68
Efferent Stance	68
Aesthetic Stance	69
Text	71
The Poem	72
Making Meaning in the Narrative Investigation	74
Experience	76
Experience and Education	77
A Transactional View of Experience	77
A Narrative View of Experience	79
Experience in Narrative Inquiry	79
A Dewian View of Narrative Inquiry	80
Chapter Synthesis	83

Chapter Three: Methodology	86
Purpose and Overview of the Study	86
Research Questions	88
Overview of the Chapter	89
Research Stance	89
Study Design	90
Chapter Organization	92
Narrative Inquiry	92
Turning Toward Narrative Inquiry	94
Philosophical Assumptions of Narrative Inquiry	96
Narrative Inquiry in Educational Research	97
Story, Narrative, and Narrative Inquiry	99
Philosophical Framework: A Narrative Perspective of Experience	100
Methodological Framework: Three Narrative Inquiry Commonplaces	102
Temporality	103
Sociality	103
Place	105
Seven Considerations for Designing Narrative Inquiry	106
Design Consideration 1: Imagining a Lifespace	106
Design Consideration 2: Living and Telling as Starting Points for Collecting Field Texts	107
Design Consideration 3: Defining and Balancing the Commonplaces	108
Design Consideration 4: Investment of the Self in the Inquiry	108
Design Consideration 5: Researcher-Participant Relationship	109
Design Consideration 6: Duration of Study	110
Design Consideration 7: Relationship Ethics and Narrative Inquiry	110
A Critical Events Approach Nested within Narrative Inquiry Design	112
Rationale for a Critical Events Approach	112
A Critical Events Approach	114
Definition of Critical Event	115
Types of Critical Events	117
Extrinsic, Intrinsic, and Personal Critical Events	117
Positive Critical Events	118
Critical, Like, and Other Events: Categories for Data Analysis	118
Operational Definition of Critical Event	119
Description of the Narrative Inquiry: Collection, Analysis, and Representation of Field Texts	120
Overview of the Study	120
Participants	123
Sampling	123
Selection of Participants	126
Description of Participants	127
“Helen”	128
“Amy”	128
Data Collection	128

Telling and Living as Starting Points for Data Collection	129
Interviews	130
Role of the Interviewer	131
Sequence of Interviews	131
Interview Protocols	132
Recording, Transcribing, and Storing Interview Data	133
Researcher-Participant Conversations	133
Classroom Artifacts	135
Classroom Experiences	135
Participating in Classroom Experiences	136
Negotiation of Entry	137
Field Notes	138
Researcher Journal	140
Archival Data	140
University Coursework Artifacts	141
Interviews	141
Summary of Data Collection	142
Phase One	141
Phase Two	142
Analysis of Field Texts	144
From Field Texts to Research Texts: Six Phases of Data Analysis	145
Phase One: Identifying Stories	145
Phase Two: Analyzing Participants' Meaning Making	146
Phase Three: Analyzing the Researcher's Meaning Making	148
Phase Four: Analyzing Connections between the Participants' and Researcher's Meaning-Making	151
Phase Five: Writing as Data Analysis	152
Phase Six: Reading as Data Analysis	153
Bricolage as an Approach to Making Meaning from Field Texts	154
Narrative Analysis	155
Theoretical Reading	155
Critical Events Analysis	157
Analysis Focused on Meaning	157
Analysis Focused on language	157
Representation of Field Texts	158
Narrative Sketches	159
(Re)Consideration of the Classroom Literacy Theoretical Framework	159
Verisimilitude	160
 Chapter Four: Making Meaning with Readers and Texts	 162
Purpose of the Study	162
Focus of the Study	162
Research Questions	162
Overview of the Chapter	164
Meanings Made from Research Events	166

Research Events as Story	166
Meanings I Made From Research Events	169
Participants Made Meaning through Stories	169
Participants Made Meaning by Making Connections	169
Participants Drew from their Reservoir of Prior Experience, Knowledge, and Language to Guide Their Meaning-Making from Classroom Events	169
Participants Used Particular Prior Experiences as <i>Touchstone</i> Events to Guide Meaning-Making from Classroom Events	170
Making Meaning with Readers and Texts: A Research Story	173
“Dawning”: Being outside of and Stepping into the Research Story-World with Christi	173
Remembering “Piecing a <i>Classroom Quilt</i> ”: Being in the Research Story-World and Moving through Christi’s Touchstone Story- World	176
Stepping outside of and Objectifying Christi’s Touchstone Story-World	179
Leaving Christi’s Touchstone Story-World and Going Beyond: Imagining the Research Story World	180
“Beginnings”: Being outside of and Stepping into the Research Story-World	181
Making Meaning with “Helen Heart”	183
“Beginnings with Helen”: Being inside the Research Story-World and Moving Through it with Helen	183
Stepping outside of the Research Story-World and Reconsidering What I Know: Helen’s “Dropping a Syllable”	184
Being outside of the Research Story-World and Objectifying It	187
Stepping Back inside the Research Story-World with Helen	188
Being inside and Moving through the Research Story-World with Helen: “From the Idea of Teaching to the Reality”	189
Stepping outside of the Research Story World and Reconsidering What I Know	191
Stepping outside the Research Story-World and Objectifying It	191
“Maybe I Can Go Catch a Few”: Being outside of the Research Story-World and Reconsidering what I Know	199
Stepping outside the Research Story-World and Objectifying It	201
“Pursuing the Dream” and “First Impressions”: Being outside of and Stepping into the Research Story-World	205
“Another Look at ‘First Impressions’”: Being Inside and Moving Through the Research Story-World	209
Stepping outside of the Research Story-World to Reconsider What I Know	221
Stepping inside and Moving through the Research Story-World	223
Stepping outside of the Research Story-World and Reconsidering What I Know	225
Being outside of and Objectifying the Research Story-World	226

Stepping inside and Moving through the Research Story-World	226
Stepping outside of the Research Story-World and Reconsidering What I Know	230
“First Impressions”: Being inside and Moving through the Research Story-World	231
Stepping outside of and Reconsidering the Research Story-World	235
Being outside of and Objectifying the Research Story-World	235
Being inside and Moving through the Research Story-World	236
Stepping outside of and Objectifying the Research Story-World	239
Being outside of and Stepping into the Research Story World	239
“Making Meanings from ‘First Impressions’”: Being inside and Moving Through the Research Story-World with Helen	240
Stepping outside of the Research Story-World and Reconsidering What I Know.	265
How Helen Makes Meaning: Stepping outside of the Research Story-World and Objectifying It	269
“Piecing Meaning”: Leaving the Research Story-World with Helen and Going Beyond It	273
Making Meaning with “Amy Johnson”	275
“Beginnings with Amy”: Being inside the Research Story- World and Moving through it.	275
Stepping outside of the Research Story-World and Reconsidering What I Know: Amy’s “When I Think of My Name”	278
Being outside of the Research Story-World and Objectifying It	280
Being outside of the Research Story-World and Reconsidering What I Know	284
“From ‘Air Ball’ to ‘Slam Dunk’ and ‘Hook’”: Being outside of And Stepping into the Research Story-World with Amy	287
Stepping outside the research story-world and reconsidering what I Know	288
Stepping into the Research Story-World and Moving through It	289
Stepping outside of the Research Story-World and Reconsidering What I Know	293
Being outside of and Objectifying the Research Story-World	293
Being outside of the Research Story-World and Reconsidering What I Know	297
“What Would Jerry Do?”: Being inside the Research Story-World and Moving through It.	300
Stepping outside the Research Story-World and Objectifying It	301
“Fun Friday”: Reframing failure, Frustration, and [the State Reading Test] Preparation: Being outside of and Stepping into the Research Story World.	302
Stepping outside of the Research Story-World and Reconsidering What I Know	304
“Reading Test”: Being inside and Moving through the Research Story-World with Amy	305

“Remembering My Reading History”: Being outside of the Research Story-World and Reconsidering What I Know	310
“Reading Helen and Amy”: Being outside of the Research Story- World and Objectifying It	312
“Fireworks”: Being inside and Moving through the Research Story-World with Amy.	314
Stepping outside of the Research Story-World and Reconsidering What I Know	320
“Reading the Invisible?”: Being outside of the Research Story- World and Objectifying It	322
“(Re)Seeing in Light of Fireworks”: Being outside of the Research Story-World and Going Beyond It	324
Chapter Five: (Re)Viewing, (Re)Considering, and (Re)Envisioning <i>Classroom</i> <i>Literacy</i>	328
Overview of the Chapter	329
(Re)Viewing the Study	331
Setting a Purpose	331
Attending to Problems	331
Determining the Phenomenon of Investigation	333
Posing Inquiry Questions	334
Constructing a Theoretical Framework	335
Designing Methods for Inquiry	336
Making Meaning from Field Texts	337
(Re)Considering <i>Classroom Literacy</i>	340
Teachers as Readers of the Classroom as Text	341
Reading Students as Texts	344
Reading Students to Gauge Students’ Attention And Understanding	344
Teachers as Writers of the Classroom as Text	345
(Re)Envisioning <i>Classroom Literacy</i>	347
References	354
Appendix A: Email to Recruit Participants	384

List of Tables

Table 1: Data Matrix

122

List of Figures

Figure 1	Meaning Making	32
Figure 2	Meaningful Understanding	34
Figure 3	<i>Classroom Literacy</i> Three-Dimensional Meaning-Making Construct	35
Figure 4	Data Collection Timeline	143
Figure 5	Bricolage: Relationship of Analytical Tools Used	150
Figure 6	Six Phases of Data Analysis	154
Figure 7	Six Phases of Data Analysis	166
Figure 8	Meanings Made from Research Events	173
Figure 9	Narrative Context of Helen's Story "Adapting to the Reality of Teaching"	192
Figure 10:	Turning points in Helen's Teaching Story "From the Idea of Teaching to the Reality"	193
Figure 11:	Meanings Made from Research Events	339
Figure 12:	Making Meaning from the Classroom as Text	349

Abstract

Situated in a transactional paradigm, connections between the constructs of meaning and experience in both teacher education and reading in English education guided my construction of a theoretical framework called *Classroom Literacy*. This framework extends Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory of Reading (1978, 1994, 2005), broadens the concept of *text* to include the verbal and non-verbal communicative signs related to the context of the classroom, and positions teachers as "readers" of their classrooms as texts. The Classroom Literacy theoretical framework guided my thinking as I re-conceptualized three persistent problems in learning to teach (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald, & Zeichner, 2005)—an apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), complexity (Jackson, 1968, 1990), and enactment (Kennedy, 1999; Simon, 1980)—in light of research on literacy and Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory of Reading in order to understand how two beginning English teachers made meaning from classroom events and how I, the researcher, made meaning from research events. To address research questions, I collected the stories participants lived and told about their second-year (2010-2011) teaching experiences through interviews, documented participant-researcher conversations, participants' writings, classroom observations, and field notes. To contextualize these field texts, I considered archival data from the stories participants lived and told during their university coursework and full-time teaching internships (January 2008-May 2009).

The research story I present in this study was constructed as I moved through six phases of data analysis. It focuses on the connections between the participants' and the researcher's meaning-making and demonstrates that: 1) story connected a narrative mode of reasoning (Bruner, 1986) to a transactional paradigm (Dewey & Bentley, 1949; Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005) and created a space in which each made meaning from experiences; 2) making connections through stories reflected and aided an understanding of self, others, and professional milieus; 3) stories demonstrated how meaning-making was guided by an individual's reservoir of prior experiences, knowledge, and language; 4) stories revealed how each meaning-maker referred to prior meanings made from "touchstone" events to guide her decision-making, ongoing meaning-making of experiences, and sense of self; and 5) stories demonstrated that as each meaning-maker read, she attended to both efferent and aesthetic meanings, yet each read, interpreted, and composed experiences *as* texts from her dominant stance or orientation toward those experiences. Meaning-making was a continuous construction of a conceptual text, simultaneously read and composed in situational context, guided by an individual's reservoir of knowledge, experiences, and language, and used for both framing a point of reference from which additional understanding was sought and a point of departure through which exploration and discovery was initiated.

Chapter One

Introduction

True to what she wrote in *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do* (2003), Kylee Beers began the 2006 Florida Council Teachers of English (FCTE) workshop on teaching struggling readers by asking, "Could you show me what a struggling reader looks like?" Without hesitation, hundreds of English teachers moved. Many slumped down into their seats and folded their arms; others pulled imaginary sweatshirts over their heads, assumed the half-asleep-on-one-elbow pose, or pushed imaginary books across the tables in front of them. Poignant was the message communicated in the collective body language. Powerful was the indictment to teachers' perceptions of what a struggling reader looks like. Given a challenging text, *anyone* can struggle, Beers admonished. As she explained in her book,

I want to consider what it suggests when we all visualize that same type of student, this stereotypical posture of the struggling reader. I believe it suggests a stereotype that excludes more readers than it includes....We cannot make the struggling reader fit one mold or expect one pattern to suffice for all students. Not all struggling readers sit at the back of the room, head down, sweatshirt hood pulled low, notebook crammed with papers that are filled with half-completed assignments, a bored expression, though that often is the image that springs to

mind when we hear the term *struggling reader*....[R]emember that *anyone* can struggle given the right text. (2003, 14-15)

As the sea of teachers seated before Kyleene Beers bobbed their heads in agreement, it struck me as problematic that we can conceptualize how every student might need reading instruction and strategies throughout the duration of their education in order to make meaning from texts, yet teachers' abilities to aid their students is predicated upon their own ability to read and to make meaning of their students' literacy needs. What happens when the *teacher* is the "reader" struggling to make sense of the teenage "texts" in the classroom? What strategies do *teachers* employ for reading and interpreting the learning needs of their students?

Questions born in this moment took me on a journey through stacks of library books, conversations with colleagues, numerous nights contemplating research across conference tables in doctoral classes, and five semesters teaching prospective teachers. Two years later, I returned to the 2008 FCTE conference. In the same city, same hotel, and same grand ballroom, once again filled with hundreds of English teachers sitting in the same round tables, I again found myself before Kyleene Beers—this time aided by her colleague Robert Probst—in a workshop for helping adolescent readers to make meaning from texts. In two years, my questions had come full circle.

While Beers and Probst challenged us to consider 21st century literacy demands, reminded us that any reader can be a struggling reader given the "right" text, and inspired us to show students how to struggle *through* challenging texts in order to make meaning from them (Beers, 2003; Beers & Probst, 2008; Beers, Pobst, & Rief, 2006), I once again

looked about the ballroom. However, this time I didn't see a sea of teachers nodding heads in unison; instead, I saw the first-year teacher to my left vigorously scribbling notes in the margins of her handouts. I saw the seasoned teacher across from me whose quizzical brows seemed to hold some silent "ah-ha" in them. I saw what looked like awe in the faces of my own preservice students seated around a nearby table as they soaked up the inspiring words of this educational "rock star"—words they'd read in print and talked about in the university classroom but now experienced anew. When one of them broke her gaze from Beers to look over toward me, we exchanged in silent smile a shared knowing: "Yes, this *is* what we were talking about in class." And it was more. As I took the moment in I wondered: How can teacher education help pre-service and beginning teachers learn to struggle *through* the challenging "text" of the 21st century classroom?

In the midst of what was familiar, I found myself "seeing"—physical surroundings, teachers, texts—anew. Existing spheres of thought about learning to read and learning to teach shifted then clicked into concentric circles as I considered how teaching, like reading, is a meaning-making process. What we know about teaching readers how to struggle through and make meaning from challenging texts has, in part, come from research that captures the process of how readers—both struggling and proficient—read (e.g., Allen, 1995; Beers, 2003; Langer, 1995, 1998; Smith & Wilhelm, 2002; Wilhelm, 1997, 2008). Is it possible that teacher educators might gain insight into the process of learning to teach by studying the meaning-making process of teachers?

Focus of the Study

Research interests percolate from the convergence of personal and professional experiences, wonderings, and readings (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007; Kilbourn, 2006; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Maxwell, 2005). In the introduction to this chapter, I provided a “snapshot” of a moment when my own teaching and learning experiences began to coalesce with extant theory, research, and scholarship to construct a framework through which I view the classroom as a type of complex, dynamic “text.” Within this framework I have broadened the concept of *text* to include the verbal and non-verbal communicative signs in a classroom. In this study, I have used this framework to re-conceptualize three persistent problems in learning to teach (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald, & Zeichner, 2005)—an apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), complexity (Jackson, 1968, 1990), and enactment (Kennedy, 1999; Simon, 1980)—in light of research on literacy and Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading (1978, 1969, 1994, 2005) in order to understand how beginning teachers make meaning from classroom events².

Statement of the Problem

What teachers know and can do is one of the most important influences on student learning (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Dewey, 1902; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford,

² Rosenblatt (1969, 1978, 1994, 2005) asserted that reading is a transactional “event” that happens when the reader makes meaning from a text in a particular context. The use of the word “event” to describe teachers’ reading their classrooms is further discussed in later sections of this chapter as well as in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this study.

Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald, & Zeichner, 2005; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). In order to successfully influence student learning, though, teachers must learn how to use their knowledge and communicative skills for helping *others* to learn (Christenbury, 2006; Darling-Hammond & LePage, 2005). Prospective teachers who graduate from a college of education have spent four (or more) years studying how to teach others to learn; however, once in the complex context of the classroom (Jackson, 1968, 1990), teachers—especially novice teachers—are faced with the challenge of enacting what they know (Kennedy, 1999; Simon, 1980). As Shulman (1987b) notes, this challenge is exacerbated by the assumptions teachers make about teaching and learning resulting from the sixteen or more years that they have already spent thinking about teaching and learning from the perspective of a *student*—in what Lortie (1975) refers to as an “apprenticeship of observation.” As has been argued by scholars and teacher educators (e.g., Shulman 1986, 1987a, 1987b, Christenbury, 2006), the transition from teacher to student necessitates a shift in thinking. Therefore, although beginning teachers might demonstrate knowledge of both subject matter and pedagogy (Shulman, 1986), it is possible that they still lack the schema to be able to see and to “read” the classroom as a complex, dynamic, and interactive “text” with which they must transact in order to make meaning (Edge, 2009b). There is a need to study how teachers struggle *through* the process of making meaning from challenging classroom “texts” so that teacher leaders and teacher educators can better understand how teachers know and do.

Furthermore, research and scholarship reveal that reading involves a transactional process of meaning making—a process through which readers use language and

experience to construct internal texts as they negotiate meaning and revise their interpretations as they read (e.g., Beers, 2003; Langer 1995, Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005; Smagorinsky, 2008; Tovani, 2000). Scholars also argue that society is an ambiguous cultural text—one its members are continuously reading, interpreting, and creating (Bruner, 1986; Cooper & Simonds, 2007; Gee, 2008; Geertz, 1973; Goodman, 1984), guided by their frame of expectations (Popper, 1962). Nevertheless, we know little about the ways that these two—making meaning through reading literature and making meaning in life—come together in classrooms from the perspective of the teachers—from the perspective of the teachers as readers of the dynamic text of the classroom. I propose that teachers are readers and that they too can be “struggling readers,” learning how to struggle *through* the complexity of the classroom as text, and in this study I investigated *how* teachers know and do by inquiring into how two beginning teachers’ made meaning from classroom events.

Background on the Problem

Drawing from both teacher education and English education—two distinct bodies of knowledge—in this study I have investigated a problem situated in an unexplored space between. In the section that follows, I first provide additional background from extant literature in order to place the problem under investigation in the broader context of the convergence of knowledge and experience in teacher education. Next, I provide an account of recent, collective efforts of scholars, researchers, and practitioners (e.g., Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) to address what has been identified as three persistent problems in learning to teach (Hammerness et al., 2005). After attending to

each of these problems, I then consider these three problems in light of disciplinary knowledge about the transactional nature of meaning-making through reading, writing, and communicating in order to generate understanding about how teachers know and do in the context of their classrooms.

On knowing and doing in teacher education. As previously noted, what teachers know and can do is one of the most important influences on student learning (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald, & Zeichner, 2005; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Accordingly, much educational research and scholarship in the past 25 years (1984-2010) alone has sought to understand the knowledge prospective teachers bring to the study of education, the kinds of knowledge and skills prospective and practicing teachers need, how prospective and practicing teachers acquire and amalgamate their knowledge and teaching practices, as well as how teachers enact their knowledge in the complex environment of classrooms.

Theoretical frameworks for learning to know and to do. Given the importance of teachers' knowledge and skills, generating sound theoretical frameworks to facilitate potential teachers' knowledge and skills acquisition, formation of a professional identity, and trajectory for sustained professional growth remains an enduring concern in teacher education (e.g., Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Bransford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness, & Beckett, 2005; Hammerness, et al., 2005; Howey, 1996; Howey & Zimpher, 1989; Kennedy, 1999; Zeichner, 2008). In English education, where

there is a concern for English language arts teachers' ability to help students comprehend, interpret, and produce various texts (Smagorinsky, 2001; Smagorinsky, 2008) nested within a professional climate which recognizes the ever-broadening definitions and implications of 21st century literacy (Draper et al., 2010; Harste, 2000; Langer, 1987; National Council Teachers of English, 2007, 2008), the direction of educational research has moved toward studying how teachers (and their students) use background knowledge and strategies to construct meaning and interpretations of texts (Wittrock, 2003).

Qualitative research methods such as narrative inquiry have pointed to promising paths for understanding how teachers use and develop knowledge to make meaning in the complex context of classrooms (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, 2005; Florio-Ruane, 2008; Wittrock, 2003). Such understanding could contribute to further developing present and future frameworks for teacher education—frameworks that will aid teachers' developing knowledge and skills to aid student learning. As Wittrock (2003) concludes in a review of both the contemporary and future directions in research on the teaching of English, the combination of a shift toward research examining mental processes and the development of research methods to study meaning construction, “promises to unite the researchers of teaching and the teachers of English in the study of English teaching” (p. 281).

To systematically address what teachers should know and be able to do, The National Academy of Education's (NAE) Committee on Teacher Education (Darling Hammond & Bransford, 2005) compiled generations of existing research from sources such as the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education's (AACTE) *The Knowledge Base for the Beginning Teacher* (Reynolds, 1989), four editions of *The Handbook of Research on Teaching* (Gage, 1963; Richardson, 2001; Travers, 1973;

Wittrock, 1986), three editions of *The Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, & McIntyre, 2008; Huston, Haberman, & Sikula, 1990; Sikula, Buttery, & Guyton, 1996), and specialized volumes such as the *Handbook of Research on Reading*³, and then extended these studies by considering how knowledge about teaching aided by the growing knowledge base on how *teachers learn* can contribute new understandings that will inform the curriculum of teacher education (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005).

The goal of preservice teacher education, posit Bransford, Darling-Hammond, and LePage (2005), “is to provide teachers with the core ideas and broad understanding of teaching and learning that give them traction on their later development” (p. 3).

Accordingly, the collaborative efforts of the NAE Committee on Teacher Education, published in *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do* (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005), focus on a conceptual understanding of teaching and learning that will allow novice teachers to construct conceptual maps needed to effectively navigate classroom landscapes as well as to continue to expand their knowledge and skill base for the duration of their professional lives as “adaptive experts” (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Bransford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness, & Beckett, 2005; Hammerness, et al., 2005; Hatano & Inagki, 1986; National Research Council, 2000, 2004) who can be flexible, reflective, and metacognitive for purposes of rethinking their practice, ever adapting in their

³ The collection and codification of this research has informed efforts such as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards’ development of teaching standards and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, as well as professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005).

expertise (Bransford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness, & Beckett, 2005; Hammerness, et al., 2005).

Adaptive expertise, as described by the National Research Council (2000, 2004), is what Bransford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness, and Beckett (2005) identify as a “gold standard for learning” (p. 49) in teaching. The basic premises of adaptive expertise, as understood in the context of teacher education, acknowledge that: (1) “the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for optimal teaching are not something that can be fully developed in preservice teacher education programs” (Hammerness, et al., 2005, p. 358), and that (2) “[t]o successfully prepare effective teachers, teacher education should lay a foundation for lifelong learning” which enables teachers to “be able to learn from their own practice as well as the insights of other teachers and researchers” (Hammerness et al., 2005, p. 359). Recommendations stemming from the collective and comprehensive work of the NAE Committee on Teacher Education (Darling-Hammond, 2005) point to the use of conceptual frameworks to guide teachers, especially preservice and beginning teachers, to organize their thinking and knowledge in a way that will promote the kind of life-long learning that aids adaptive expertise (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005). The framework guiding my thinking throughout this investigation views teachers as readers and meaning-makers who can, like readers of printed texts, develop metacognition and learn from their own and others’ reading and meaning-making of their classrooms as texts.

Three persistent problems in learning to teach. Broadly speaking, *how* teachers learn, develop into professionals, and actually do what it is that they do in classrooms

have been persistent, perplexing inquiry puzzles for researchers and teacher educators (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald, & Zeichner, 2005). Karen Hammerness (2005) and her colleagues from the NAE's Committee on Teacher Education reviewed what they identified to be classic and contemporary research and theory on teacher learning and development. Keeping in mind that the goal of preservice teacher education is to help prospective teachers lay a foundation for lifelong learning that helps teachers develop into "professionals who are adaptive experts" (p. 359), they first attended to "three widely documented problems in learning to teach" (p. 359): 1) the problem of an "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975) refers to the problem of learning to "think like a teacher" (Hammerness, et al., 2005, p. 359); 2) the "problem of enactment" (Kennedy, 1999) refers to the problem of teachers' putting what they know into action; and (3) the "problem of complexity" (Jackson, 1968, 1990) refers to the dynamic nature of classroom life that demands teachers' ability to make minute-by-minute and day-by-day decisions in order to juggle numerous academic and social goals at once (Hammerness, et al., 2005; Jackson, 1968, 1990). The NAE Committee on Teacher Education's report, *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do* (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) asserts that effective teacher education programs set the groundwork for lifelong learning by preparing professional educators to continue to learn from their own practice as well as from the insights of their professional community and from research (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Bransford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness, & Beckett, 2005; Hammerness, et al., 2005). Simply stated, teachers do not

learn all of what they need to know during the limited duration of a teacher education program (Hammerness, et al., 2005). Beginning teachers are still learning to teach.

In this study I contributed to the collective efforts of teacher educators (e.g., Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) by attending to long-standing problems in learning to teach in light of disciplinary knowledge, specifically Rosenblatt's transactional theory (1978, 1994, 2005), in order to generate additional understanding through exploration of a framework that potentially helps prospective and beginning teachers to become adaptive experts who learn from their own and others' practice and who think metacognitively about their teaching. In the sections that follow, I provide additional background on each of these persistent problems in preparing teachers before connecting these problems to the disciplinary knowledge base of English language arts through Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading (1978, 1994, 2005). Chapters Two and Five further explicate these connections.

An apprenticeship of observation. Prospective teachers enter the study of teaching with preconceptions about what teaching entails (Christenburry, 2006; Hammerness, et al., 2005; Lortie, 1975; Shulman, 1987b). Unlike other professions, people who learn to teach learn it after observing teaching for nearly 20,000 hours from the perspective of the student desk (Lortie, 1975; Shulman, 1987b). Bransford, Darling-Hammond, and LePage (2005) liken this limited perspective to a music lover sitting in the audience watching a conductor direct a concert:

To a music lover watching a concert from the audience, it would be easy to believe that a conductor has one of the easiest jobs in the world. There he stands,

waving his arms in time with the music, and the orchestra produces glorious sounds, to all appearances quite spontaneously. Hidden from the audience—especially from the musical novice—are the conductor’s abilities to read and interpret all the parts at once, to play several instruments and understand the capacities of many more, to organize and coordinate the disparate parts, to motivate and communicate with all of the orchestra members. In the same way that conducting looks like hand-waving to the uninitiated, teaching looks simple from the perspective of students who see a person talking and listening, handing out papers, and giving assignments. Invisible in both of these performances are the many kinds of knowledge, unseen plans, and backstage moves—the skunkworks, if you will—that allow a teacher to purposefully move a group of students from one set of understandings and skills to quite another over the space of many months. (p.1)

Many teacher educators, researchers and scholars (e.g., Christenbury, 2006; Hammerness, et al., 2005; Shumlan, 1987b; Tobin, 1991, 2004) argue that part of what makes becoming a teacher so difficult is that teachers make assumptions about teaching based on their own sixteen-year “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975) as students. The problem of an apprenticeship of observation refers to the need for prospective and beginning teachers to be able to “think like a teacher” (Hammerness et al., 2005, p. 359). As Lortie (1975) noted in his seminal sociological study, *Schoolteacher*, students’ apprenticeship of observation limits their understanding of teaching because students are not privy to their teachers’ thinking. What they learn about teaching from this student-oriented perspective is simplistic. It is “intuitive and imitative

rather than explicit and analytical; it is based on individual personalities rather than pedagogical principles” (p. 62). Not privy to the teacher’s internal decision-making or reflection, students watch their teachers from a limited vantage point that Lortie (1975) likens to an audience watching a play. Students see the teacher front and center on stage; they are not invited to view teaching from the wings. “Thus, they are not pressed to place the teacher’s actions in a pedagogically oriented framework” (62).

For beginning teachers, entering the profession with an apprenticeship of observation often means that teaching is more difficult than they originally perceived, and that these teachers’ orientation to teaching is often biographical rather than pedagogical (Edge, 2008b; Lortie, 1975).

Transitioning from being an “expert” student to becoming a novice teacher necessitates that teachers think about, understand, and move beyond their own set of experiences as learners in order to conceptualize learning in ways that help *others* to learn (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Hammerness et al., 2005). In her book, *Making the Journey: Being and Becoming a Teacher of English Language Arts* (2006), former National Council Teachers of English [NCTE] president, Leila Christenbury included a chapter titled, “What It Takes to Be a Teacher.” In this chapter Christenbury, like many other teacher educators who write textbooks, shares her own beginnings as a teacher. She shares what she describes as a “jarring, dislocating moment in [her] early teaching career” (p. 37), a moment in her transition from being an expert student and becoming a novice teacher:

I looked around me, down the hall, in the building where I was now teaching—it was, yes, that some place, that familiar, alien, scary place: school. What in the world, I wondered in a sick rush, was I doing *as a teacher in a school?* (p. 37)

She then addresses prospective English teachers:

[T]he shift from student learner to teacher learner is a tough one. It is no small exaggeration that the world looks very different on the other side of the desk, and for some novices it is almost a loss of innocence to confront the classroom with the chalk-board *behind* you. Making that transition is a difficult one under the best of circumstances....the shift from a member of the class to the principal organizer of the class is not automatic or, as in my case, a graceful event. (p. 37)

Christenbury builds upon her point by writing, “Becoming a teacher sometimes involves unlearning what you know or think you know—and possibly involves recognizing that what you may assume about teaching is, as T.S. Eliot writes, precisely what you do not know” (p. 37).

Beginning teachers’ preconceptions about teaching based on their sixteen or more years as students constructs a stance toward teaching that is limited.

Enactment. In addition to thinking like a teacher, beginning teachers also struggle to “put what they know into action” (Hammernes, et al., 2005, p. 359)—a problem Kennedy (1999) refers to as a “problem of enactment” (p. 70). Referring to Lortie’s (1975) sociological study, Kennedy (1999) explains that students enter the study of teaching with an apprenticeship of observation. This apprenticeship is “an invisible element in learning to teach” (p. 55), for prospective teachers use their experiences in

primary and secondary schools as a frame of reference for what teaching is supposed to be like. Said another way, “[t]his apprenticeship gives teachers a frame of reference that allows them to interpret their experiences and gives them some ideas of how to respond to them (p. 55). Kennedy asserts that teacher educators work to change prospective teachers’ frames of reference—a change that she likens to Kuhn’s (1970) notion of paradigm shifts in scientific communities. Nevertheless, even though novices may be persuaded by teacher educators to shift their thinking in order to view teaching from a different frame of reference, it is possible that novice teachers “will not know what actually to do to enact these new ideas.” (p. 71). Kennedy explains,

To pursue any particular teaching idea or ideal, teachers need to be able to recognize particular situations as calling for that particular idea. Teachers may acquire numerous important ideas about teaching when they are studying in college, and they may even have some visions of what to do to enact these ideas yet be unable to recognize situations that call for these ideas. (p. 71)

Kennedy argues that in addition to new frames of reference, teacher educators must also provide novices with opportunities to learn situated knowledge, that is, knowledge that is understood in specific situations, in order to do or enact what they know. In Kennedy’s discussion of findings from the longitudinal, large scale Teacher Education and Learning to Teach [TELT] study (National Research Council on Teacher Education, 1988), she indicates how some novices recognized the ideas that their teacher educators espoused, yet they remained frustrated because they were not able to enact what they knew in order to become better teachers. The problem of enactment acknowledges that there is—as Simon (1980) noted—a difference between “knowing that” and “knowing how” (cited in

Hammerness et al., 2005, p. 359). Learning how to think and to act professionally is challenging for beginning teachers (Hammerness, et al., 2005).

Complexity. Classrooms are dynamic places where teaching and learning happen amid many intersecting facets of living: remembering, wondering, connecting and questioning; assessing, growing, thinking and communicating; feeling, fearing, celebrating and correcting; hoping, hurting, relating and isolating. Often cited, McDonald (1992) wrote about the complex nature of teaching:

Real teaching happens within a wild triangle of relations—among teacher, students, subject—and the points of this triangle shift continuously. What shall I teach amid all that I should teach? How can I grasp it myself so that my grasping might enable theirs? What are they thinking and feeling—toward me, toward each other, toward the thing I am trying to teach? How near should I come, how far off should I stay? How much clutch, how much gas? (p. 1)

Teachers' juggling numerous curricular demands amidst the academic and social needs of many students simultaneously necessitates minute-by-minute and day-by-day decisions (Hammerness, et al., 2005; Jackson, 1968, 1990). The ability to think metacognitively about these decisions is an important aspect of developing adaptive expertise (Hammerness, et al., 2005).

To a new teacher who has spent sixteen or more years thinking about school from his/her own personal experiences as a learner, the ability to think about multiple students' needs simultaneously, to contemplate how those many needs relate to curricular demands, and to navigate those individual needs within the dynamics of a group is not

automatic. Research reports that novice teachers, especially, demonstrate a simplistic understanding and a rigid, discrete approach to meeting the more generic needs of a class that is perceived as a single unit of learners. Expert teachers, on the other hand, are more likely to understand the complexity of teaching; they demonstrate flexibility in instructional approaches and are more likely to view the students as individual learners with particular needs (Berliner, 1986; Burke, 2008; Burke & Krajicek, 2006; Calderhead, 1991; Hogan, Rabinowitz, & Craven, 2003; Koehler, 1985; Kowalchuk, 1993; Lortie, 1975; Schunk, 2008; Shulman, 1986).

While it might be nice, or at least convenient, if novice teachers were given the ability to think about and to navigate the complexity of the classroom along with the key to their classroom door, several scholars, for instance Schön (1983), have argued that information needed to make professional decisions emerges in the context of practice. Learning which strategies work with particular groups of students, or learning how individual students are or are not understanding a particular topic best emerges while working with both groups of and individual students (Hammerness, et al., 2005).

Citing Sawyer (2003), Hammerness and her NAE colleagues (2005) note that teaching includes “disciplined improvisations” which allow for new ideas and actions to emerge in the context of ongoing classroom interactions. They also argue that in order to become adaptive experts who can systematically think about the complexity of the classroom, teachers need to acquire metacognitive habits of mind that guide their decisions and allow them to reflect on their practice in a way that promotes ongoing development.

Considering the problems in the context of learning to teach English.

Although researchers might separate the three problems—an apprenticeship of observation, enactment, and complexity—in order to examine or to discuss them as discrete variables, novice teachers often experience these three challenges simultaneously. I observed the relationship among the problem of an apprenticeship of observation, the problem of enactment, and the problem of complexity in investigations of novice teachers' perceptions of teaching (e.g., Edge, 2008b, 2008c, 2009b).

In a multiple-case study using interviews and classroom observations to investigate how stance⁴ guided teaching experiences, I (Edge, 2008c, 2009b) reported that participants' life histories as successful students appeared to guide their “frame of expectations” (Popper, 1962, p. 47) toward teaching during their internship. For instance, one intern prepared her “low-level” students for the state writing exam by referring to her own experience with phrases such as “When I scored a six on my [state writing exam], I...”. The primary purpose of their internship seemed to be mastering another series of university assignments rather than teaching learners. A successful internship, as one participant described it, was “fulfilling the requirements set by [the university], establishing a good rapport with students and colleagues, [and] learning about the system from within” (Edge, 2009b, p. 31).

Participants' frameworks as successful students seemed to create tensions for these novice teachers when they were in the complex context of the classroom trying to

⁴ This study investigated stance as revealed in three pre-service teachers' expressed perceptions of their roles in English language arts classrooms during their full-time internship.

enact what they had learned about teaching. Sounding exasperated and incredulous, one participant in the Edge (2008c) study remarked, “I *know* I’m not supposed to use writing as a punishment...but here I am, punishing my kids with writing!” Similar to the findings of the TELT (1988) study (cited in Kennedy, 1999), this novice was able to recognize that what she observed herself doing was not in accord with the ideals she had come to accept and aspire to during her preparation in a college of education; nevertheless, she expressed frustration with her choices. This same participant was also aware of the dissonance between the kind of teacher she wanted to be—a mentor and a guide, the way she claimed her most influential teachers were to her—and the roles she actually played as a teacher during her internship. As she explained,

In my [advanced] classes, and I know this isn’t right, but unfortunately, this is the foot I started out on, and now it’s going to be difficult to correct it, I am “cool Mrs. Thompson” who tries to do fun activities...[The students] look at me like I’m their peer. (Edge, 2009b, p. 11)

Unlike the eleventh-grade honors classes where she felt she must be “Cool Mrs. Thompson,” in her ninth grade remedial English class, the intern described her role as a “warden,” someone who had to be the locus of control and “the gatekeeper of knowledge” for students:

...I’m a drill sergeant, a jail warden, prison guard, wicked witch, and, uh, behavior corrector, manners enforcer, “No, we don’t pull on girls’ hair,” “Sit back down in your seat,” “Don’t use ‘aint’,” “Don’t use the *F* word in my classroom,” and so on and so forth. (Edge, 2009b, p. 16)

Neither the “cool peer” nor the “drill sergeant” were “right” teaching roles according to what this novice knew about teaching from both her own experiences as a student and from her study of education; yet amid the complex dynamics of classroom life, the participant struggled to enact the kind of teaching role to which she aspired.

In another case, an intern and her cooperating teacher both expressed frustration with the intern’s inability to successfully prepare lessons for the students in a middle school language arts classroom. Both the intern and the cooperating teacher relayed the enthusiasm with which the intern began her full-time internship. The intern brought in a two-inch binder filled with a unit plan she was proud to have created as an assignment for a university methods class. Nevertheless, the plans that the intern successfully prepared in the context of a university course did not directly apply to the students she was teaching. While an experienced teacher might have been able to adapt the pedagogy and content she knew in order to create a unit of instruction that related to the needs of the students she was charged with teaching, this novice expressed a feeling of overwhelm in her oft repeated, “I don’t know. I don’t *know!*” when it came to using what she had learned for purposes of helping others to learn (Edge 2008c). She commented that she had always been a successful student but now feared failure and just wanted her cooperating teacher to tell her what to do (personal communication, 2008).

In an interview study focused on the sociological nature of teaching (Edge, 2008b), a second-year high school English language arts teacher expressed that the complexity of the classroom is challenging for novice teachers when he shared the crux of the challenge he faced in his first two years of teaching: “She just made it look *so*

easy.” The participant explained how when he observed his mentor teacher, she made teaching seem effortless. He hinted at the seamlessness of his mentor teacher’s class, the fluidity of her lessons, and the interest of her students. However, in comparison, his teaching experiences felt disjointed, filled with doubt, conflict, resistance, and disruptions; planning was a day-to-day series of things to “get through.” Things were just “different...harder,” he confessed. He stressed how difficult it was to anticipate and understand the group dynamics of his classes. A year after the interview, the participant quit teaching to manage a retail store that sells mattresses.

From these investigations (Edge 2008b, 2008c, & 2009b), I began to observe that documented problems in learning to teach are facets of the whole, complex, process of transitioning from student to teacher. I also began to consider how beginning teachers could be viewed as “readers” struggling to make meaning from their classrooms as texts.

The assumption of reading and writing the classroom as a text. After the 2006 FCTE conference, I began reviewing scholarship and research to inform my initial questions and concerns about teachers being “struggling” readers of their classrooms as texts. I soon began to notice that numerous scholars either implied that teachers read their classrooms or provided readers of their texts with the meanings they made from having read their classrooms as texts (e.g., Allen, 1995; Beers, 2003; Burke, 2008; Christenbury, 2006; Pearl, 1994; Tobin 1991, 2004 Wilhelm, 1997, 2008). Nevertheless, these statements appeared to be tacit assumptions that had not yet been systematically explored or explicitly connected to problems in learning to teach. In this study I explored these assumptions—that teachers read their classrooms and compose new understandings,

lessons, assessments, or visions for teaching in response to what they read—through investigating how teachers make meaning of classroom events in order to contribute new understanding to how teachers know and do.

An example of this assumption may be found in a textbook from a former president of the National Council Teachers of English (NCTE), Christenbury's (2006) *Making the Journey: Being and Becoming a Teacher of English Language Arts*. Listing some generalizations about the characteristics of good teachers, Christenbury states successful teachers have the ability to observe the classroom and to draw out appropriate conclusions in order to make judgments about future planning. Christenbury writes:

Students often tell teachers all they need to know if indeed the teachers have, as the biblical aphorism tells us, the ears to hear and the eyes to see. . . . It is important to recognize the overt *text* of what our students say and the covert *subtext* of what they are saying. (p. 38)

Christenbury's comment implies that teachers read the text and subtext of spoken and unspoken classroom communication. She also implies that this communication is a crucial aspect upon which teachers base their instructional decisions. Furthermore, Christenbury's (2006) writing implies that "reading" the classroom "text" plays a crucial part in constructing one's identity as a teacher. In the story of her beginnings as a teacher, Christenbury places the following statement between her sense of being overwhelmed and the moment of epiphany when she first began to really understand teaching:

I began to watch my students' reactions and body language and expressions, convinced that actually the key to what to do was right there in the class, right in

front of me—if only I could clear my eyes and just *see* it. I was experiencing something very intense, and I was struggling to make sense of it. (p. 2)

Christenbury (2006) implies that effective teachers observe and interpret or “read” communicative signs or “texts” in their classrooms and use that reading to guide their understanding of teaching; however, how teachers learn to read and make sense of their classrooms is not explored, only reported. In designing this study I envisioned novice teachers as readers who are, as Christenbury stated, “struggling to make sense of it” (p. 2); that is, novice teachers are readers who are struggling through their readings of their classrooms as texts in order to make sense of what is there and to know how to proceed. In this study I investigated how teachers know and do by examining how two novice teachers read and made meaning from their classrooms as texts.

Classroom communication. Support for Christenbury’s assertion that verbal and nonverbal communication are central components of teaching and learning may be found in the work of instructional communication scholars (Cooper & Simonds, 2007), cognitive psychologists (e.g., Bruner, 1986), linguists (e.g., Gee, 1985, 2008), anthropologists (e.g., Geertz, 1973), educational philosophers (e.g., Dewey, 1938; Greene, 1983; Polkinghorne, 1988; Popper, 1962), researchers (e.g., Brochner, 2005; Clandinin, 1985, 1986; Clandinin & Connolly, 2000) educational theorists (e.g., Eisner, 1985; Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978, 2005), teacher researchers (e.g., Allen, 1995), teacher educators (e.g., Burke, 2008; Christenbury, 2006; Perl, 1994; Smagorinsky, 2008; Tobin, 1991, 2004), literacy experts (Langer, 1995) and practitioners.

For instance, the research of instructional communication scholars emphasizes the centrality of communication in classrooms and suggests that “teaching effectiveness is intrinsically related to the way one communicates” (Cooper & Simonds, 2007, p. 12). Cooper and Simonds (2007) define classroom communication as “the verbal and nonverbal transactions between teachers and students and between or among students” (p. 8). Communication, they explain, is a transactional process between people who make meanings through the words and behaviors that are used to symbolize experiences and perceptions. As Hurt, Scott, and McCroskey (1978) observe, “The difference between knowing and teaching is communication” (as cited in Cooper & Simonds, 2007, p. 3). In classrooms, where communication is central, even intrinsic to effective teaching, and where communication is viewed as a transaction between people who interpret both words and behaviors to make meaning, it is logical for Christenbury to assert that effective teachers observe and interpret (or “read”) both the text and subtext of what students say and do in order to draw conclusions about their teaching and to guide future planning.

Teaching as reading and writing. The transactional nature of language resides at the core of classroom communication, as defined in the preceding section; it also constitutes the core of a transactional theory of reading and writing⁵ (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005). Briefly, Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading states that reading is an event or transaction between a reader and a text in a particular context. *Text* refers to a set of signs capable of being interpreted (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005; Smagorinsky,

⁵ Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading and writing is reviewed in detail in Chapter Two of this study.

2001; Witte, 1992). *Meaning* is what happens in the transaction between the reader and the text. Writing too is an event, a transaction; a writer transacts with his/her personal, social, and cultural environment (Rosenblatt, 1994, 2005).

In his book, *Reading Student Writing* (2004), Tobin asserts that “teaching is a way of reading and writing. Students learn to teach through, first, learning to read the classroom and, second, learning to write themselves within that classroom” (p. 133).

Tobin also argues that there is a need to “textualize the classroom” (p. 131). As a composition scholar who prepares graduates to teach composition, he calls for teacher educators to “define and articulate some of the various texts and various readings that grow out of everyday classroom situations” (p. 131). In an era of critical theory which positions just about anything as a text to be studied, Tobin asks,

what are we in composition and pedagogy to make of colleagues who read *everything* as a text—*except* their own classrooms and pedagogical methods? It seems a comically stunning act of denial, like Freud asserting that everything is a phallic symbol—*except* his own cigar. (129)

Synthesis of Background on the Problem

The transition from being an expert student to becoming a novice teacher is challenging. After thinking about teaching from the limited perspective of a student for sixteen years or more, beginning teachers must shift their frame of thinking from a student-oriented frame to a pedagogically oriented frame in order to think about how to help *others* to learn. In addition to needing to think like a teacher, actually *doing* or

enacting what they know presents additional challenges to novice teachers—especially once they are in the complex environment of the classroom where the nature of teaching and learning necessitates that teachers make minute-by-minute and day-by-day decisions in order to juggle curricular demands amid the academic and social needs of many students simultaneously. Beginning teachers are still learning to teach. Given the notion that communication is a central component to effective teaching, teachers’ inclination to observe and interpret, or read, classrooms in order to guide their teaching is logical if not instinctual. Since developing metacognition and pedagogical frameworks for guiding teachers’ decisions are crucial aspects of teachers’ developing adaptive expertise, research which draws from English education and teacher education in order to investigate how teachers read and make sense of the spoken and unspoken communication in their classrooms could inform existing problems in learning to teach and could inform the existing knowledge base of what and how teachers know and do by generating knowledge that aids teachers’ metacognition and contributing to frameworks for preparing and guiding teachers.

Statement of the Purpose

I conducted this narrative inquiry in order to inquire into how two beginning English teachers made meaning from classroom events. Since narratives organize and communicate the meaning of human experiences, I collected the stories participants told and lived about their classroom experiences in order to then analyze and describe participants’ meaning-making. Understanding how novice teachers make meaning from

classroom events offers new insights into how teachers know and do and offers contributions to frameworks for teacher education.

Theoretical Framework

Classroom Literacy: Teachers as readers, writers, communicators, and meaning makers. Couched in the concept of the classroom as a type of living, dynamic “text” (e.g., Edge, 2008a; Edge, 2008b; Edge, 2009; Tobin, 2004; Witte, 1992), this study is guided by a framework which acknowledges the transactional and communicative nature of teaching and learning (Allen, 1995; Cooper & Simonds, 2007; Dewey & Bentley, 1949; Greene, 1983; Hurt, Scott, & McCroskey, 1987; Langer, 1987; Rosenblatt, 1978; Rosenblatt, 2005a; Rosenblatt, 2005b; Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Through the *Classroom Literacy* theoretical framework, I view teachers as readers and composers of classrooms as “text.” This text is not the fixed black print on white pages that more traditional notions of the word *text* might conjure. Rather, *text* in the context of the classroom is broadly defined as everyday verbal and nonverbal communicative signs. The classroom text is dynamic.

As readers, teachers observe and interpret various communicative signs or the *text* of the classroom. This process of reading and interpreting the classroom text is a transactional act of meaning-making making (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005) in which the teacher reads the *external text* (Beers, 2003)—in this case, the audible, observable and affective verbal, nonverbal, and sensed texts—and through interpretation—or more specifically, through transaction—creates or composes an *internal text* (Beers, 2003). Borrowing (Durkin’s (1993) terms that Beers (2003) uses to describe a reader’s process

of making meaning of printed text, the *external* text is the printed, fixed, words on a page. The *internal text* refers to a reader's ongoing interpretation of that printed text. As a reader transacts with the printed text, she or he interprets and re-interprets the text as the reader progresses through the printed text. Said another way, as one reads a printed external text, she or he adjusts her or his interpretation of what the text means as she or he proceeds through the text.

According to Rosenblatt (1978, 1994, 2005), this interpretive process of reading a text is guided by the reader's "personal linguistic-experiential reservoir" (2005, p. 5). This ongoing process of meaning-making is consistent with a transactional view of reading, and it also describes the meaning-making process teachers engaged in as they read, interpret, and re-interpret the various signs and patterns of classroom communication here called the *classroom text* in the Classroom Literacy framework.

Sociocognitive conceptions of literacy view literacy as thinking like a literate person (Langer, 1987, 2011a, 2011b) and using literacy skills to acquire and construct new knowledge (Harste, 2000; McKenna & Robinson, 2009; National Council Teachers of English [NCTE], 2008). In the context of teaching, literacy practices particular to teachers might include their ability to think like a teacher and use pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) to read their classrooms as texts and to compose understandings of teaching and learning based on that reading to guide future actions and thinking. *Classroom Literacy* might include a teacher's ability to read and make meaning of specific classroom situations, including reading classroom discourse, making meaning of teachable moments, connecting theory and practice, constructing scaffolds to aid students' understandings, questioning and evaluating student progress, "reading between

the lines” of students’ verbal and nonverbal language, and thinking critically and metacognitively about the process of teaching. In the *Classroom Literacy* framework, teachers are readers, writers, and communicators who acquire and use literate thinking and skills for educative purposes.

In the Classroom Literacy framework, (a) teachers, like readers, draw from their linguistic-experiential reservoir (Rosenblatt, 2005) to guide their process of interpreting and understanding classroom events; (b) teachers, like readers, are guided by the stances they adopt; (c) teachers, like readers, compose understanding in social contexts; (d) teaching, like reading, is a transactional experience; (e) and teacher education, like English education, can benefit from studying the meaning-making processes of “readers.” Classroom Literacy attends to teachers’ cognitive and social processes of meaningful understanding. Classroom literacy also acknowledges that as a transactional experience, teaching can shape a teacher’s professional identity, knowledge, and view of others, similar to how the exploration of literature through reading transactionally influences one’s sense of self, the text, and the world beyond (Rosenblatt, 1938). Finally, just as scholars holding a transactional view of reading argue that readers compose new texts as they read (e.g., Rosenblatt, 1978, 2005; Smagorinsky, 2008), teachers compose stories of their teaching experiences.

Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading (1978, 1994, 2005), John Dewey’s transactional view of experience in his philosophy of educative experience (1938), and what Jerome Bruner (1985, 1986) refers to as a narrative mode of reasoning connect the knowledge base of reading to the knowledge base of teaching and teacher education.

How this scholarship connects the aforementioned bodies of knowledge is further explored in Chapter Two.

In the sections that follow, I first provide a short description of two tenets of the Classroom Literacy theoretical framework, meaning and experience. The transactional paradigm in which these two tenets are situated allows for scholars and researchers to make connections between the disciplinary knowledge bases of reading in English language arts and teacher education. Following the description of each facet, I briefly note its position in the Classroom Literacy framework. To conclude this section, I provide Figure 3, a three-dimensional schematic of the relationship of meaning and experience in the Classroom Literacy theoretical framework. Chapter Two of this study provides additional background on both meaning and experience as they relate to the Classroom Literacy framework.

The transactional meaning-making relationship between a reader, a text, and a context. In any reading situation, there exists a reader, a text, and a context. The term *reader* implies that there is a transaction with a text. A reader makes meaning when she or he transacts with a text in a particular context (Rosenblatt, 1969, 1978, 1994, 2005). As Rosenblatt (2005) wrote, “Every reading act is an event, or a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular pattern of signs, a text, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context” (p. 7). When a reader, a text, and a context come together in a transactional event, there is a dynamic and powerful moment of meaning making—a poem Rosenblatt (1978, 2005) has called it. This relationship is represented in Figure 1.

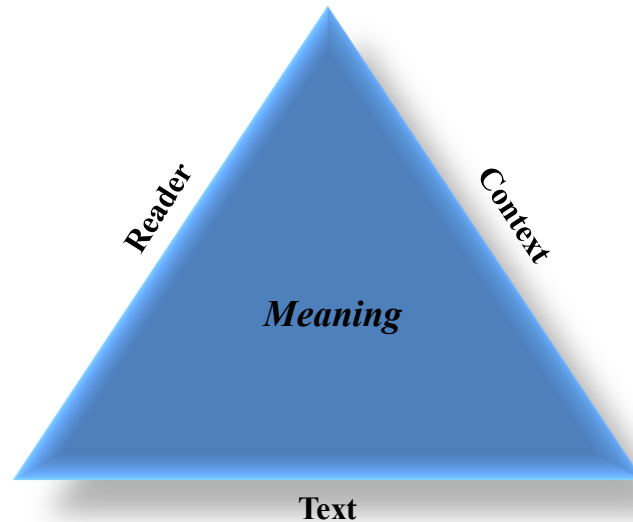


Figure 1: Meaning Making

In the Classroom Literacy framework, I recognize that in a classroom there are many readers of many texts. Some of these texts are printed words, but many of them are spoken, enacted, and represented in the context of a classroom. Teachers and students make meaning from these many texts when they transact with them.

Transactional view of experience. In a transactional paradigm, a knower, knowing, and the known existing in a kind of ecological relationship; humans are a part of the world they observe not separate from it (Bohr, 1959; Dewey & Bentley, 1949; Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005). Educative experience, according to John Dewey (1938), has a transactional quality to it. An individual's experience is both influenced by the environment in which it takes place, and it also influences that environment.

Reading as a transactional meaning-making experience. In a transactional paradigm (Dewey & Bentley, 1949; Rosenblatt, 1978; Rosenblatt, 2005a; Rosenblatt, 2005b), reading, learning, and teaching share a common theory of meaning making:

Rosenblatt wrote that a reader's transactional experience with a text creates meaning; Dewey wrote that a learner's interactive experience with her or his environment creates an educative experience. In the Classroom Literacy framework, teaching is a transactional experience created by a teacher's transaction with a classroom⁶ as a text. Teaching is a transactional event in the moment of a classroom—a dynamic interaction between a particular teacher's linguistic and experiential repertoires and the verbal and nonverbal texts within the lifespace of the classroom.

Narrative mode of reasoning. Jerome Bruner (1985, 1986) has written that there are two primary modes of cognition, each providing a different way of ordering experience: the paradigmatic or logo-scientific mode of reasoning and the narrative mode of reasoning. Whereas the paradigmatic mode of knowing is concerned with logical reasoning and scientific procedures for verification and empirical proof, the narrative mode of knowing is concerned with verisimilitude, the human condition, human intentions and the shifts and consequences of human action, and finds meaning in the connections between events (Bruner, 1985, 1986; Smagorinsky, 2008; Richardson, 1990).

Literacy experts and scholars (e.g., Keene & Zimmerman, 1997, 2007; Langer, 1998, 1995; Tovani, 2000; Wilhelm, 1997, 2008) have built upon the transactional nature of reading, writing, and communicating to describe how readers' meaning making from texts is constructed through the connections readers make: connections between self, text, and world (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997). Making these connections, literacy experts

⁶ The word "classroom" is not limited to the physical space of a room; rather, it refers to the entire makeup of a classroom—the physical, mental, emotional, relational, curricular, and procedural makeup of a classroom.

assert, leads readers toward a meaningful understanding or comprehension of texts. This view is represented in Figure 2.

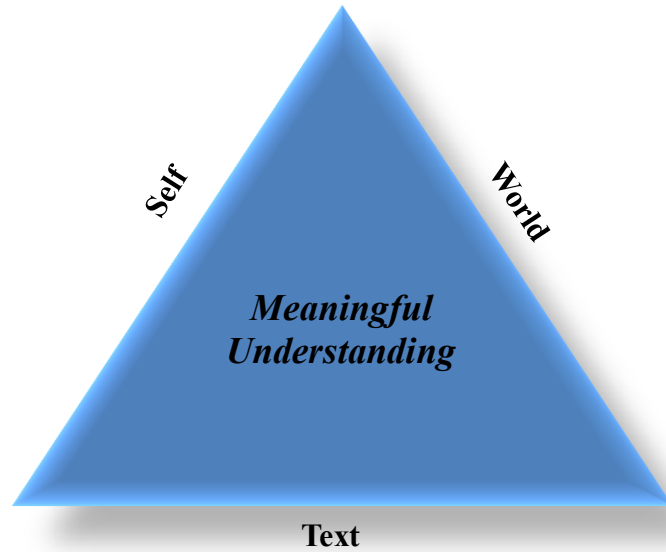


Figure 2: Meaningful Understanding

Guided by the Classroom Literacy theoretical framework, I approach this narrative inquiry envisioning “readers”—students, teachers, researchers, and readers of research alike—make meaning by transacting with a text in a particular context, and they arrive at a meaningful understanding by making connections—connections within texts, to other texts, between events, as well as connections between one’s self, others, and the world. This relationship is represented in Figure 3 below.

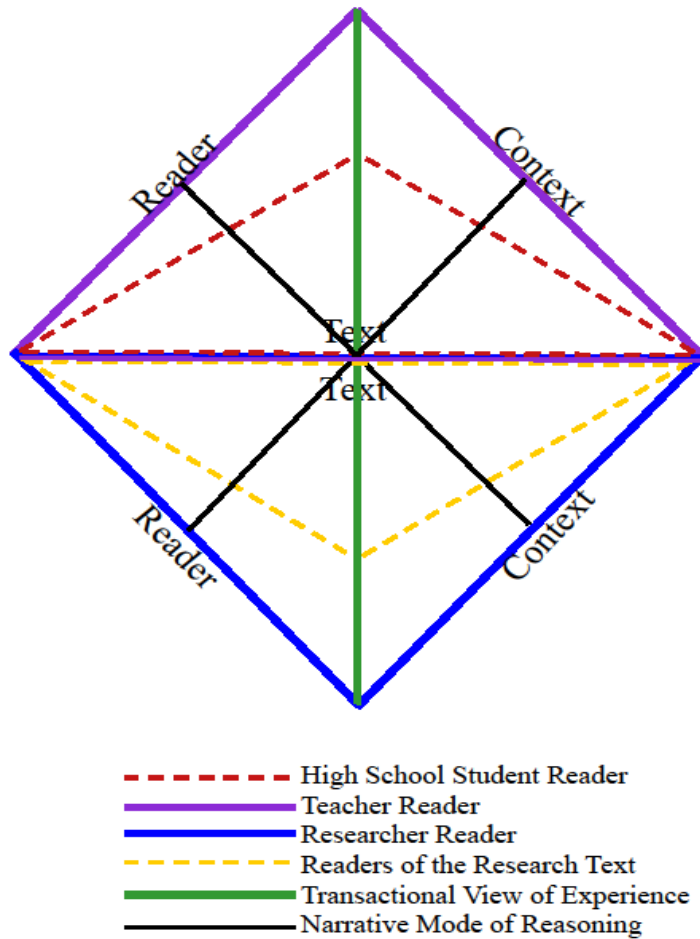


Figure 3: *Classroom Literacy Three-Dimensional Meaning-Making Construct*

Significance of the Study

In 1996 the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future published *What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future*. The crux of their report is captured in a single sentence: “What teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn” (p. 6). Research, policy, and scholarship produced in the fourteen-year wake of this statement reveals that *what* teachers know and can do has mattered to a

variety of educational constituents. What is somewhat less evident in extant literature is *how* teachers know and do. This study investigated *how* teachers know and do by inquiring into how two beginning teachers' make meaning from classroom events.

Narratives are “a primary way individuals make sense of experience,” writes Riessman, “this is especially true of difficult life transitions” (1993, p. 4). For beginning teachers, transitioning from a lifetime of school experienced from the student side of the desk to being the teacher can be a difficult transition—a transition that Christenbury (2006) likens to a “loss of innocence” (p. 37). Since “[l]ife’s narratives are the context for making meaning of school situations” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 3), inquiring into beginning teachers’ stories offers teacher educators a window into better understanding how teachers make meaning from teaching experiences during the transitional stage of beginning teaching.

This study (a) contributes awareness to understanding teachers’ learning and meaning-making experiences as they transition from being expert students to novice teachers, (b) informs the ongoing development of frameworks for teacher education, and (c) address a gap in the literature by extending notions of literacy to include the “classroom literacy” practices of teachers. Because I agree with the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) that “[w]hat teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn” (p. 6), this study sought to contribute to the existing knowledge bases of educational research, teacher education, and English education by helping to make visible the largely invisible process of *how* two beginning English teachers know and do.

Research Questions

The following central question (Creswell, 2007) guided my inquiry in this narrative investigation:

1. How do two beginning English language arts teachers make meaning from classroom events?

In order to address this central question, I sought to answer the following sub-questions: (a) What stories do two beginning English teachers live and tell about their classroom experiences?; (b) What are the contexts of these two beginning English teachers' stories?; (c) What critical events or turning points do they identify in their stories?; and (d) What knowledge, language, or experiences do they use to make meaning from classroom events?

Furthermore, in the spirit of bracketing myself, the researcher, *into* the study and providing an account of who I am in relationship to the study and study participants (Campesino, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Connolly, 2007; Connolly & Reilly, 2007), a second question also guided my inquiry:

2. How do I, as a beginning teacher educator and educational researcher, make meaning from research events?

To address this second question, I considered the following sub-questions: (a) What research stories do I live and tell?; (b) What are the contexts of these research stories?; (c)

What critical events or turning points do I identify?; (d) What knowledge, language, or experiences do I use to make meaning from research events?

Definition of Terms

I have defined the central terms in my research questions in the following manner:

Beginning English language arts teacher. In this study, *beginning teacher* refers to someone who has three or fewer years of full-time teaching experience. *English language arts* refers to the secondary level (middle or high school) discipline (subject area) of English language arts and reading.

Making meaning. Meaning is a transactional event. I define *making meaning* in relationship to Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading and writing (1978, 1994, 2005). As Rosenblatt (2005) wrote, "Meaning—whether scientific or aesthetic, whether a poem or a scientific report—happens during the interplay between particular signs and a particular reader at a particular time and place" (p. x). People make meaning during a transaction. A reader and a text are not fixed objects acting on each other; rather, they are "two aspects of a total dynamic situation. The 'meaning' does not reside ready-made 'in' the text or 'in' the reader but happens or comes into being during the transaction between reader and text" (2005, p. 7). Readers make meaning during transactional events by drawing upon their linguistic-experiential reservoir to guide their sense making (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005). In the context of a classroom, meaning is not located in texts or in lessons or even in people; rather, it is *made* through dynamic transactions with people and various texts in various contexts.

Event. In this study, *event* refers to a transactional experience. An event is an experience from which meaning is made. *Meaning-making* and *event* are biconditional terms. Meaning-making presupposes that a transaction has taken place. Rosenblatt (1978, 1994, 2005) has written that meaning is a transactional event.

Story. In this study, *story or stories* signifies “narratives that combine a succession of incidents into a unified episode” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 7). Stories are narratives that have both a distinguishable shape—a beginning, middle, and end or a situation, transformation, and situation—as well as a subject matter that includes or invites human values (Scholes 1981).

Context. In “The Total Context” portion of her transactional theory of reading and writing, Rosenblatt (1994, 2005) wrote that

human beings are always in transaction and in a reciprocal relationship with an environment, a context, a total situation. The classroom environment, or the atmosphere created by the teacher and students transacting with one another and the school setting broadens out to include the whole institutional, social, and cultural context. (2005, p. 26)

In this study the classroom context refers to the total teaching situation, including the physical and temporal elements, the relational components of the classroom, the emotional or attitudinal conditions, the instructional elements, curricular conditions and expectations, as well as the broader academic, administrative, and community culture(s) in which the school environment resides. Additionally, since my focus in this inquiry is on how two teachers (and I as the researcher) made meaning, the definition of context

extends beyond the school environment to also include the personal and professional life contexts of the participants as they may relate to classroom events.

Critical event. “A critical event as told in a story reveals a change of understanding or worldview by the storyteller” (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 73). Quoting Woods (1993a, p. 102), Webster and Mertova (2007) note that when an event has the “right mix of ingredients at the right time and in the right context” it becomes critical (p. 73). Citing Fay (2000), Webster and Mertova write events can be critical when an individual struggles to adapt an idealized world view in light of the reality of their experience. The conflict between experience and belief “promotes the development of a critical event as the storyteller struggles to accommodate a change into their worldview” (2007, p. 75). Essentially, what makes an event “critical” is the impact or change it has on the storyteller; this impact can only be identified after the event has taken place. Critical events can be positive or negative in nature (Webster & Mertova, 2007; Woods, 1993b). Negative critical events are those that might “lead to personal or educationally retrogressive consequences” (Woods, 1993b, p. 357). In this study, a *critical event* is one that a participant or I identify as having had an impact on the participant’s worldview or understanding (e.g., approach to teaching, perception of self as a teacher, understanding of learners, or process of teaching) or an event that has an impact on the researcher’s worldview or understanding (e.g., understanding or perception of the theoretical framework guiding this study, of the research questions guiding this study, of participants, of the nature of teaching and or learning, of the research process, of narrative inquiry, or of self as a researcher).

Turning points. In the context of narratives, *turning points* refer to the points at which the conflict, story line, or sequence of events changes direction. In relation to a story line, a turning point refers to the change in conflict, plot, or series of events. In relation to meaning making and human understanding, turning points refer to a change in awareness, thinking, or to having a realization about an event's significance or about one's professional or personal growth (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Assumptions

Methodological assumptions. In this narrative inquiry I employ a narrative way of thinking about and approaching the phenomena of interest. Thus, I embrace narrative assumptions that story is one of the primary ways that humans organize and make meaning of their experiences; that language both imbues and constructs meaning; that meaningful understanding of local, contextualized experiences can provide a way to better understand the broader milieu of which we are a part; that research is not “neutral” or “value free”; that I as the researcher am engaging in a relationship with my participants; and that connections between parts are ways in which we better come to understand the whole.

Language. Language is imbued with meaning. The words we select, the images we employ, the metaphors which we choose as guides—these are narrative constructions (Richardson, 1990) which potentially offer insight into the meaning-making process (Newbury & Hoskins, 2010). Since I am a “reader” of the research events I study, my use of figurative language (similes, metaphors, symbols) and techniques (personification, imagery, allusions) are not a blight upon the study (Howe, 2009); rather, they are efforts

to show rather than just tell, creating vocative texts (Nicol, 2008; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) and communicating additional layers of meaning-making that not only do I analyze, but I also invite readers of this study to consider—as I do—how researchers make meaning from research events.

Limitations

Researcher limitations. The transactional paradigm in which I ground this study is not only a concept to which I have given consideration; it is also a description of my experiences as a learner, a teacher, a teacher educator, and a researcher. Therefore, this study might say as much or more about my reading of this research event as it does about the two participants of this study. To account for this, I have included a second research question—one which considers myself as a reader and asks how I make meaning from research events.

Researcher-participant relationships. The two participants in this study were my students during the spring and fall semesters of 2008. During the spring semester of 2009, when both participants were completing their final, full-time internship (student teaching), they both elected to participate in a phenomenological investigation focused on what classroom literacy means to prospective teachers. The participants were not students of mine at the time of the 2009 investigation. Because these participants and I had already established a participant-researcher relationship of mutual respect, collaboration, and candor, these two teachers were ideal candidates for a narrative investigation where such relationships are paramount (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Huber & Clandinin, 2002).

Overview of the Study

In order to address the aforementioned research questions, I focused this inquiry on the stories participants lived and told about their second-year (2010-2011) teaching experiences. I collected the stories participants told through interviews, documented participant-researcher conversations, and participants' writings. I also considered how these teachers lived their teaching stories by participating in classroom observations and conversing with participants while I was in the midst of their teaching experiences. The purpose of these observations was to attend to the context in which these teachers live out their teaching lives and tell their teaching stories. To further contextualize the data I collected, I reviewed archival data from participants' university coursework and internships (January 2008-May 2009) in order to respect the experiential continuity of these two participants as they transitioned from being students of teaching in university related contexts to being teachers in their own classrooms. This study focused on the participants' beginning teaching experiences in relationship to the narrative unity of their teaching lives.

Data analysis included six phases. During initial phases of data analysis, I focused on identifying and understanding stories using linguistic analysis, structural analysis, and narrative analysis. Phase two focused on understanding participants' meaning-making. I used narrative analysis and a critical events approach that included identifying "critical," "like," and "other" events in participants' stories of experience. Webster and Mertova (2007) assert that narrative is an "event-driven tool of research" (p. 71) and propose that narratives can be analyzed through a critical events approach to narrative. This approach

focuses on highlighting critical, like, and other events in the stories of experience for purposes of understanding human understanding and action. A critical events approach is also consistent with the transactional paradigm in which I have couched this study; making meaning is a transactional event.

After identifying critical, like, and other events, I analyzed my own process of making meaning from research events using *bricolage*, an analytical qualitative research stance that allowed me to select a variety of analytical methods and tools in response to the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). *Bricolage* refers to a constructive process of moving back and forth through the data, attending to its parts and the whole, using diverse tools for data analysis. Some of the analytic tools I used included: a theoretical reading of data, analysis focused on meaning, meaning interpretation, analysis focused on language, and writing as data analysis. At this fourth phase, I looked for patterns between participants' meaning-making and my own. Based on my research questions and phases one through four, I constructed narrative sketches from events that were critical to the participants and to research events. From these stories, I described participants' meaning-making. During the final phase, participants and I read the completed research stories and examined them together. Participants member-checked and verified interpretations throughout the study as well.

In Chapter Five I returned to the Classroom Literacy theoretical framework with which I began this study in order to re-consider it in light of understanding garnered from this narrative inquiry and to present the meaning I made from research events.

Chapter Two

Discussion of the Literature

Context of the Chapter

This chapter is a discussion of the literature informing two constructs in the research questions and theoretical framework I generated to guide this study. Before discussing this literature, I summarize this study's purpose, research questions, and theoretical framework as a way of providing a context for this chapter.

Purpose of the Study

Social science research burgeons from either a quest for certainty or a quest for the meaning of experiences (Bruner, 1985, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988; Rorty, 1979, 1989). In this narrative study, I sought to understand how two beginning teachers made meaning from their classroom experiences. Since narratives organize and communicate the meaning of human experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 1993) this study collected the stories participants lived and told (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, 2006; Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Daynes 2007) about their classroom experiences in order to describe participants' meaning-making.

Beginning teachers are transitioning from being expert students to becoming novice educators (Christenbury, 2006). This transition is complicated by three persistent problems in learning to teach: (a) assumptions about teaching and learning based on

teachers' own experiences in school, what Lortie (1975) referred to as "an apprenticeship of observation"; (b) the complex nature of classroom life (Jackson, 1968, 1990); and (c) the challenge of putting into action, or enacting (Kennedy, 1999), teachers' ideas about teaching (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald, & Zeichner, 2005). Understanding how beginning teachers make meaning of classroom experiences offers insight into how teachers know and do during this transition. It also offers contributions to reconsidering these long-standing problems in preparing students to become teachers by examining them through a theoretical framework which views teachers as readers and meaning-makers of classrooms as texts (Edge, 2008c, 2009a, 2009b; Tobin, 1991, 2004).

Classroom Literacy: A Theoretical Framework for Considering How Teachers Make Meaning from Classroom Experiences

In Chapter One and again here, I outline a theoretical framework that I refer to as *Classroom Literacy* in which I envision teachers as readers and writers of a dynamic "classroom text." Examining existing scholarship on teacher education and on reading in English language arts through this theoretical lens has enabled me to theorize how teachers engage in literate thinking (Langer 1987, 2011a, 2011b) and use literacy skills to make meaning. However, unlike other readers, teachers make meaning of their classrooms as text. This reading is situated in a pedagogical and professional context and necessitates that they draw from their individual repertoire of knowledge and experiences. *Text* in the environment of the classroom was broadly defined as everyday verbal and nonverbal communicative signs. Within a transactional paradigm (Dewey and Bentley, 1949), literacy can embrace both sociocognitive and sociocultural perspectives

of literacy. Literacy, then, may be described as a person's ability to think like a literate person (Langer, 1987) as well as ability to use literacy as a tool to acquire and to construct new texts which both influence and are influenced by cultural contexts (Gee, 1996, 2008; National Council Teachers of English, 2005, 2008; Smagorinsky, 2001; Smagorinsky & O'Donnell-Allen, 1998). Within this Classroom Literacy framework, I view teachers as literate thinkers who use literacy skills—reading, writing, listening, viewing, speaking, and visually representing—in particular contexts, to construct educative experiences for students, conceptions of teaching, and conception of self as teacher.

Teacher as reader. As a “reader,” a teacher observes and interprets various communicative signs or the *text* of the classroom. This process of reading and interpreting the classroom text is a transactional act of meaning-making during which the teacher reads the *external texts*⁷ (Durkin, 1993 as cited in Beers, 2003)—in this case the audible, observable, and sensed signs or the verbal, nonverbal, and affective cues—and through interpretation—or more specifically, *transaction*—constructs a new internal text (Beers, 2003; Durkin, 1993; Smagorinsky, 2001, 2008). An *internal text* (Durkin, 1993) refers to a reader's ongoing meaning-making of a text. In the case of a printed text such as a poem or a scientific study, a reader uses her or his background knowledge to make sense of the words printed. This sense-making continues as a reader progresses through

⁷ Here, I have borrowed Durkin's (1993) terms that Beers (2003) uses to describe a reader's process of making meaning of printed texts to describe how I am thinking about a teacher's process of making meaning of a “classroom text.” As described by Durkin and Beers, the *external text* is the printed, fixed, words on a page and the *internal text* refers to a reader's ongoing interpretation of that printed text.

the text, adjusting her or his understanding as s/he reads, adapting initial understanding in light of additional textual detail and the continued transactional process (Beers, 2003; Langer, 1995, 2011a, 2011b; Langer & Close, 2001; Rosenblatt, 1978, 2005). In the context of the classroom, a teacher reads various classroom texts—for example: a student’s posture or gestures (Rosenblatt, 2005; Roth, 2001), the subtext of a student’s question (Christenbury, 2006), a meaningful pause, a facial expression (Rosenblatt, 2005), the extent of understanding in a student’s response, a collective sense of excitement or confusion, the direction of a class-wide discussion, the curricular texts in use, allusions, metaphors, and images laden in a student’s writing or speech (Cooper & Simonds, 2007; Newbury & Hoskins, 2010; Sperling, 1994, 1996)—and like readers, uses her or his background knowledge and prior experiences to construct an internal text as she or he makes meaning of these communicative signs or texts during the classroom experience (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005; Smagorinsky, 2001, 2008). Within the Classroom Literacy framework I posit that teaching is reading and composing the classroom as text (Edge, 2008c, 2009a, 2009b; Pearl, 1997; Smagorinsky & O’Donnell-Allen, 1998; Tobin, 1991, 2004). As Smagorinsky (2001) has written, “[t]he reader’s construction of these new texts is the source of meaning in reading” (p. 134). The meaning a teacher makes from transacting with the classroom texts potentially informs the teacher’s pedagogical and management decisions, assessment of student learning, future instruction, and even her or his identity as a teacher (Newbury & Hoskins, 2010; Roth, 1998; Tobin, 1991, 2004).

Teacher as writer. As a “writer,” a teacher constructs her or his understanding of teaching, of student learning, of self as teacher, and composes educative experiences for

students in a transactional relationship with the texts she or he reads (Dewey, 1938; Grossman & Shulman, 1994; Rosenblatt, 1978; Roth, 1998). Like writers facing a blank page, a teacher draws from her or his background knowledge, resources at hand, and knowledge of the intended audience (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005) in order to compose situations, assignments, or other learning experiences for students. And similar to the way that writers look to new drafts of their composition when they cut, reorganize, and add to their work (Murray, 1982), teachers also compose next texts (Smagorinsky, 2001) as they “reflect in action” and “reflect on action” (Grossman & Shulman, 1994, p. 10), revising lessons as well as their understanding of curriculum, conception of teaching, of assessment of self as teacher, assessment of student learning, and of students as learners.

Finally, teachers—like readers and writers of printed texts—transact with classrooms as texts in particular personal, social, cultural, environmental, and pedagogical contexts (Bruner, 1986; Gee, 1996, 2008; Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005; Maclellan, 2008).

Research Questions

1. How do two beginning English language arts teachers make meaning from classroom events?

Because narratives are a primary way that humans organize and convey meaning of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 1993), this study focused on the stories participants lived and told about their teaching experiences, considered the contexts in which the stories were told, and attended to participants’ interpretive processes for constructing, living, and communicating their stories

(Brochner, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, 2006; Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Daynes 2007). This focus was reflected in the following sub-questions: (a) What stories do two beginning English teachers live and tell about their classroom experiences?; (b) What are the contexts of these two beginning English teachers' stories?; (c) What critical events or turning points do they identify in their stories?; and (d) What knowledge, language, or experiences do they use to make meaning from classroom experiences?

The second question guiding this study turned its focus toward the researcher. In the spirit of bracketing myself, the researcher, *into* the study and providing an account of who I am in relationship to the study, study participants, and interpretations of data gathered and analyzed (Campesino, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Connolly, 2007; Connolly & Reilly, 2007), I also asked:

2. How do I, as a beginning teacher educator and educational researcher, make meaning from research events?

To mirror the issue sub-questions (Creswell, 2007) designed to understand the meaning-making of the participants, this study also asked: (a) What research stories do I live and tell?; (b) What are the contexts of these research stories?; (c) What critical events or turning points do I identify in these research stories?; and (d) What knowledge, language and experiences do I use to make meaning from research experiences?

Purpose and Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to provide readers with a synopsis of the literature informing to two core constructs in this study's research questions and theoretical framework: (a) meaning-making and (b) experience.

Since making meaning is the focus of this study's research questions, this chapter focuses primarily on the construct of meaning. Nevertheless, as Gee (2008) notes, "‘Meaning’ is one of the most debated terms in linguistics, philosophy, literary theory, and the social sciences" (p. 97). To comprehensively review the concepts of *meaning* and *making meaning* in their more expansive historical and disciplinary contexts is beyond the scope of this study. The theoretical framework guiding this study provides the specific context of Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading and writing (1978, 1994, 2005) nested within the broader context of literacy as lens through which to consider meaning. Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading and writing (1978, 1994, 2005) developed from her questioning how readers make meaning from printed texts. In a sociocultural perspective of literacy, reading and writing are meaning-making endeavors through which humans search for meaning, construct it, negotiate it, communicate it, refine it, and even contest it within the many contexts (e.g., social, cultural, historical, political, economic) of which they are a part and to which they contribute (Gee, 1996, 2008; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007; Smagorinsky & O'Donnell-Allen, 1998; Smagorinsky, 2001; Wilhelm, Baker, & Hackett, 2001). Therefore, as a narrative study focused on the meaning of experiences, Rosenblatt's theory and the broader context of literacy are appropriate contexts in which to consider meaning (Polkinghorne, 1988).

Situated in a transactional paradigm (Dewey & Bentley, 1949; Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005), this study's Classroom Literacy theoretical framework includes the tenet that teachers are readers, making meaning of their classrooms *as* texts. Classroom Literacy is an extension of Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading and writing (Rosenblatt, 1969, 1978, 1982, 1985, 1986, 1993, 1994, 1998, 2005); it adopts Rosenblatt's conception of *making meaning, event, transaction, reader, and text*, and extends these terms by focusing on teachers as readers and writers or producers of classrooms as texts.

As previously stated, this chapter focuses on making meaning. In the first section of this chapter I attend to Rosenblatt's explanation of making meaning, her transactional theory of reading and writing, and her theory's epistemological assumptions and historical context as they relate to the research questions guiding this narrative inquiry. Then, in the second section of the chapter, I connect Dewey's philosophy of experience (1938) to Rosenblatt's theory of reading and writing through their shared transactional paradigm.

Making Meaning

Meaning as a transactional event. The definition of *making meaning* guiding my inquiry questions was drawn from Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading and writing (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005). Meaning, Rosenblatt wrote, is an event that happens during a transaction between a reader and a text in a context. In a transactional paradigm, a reader and a text are not fixed objects acting on each other; rather, they are "two aspects of a total dynamic situation" (2005, p. 7). Thus, "'meaning' does not reside

ready-made ‘in’ the text or ‘in’ the reader but happens or comes into being during the transaction between reader and text” (2005, p. 7). It is the live circuit between a particular reader and a particular text in a particular context (1978, 1994, 200). “Meaning—whether scientific or aesthetic, whether a poem or a scientific report—happens during the interplay between particular signs and a particular reader at a particular time and place” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. x). Meaning is not an object or even an idea; it is a doing, a making, an event (Polkinghorne, 1988; Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005).

In the following sections I summarize Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading and writing, attend to her theory’s philosophical and historical contexts, and provide this study’s readers with Rosenblatt’s descriptions of her theory’s key terms: *transaction*, *reader*, *text*, *context*, *event*, and *poem* or *meaning*⁸. In the summary of this “Making Meaning” section, I reiterate how Rosenblatt’s conception of meaning making relates to the research questions and theoretical framework guiding this study.

Rosenblatt’s transactional theory. Rosenblatt’s conception of meaning as an event is the crux of her transactional theory of reading. The essence of this theory is that “[e]very reading act is an event, or a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular pattern of signs, a text, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 7). The reader and the text are not fixed entities acting upon one another like parts of a machine or colliding billiard balls, explained Rosenblatt; the reader and the text are “two aspects of a total dynamic situation” (2005, p. 7). The reader *makes* meaning by transacting with the text in a particular context. Meaning, then,

⁸ The term *poem* stood for the meaning a reader made during an aesthetically-oriented transaction with the text.

is an event in time, made through the confluence of reader and the text in particular context (Rosenblatt, 1969, 1985, 1978, 1994, 2005).

Rosenblatt's transactional theory is commonly associated with her often cited 1978 text, *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*—what Rosenblatt later deemed the fullest presentation of her theory (Rosenblatt, 2005). However, after examining the development of Rosenblatt's theory (e.g., Connell, 2008; Edge, 2004; Rosenblatt, 1969, 1978, 1985, 1993, 1994, 2005), it is possible to see that her thinking about her theory had been situated in a transactional paradigm long before the publication of her 1978 text⁹. Even Rosenblatt's early work assumed a dynamic relationship between meaning and reading. When Rosenblatt wrote her seminal text, *Literature as Exploration* (1938), she “sought to understand how [readers] make the meaning called novels, poems, or plays,” and she “discovered that [she] had developed a theoretical model that covers all modes of reading” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 1). Decades transpired between the publication of her 1938 text and initial publication of her transactional theory of reading (1969), when Rosenblatt adopted the term *transaction* to describe her theory's epistemology. Nevertheless, as Rosenblatt explained in a 1999 interview: the transactional approach “had been an important part of my thinking, so that

⁹ A narrative examination of this theory—that is to say, an examination of her theory that considers the maturation of her work in the decades preceding and following her 1978 publication—reveals that Rosenblatt's transactional theory itself is a text constructed through the transactional process about which she writes. In other words, I assert that Rosenblatt's transactional theory is the meaning she made from reading texts—including her classroom *as* text—in various contexts. While I do not wish to distract the reader with a lengthy narrative analysis of Rosenblatt's work, even minimally attending to her theory's “sociology of knowledge” (Noddings, 2005, p. 58) may illumine the larger context of the theory as well as how this study extends her work to make new meanings in different contexts.

I welcomed the term transaction to emphasize that the meaning is being built up through the back-and-forth relationship between reader and text during a reading event.”

(Rosenblatt, 2005, p. xix).

Rosenblatt’s conception of making meaning is rooted in a transactional paradigm and draws from philosophical and theoretical fields, including John Dewey’s pragmatist epistemology, Charles Sanders Peirce’s (1933, 1935) semiotics, and William James’ (1890) concept of “selective attention” (Rosenblatt 1978, 1990, 1994, 1995, 2005).

Although her theory has broad philosophical and theoretical underpinnings, it “especially links with a theory of language and a view of how man relates to the natural world”

(Rosenblatt, 1978/1994, p. 16).

The transactional paradigm. According to Rosenblatt (1978, 1986, 1994, 1995, 1999, 2005), the terms *transaction* and *transactional* were congruous with a philosophical perspective increasingly accepted in the 20th century. In science, a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1970) necessitated a change in the way humans viewed themselves in relationship to the world around them. For 300 years Cartesian dualism held a view of the self as completely separate from nature. This produced, for example, a Newtonian stimulus-response paradigm in physics—a paradigm that studied the interaction between things thought to be separate or self-contained. Scientists valued “objective” facts free from the subjectivity of human consciousness and sought a direct, immediate perception of reality. Einstein’s theory and work in subatomic physics challenged this traditional view. It revealed the need to consider, as Neils Bohr (1959) had explained, that humans are a part of nature—the observer is part of the observation (Rosenblatt, 2005). Even the

physicist's facts are to some extent shaped by the interests, hypotheses, and technologies of the observer. Thus, it became increasingly apparent, wrote Rosenblatt (1978, 1994, 2005), that the human organism is the mediator in any perception of the world or sense of reality.

The epistemology of John Dewey and other early 20th century pragmatist philosophers fitted this new paradigm (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005). In 1949 John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley worked out a new terminology in *Knowing and the Known*. They considered the term *interaction* to be too associated with the old positivistic paradigm where elements were pre-determined to be separate and their interactions studied. They suggested the term *transaction* in order to imply “unfractured observation” (Dewey & Bentley, 1949, p. 131) of the “whole situation” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 2). “The knower, the knowing, and the known,” wrote Rosenblatt, “are seen as aspects of ‘one process.’ Each conditions and is conditioned by the other in a mutually constituted situation” (2005, p. 3). “Thus a *known* assumes a *knower*, and vice versa. A ‘knowing’ is the transaction between a particular individual and a particular environment” (Rosenblatt, 1969, p. 43). Rosenblatt (1994, 2005) noted that “ecology offers an easily understood illustration of the transactional relationship between human beings and their natural environment” (2005, p. xviii). In ecology, humans are viewed as a part of nature, always in a transactional relationship with an environment—each conditioning the other (2005). “Human activities and relationships are seen as transactions in which the individual and social elements fuse with cultural and natural elements” (2005, p. 3). For Rosenblatt, the transactional paradigm held implications for humankind’s relationship with the natural

world and for social relationships; it also held particular implications for language (1978, 1994).

Implications for language. The transactional paradigm had “profound implications for understanding language” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 3). Traditionally, language had been seen as an autonomous, self-contained code or system that imprinted its meaning on the minds of readers or listeners; however, Rosenblatt’s theory recognized the role of an individual’s life and language experiences in the dynamic process of making meaning with language.

Triadic signs. The work of pragmatist philosophers, including John Dewey and the father of semiotics, Charles Sanders Peirce, contributed to Rosenblatt’s transactional view of language in her theory of reading (Rosenblatt, 1994, 2005). Particularly influential, Peirce’s (1933, 1935) triadic theory of semiosis held that meaning is made through the interpretation and creation of signs. Meaning is made through an interpretive process involving a triadic relationship between a sign, an object, and the interpretant. Pierce (1933) wrote that the “sign is related to its object only in consequence of a mental association, and depends on habit” (as cited in Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 3). Rosenblatt asserted that Pierce situated language in individual’s transactions with the world. While language is generally seen as a socially generated system of communication, Rosenblatt argued, Pierce’s triadic model noted that language is internalized by individuals transacting with particular environments. Language has public usages and meanings as well as private associations (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1991, 1994, 2005). “For the individual, then, the language is that part, or set of features of the public system that has been

internalized through that person's experiences with words in life situations" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 5). These experiences with language accumulate and form an individual's "linguistic-experiential reservoir" (p. 5). Rosenblatt wrote,

Embodying the funded assumptions, attitudes, and expectations about language and about the world, this inner capital is all that each of us has to draw on in speaking, listening, writing, or reading. We 'make sense' of new a situation or transaction and make new meanings by applying, reorganizing, revising, or extending public and private elements selected from our personal linguistic-experiential reservoirs. (p. 5)

The linguistic reservoir is not comprised of verbal signs connected to fixed meanings; rather, it is a "fluid pool of potential triadic symbolizations" (p. 7) depending on where one's "selective attention" (James, 1890) is focused.

Selective attention. Rosenblatt's transactional view of language included William James's (1890) idea that people are constantly involved in a "choosing activity" that James dubbed "selective attention" (as cited by Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 6). People constantly select from their stream of consciousness according to what is either reinforced or inhibited by attention. In a crowded room where conversations transpire simultaneously, for example, what a person hears and what becomes part of the background hum depends on where the person turns her or his attention "Thus, while language activity implies an intermingled kinesthetic, cognitive, affective, associational matrix, what is pushed into the background or suppressed and what is brought into awareness and organized into

meaning depends on where selective attention is focused” (p. 6). Rosenblatt applied James’s selective attention to the reading process. She wrote:

The reader brings to the text a reservoir of past experiences with language and the world. If the signs on the page are linked to elements in that reservoir, these linkages rise into consciousness....All readers must draw on past experiences to make the new meanings produced in the transaction with the text. This experience then flows into the reservoir brought to the next reading event. (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 91)

In summary, Rosenblatt’s transactional view of language included the triadic relationship between a sign, a signifier, and a thing signified. It also acknowledged that an individual’s attention to signs was influenced by her or his past experiences with language and the world. Thus, in Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading, an individual reader is not “a blank page, a wraith-like receptor of an alien message” (Rosenblatt, 1964, p. 127) but an active maker of meaning.

Implications for social relationships. In addition to having implications for language, Rosenblatt wrote, “‘Transaction,’ has implications for all aspects of life” (p. xviii). Transaction, noted Rosenblatt, “also applies to individuals’ relations to one another, whether we think of them in the family, the classroom, the school or in the broader society and culture” (2005, xviii-xix).

Application to the reading process. Rosenblatt applied the concepts of transaction (Dewey & Bentley, 1949), the triadic nature of language (Pierce, 1933), and selective attention (James, 1890) to her analysis and description of the reading process.

Rosenblatt (1969) adopted the term *transaction* as an epistemological concept (Rosenblatt, 1986) to free one's understanding of the reading process from "unscrutinized assumptions" (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 16) implicit in the terminology and structure of language. To say that a reader interprets the text or that a text creates a response in the reader, Rosenblatt argued, misrepresents the reading process, for "it implies a single line of action by one separate element on another separate element" (p. 16). Instead, she asserted that the "relation between reader and text is not linear. It is a situation, an event at a particular time and place in which each element conditions the other" (p. 16). Dewey and Bentley's (1949) term *transaction* captured what Rosenblatt theorized to be the dynamics at work in the reading process. Recognizing the transactional nature of the reading process is paramount to understanding Rosenblatt's conception of meaning.

Pragmatist philosophical context for making meaning. Rosenblatt explicitly situated her thinking in a pragmatist philosophical context, especially the thinking of pragmatist philosopher John Dewey. Her use of the terms *transaction* and *transactional* reflects the pragmatist epistemological perspective that humans are active makers of meaning (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005; Connell, 2008).

Nel Noddings (2005) has described pragmatism as a philosophical perspective for educational research that focuses on meaning. She agrees with Charles Sanders Pierce, the first philosopher to use "pragmatism" as a label for the perspective, that pragmatism is "a theory of meaning" (p. 57). Pragmatism assumes that humans are active meaning makers. As Noddings explains,

As we seek meaning, we are to ask ourselves what observable effects may be associated with the objects of our thinking. We anticipate certain effects as a result of reflections on past events, and where uncertainty exists, we conjecture. Meaning so described is dynamic. As we test our conjectures, meaning changes; sometimes it becomes more stable, and at other times, continued uncertainty leads to further testing. (2005, p. 57)

People are active makers of meaning rather than passive receivers of objective, *a priori* meaning. “Both theory (to guide thinking and acting) and practice (to test the suggestions of theory are important; they are equally important” (Noddings, 2005, p. 57). Thinking and acting are aspects of one process (Paul, Graffam, & Fowler, 2005). Pragmatism also highlights the importance of vocabularies and how changes in the way people use words influences the way that others think and act (Noddings, 2005).

John Dewey’s pragmatic theory of knowledge insisted that people use prior knowledge to guide their actions, and as activity either “confirms or disconfirms the trial knowledge” with which they began, knowledge is advanced. (Noddings, 2005, p. 57). He also rejected traditional quests for certainty, arguing, as Richard Rorty (1979) does that “science and philosophy are continuous” (as cited by Noddings, 2005, p. 58).

Ontologically, reality consists of justified beliefs and warranted assertions that are held until additional evidence suggests otherwise. (Paul, Graffam, & Fowler, 2005). “Neither abstract, detached theory, nor a mere account of personal experience can yield warranted assertions,” cautioned Noddings (2005, p. 58). Epistemologically, “knowledge is

constructed, questioned, refined, and encoded; it is promoted through power structures and contested ideas within social groups” (Paul, Graffam, & Fowler, 2005, p. 46).

Attending to the pragmatist philosophical context of Rosenblatt’s work brings to light the underpinnings, generative process, and implications of Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading. Contrary to the traditional view that readers passively received objective, pre-determined meaning from texts, Rosenblatt (1938, 1978) sought to understand how readers make the meanings we call poems, plays, or stories. This problem—how readers make meaning—arose in the context of a practical teaching situation. Ten years of teaching literature and composition courses at Bernard College afforded Rosenblatt the opportunity to observe readers encountering many types of texts, talking about those texts, writing reactions and responses both while reading and after reflecting on their reading. Based on what she observed, she sought to understand readers’ processes and in so doing, to generate a philosophy that would ground her teaching. What she discovered was a theoretical model that covered all modes of reading (Rosenblatt, 1994, 2005).

Dissatisfied with the limitations and assumptions of the language used to describe the reading process, Rosenblatt sought new terminology that would express the dynamics she saw at work during the reading process. Rosenblatt viewed readers as individuals who drew from their personal reservoirs of language and experience to make sense of texts. This pragmatist thinking challenged the historically dominant view of readers as a generic group who passively received meaning from texts (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994) at the height of New Criticism’s dominance in literary theory (Connell, 2008; Tompkins, 1980).

New Criticism insisted on precise, technical, objective analysis of texts; meaning was self-contained in the text and did not change with a reader's involvement (Connell, 2008). In Connell's (2008) examination of the influence of a pragmatic philosophy on the scholarly works of Rosenblatt, she writes that Rosenblatt's positioning the construction of meaning in an individual's literary experience placed the generative relation between the reader and the text at the center of attention (Connell, 2008). Rosenblatt's focus on meaning provided a shift in thinking about the role of the reader and the reader's relationship to the text. While literary criticism had historically focused a spotlight onto the text or to the author, leaving the reader largely "invisible" (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994), Rosenblatt's investigation into reader's experiences with texts "admit[ed] into the limelight the whole scene—author, text, and reader" (Rosenblatt 1978/1994, p. 5) and paid special attention to the previously ignored reader. Thus, the process from which her theory emerged embodied the pragmatist philosophy which grounded it (Connell, 2008; Rosenblatt, 1969, 1978, 1982, 1990, 1994, 2005).

In the preceding sections, I have provided readers with an overview of Rosenblatt's transactional theory, her notion of meaning as a dynamic event in the life of a reader, as well as the philosophical and historical contexts in which Rosenblatt situated her transactional theory of reading. In the section that follows, I bring the attention of this study's reader back to the heart of Rosenblatt's theory—that meaning is an event—in order to provide additional details about how reading is viewed as meaning-making, and in so doing to present Rosenblatt's descriptions of her theory's key terms: *transaction*, *reader*, *text*, *context*, *event*, and *poem/meaning*. Finally, I summarize this section by

connecting Rosenblatt's theory to the theoretical framework guiding this study and to the research questions I posed in this study.

Meaning-making as an event. At the core of Rosenblatt's theory is the idea that meaning is an event. Meaning is not a static object or thing already existing in a text or a reader; rather, it is *made* in the transaction of a particular reader and a particular text in a particular context. Rosenblatt described the key concepts in her transactional theory of reading—*meaning*, *transaction*, *reader*, and *text*—in relationship to one another. She wrote: “The term *reader* implies a transaction with a text; the term *text* implies a transaction with a reader. ‘Meaning’ is what happens during the transaction” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 7). Below, I present Rosenblatt's descriptions of these terms in the context of her observations of readers transacting with texts, reported in “The Poem as Event” (1964, 1978).

In “The Poem as Event,” first published as an article in *College English* (1964) and then later re-presented as a chapter in *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (1978/ 1994), Rosenblatt described the inductive process of readers encountering an unfamiliar text¹⁰. Aiming “to discover the paths” (p. 7) which graduate English students arrived at tentative interpretations, Rosenblatt gave her student participants an unfamiliar text and instructed them to begin writing as soon as they began reading. This procedure differed from the seminal study *Practical Criticism* (1929) conducted by New Criticism's pioneer, I. A. Richards, in

¹⁰ The students read Frost's quatrain, “It Bids Pretty Fair” (1949); however, they were not provided with the title or author. Rosenblatt's discussion uses students' reading of this poem as an example selected from hundreds of examples during the twenty-five years Rosenblatt studied readers' processes for arriving at interpretations.

which readers wrote after they finished reading. Rosenblatt's procedures allowed readers to articulate the stages of reading that are typically forgotten after arriving at a satisfactory interpretation of a text. This study offers a context for describing the *reader*, the *text*, and the *poem* or the *meaning* that is made during a reader's transaction with a text.

The reader. Readers are active participants in the reading process who create the event called meaning through transaction with a particular text and in a particular context (Rosenblatt, 1964, 1978, 1994, 2005). Essentially, a "*reader* implies someone whose past experience enables him or her to make meaning in collaboration with a text" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. x). Rosenblatt reported in "The Poem as Event" (1964, 1978) that readers' responses demonstrated that they worked through or past initial confusion toward "a framework into which to fit the meanings of the individual words and sentences" (1978/1994 p. 7). From readers' negotiation of meaning through an ongoing process of interpretation, Rosenblatt illuminated several important points about a reader's meaning-making process¹¹. First, the reader is active. The reader does not receive a ready-made meaning from the text; rather, she or he is actively involved in constructing it from the text. Second, Rosenblatt's experiment revealed that readers were not only attending to the referents that the signs in the text pointed to in their external world, they were also paying attention to the ideas, images, feelings, and associations that the words and their referents evoked within them (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994).

¹¹Rosenblatt (1994, 2005) was careful to note that while her theoretical model is, by definition, an abstraction or generalized pattern that provides a way to talk about similarities about such events, she also acknowledged that reading is an event that involves the mind and emotions of a particular reader and that "there are actually only innumerable separate transactions between readers and texts" (2005, p. 1).

As active participants in the reading process, the readers in Rosenblatt's observations made meaning by calling forth past experiences with the printed verbal symbols, selecting from a range of possible referents that came to mind, finding a context in which these referents could be connected, and sometimes reinterpreting earlier parts in light of later parts of the text. Rosenblatt observed then, that:

The reader's attention to the text activates certain element in his past experience—external reference, internal response—that have become linked with the verbal symbols. Meaning will emerge from a network of relationships among the things symbolized *as he senses them*. The symbols point to these sensations, images, objects, ideas, relationships, with the particular associations or feeling-tones created by his past experiences with them in actual life or in literature. The selection and organization of responses to some degree hinge on the assumptions, the expectations, or sense of the possible structures, that he brings out of the stream of his life. Thus built into the raw material of the literary process itself is the particular world of the reader. (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994, p. 11)

The text points the reader toward her/his past experiences in life and in literature. The expectations and frames for thinking garnered from these past experiences guide the reader toward a process of making sense of the text. However, the text could also lead the reader to become critical of prior assumptions or to realize that she/he had projected aspects of her/his past experience that was not relevant. The reader could also fail to respond to stimuli presented by the text. These points were important to Rosenblatt's argument that "the reader's creation of a poem out of a text must be an active, self-

ordering and self-corrective process” (1978/1994, p. 11). The readers in Rosenblatt’s study did not interpret the text in a strictly linear manner—word by word, phrase by phrase, or line by line; rather, they subtly adjusted and readjusted meaning and tone to “achieve a unified and coherent synthesis. The text itself leads the reader toward this self-corrective process” (p. 11). This interpretive process is guided by what Rosenblatt (1994, 2005) called the reader’s linguistic-experiential reservoir.

Linguistic-experiential reservoir. The event called meaning, according to Rosenblatt, is guided by a reader’s “linguistic-experiential reservoir” (2005, p. 5). This reservoir is “the residue of the individual’s past transactions—in particular natural and social contexts” (p. 5), and it “reflects the reader’s cultural, social and personal history” (p. 8). In other words, each individual draws upon expectations that emerge from her or his storehouse of language and experience. This expectation acts as a guide for making sense of present events; nevertheless, this sense-making might also require the reader to reconsider or to extend her/his storehouse. Rosenblatt explained:

Embodying funded assumptions, attitudes, and expectations about language and about the world, this inner capital is all that each of us has to draw on in speaking, listening, writing, or reading. We ‘make sense’ of new situations or transactions and make new meanings by applying, reorganizing, revisiting, or extending public and private elements selected from our personal linguistic-experiential reservoirs. (2005, p. 5)

A person’s linguistic-experiential reservoir is malleable. It is reciprocal. It both guides a person’s meaning-making and is revised as a result of meaning that is made. It is both an

aspect of the total context in which a reader makes meaning, and it is a product of meaning made during the transaction that the reader will use to guide future transactions.

Stance. What a reader calls forth from her/his linguistic-experiential reservoir is guided by what Rosenblatt referred to as the *stance* a reader takes toward a reading event (Rosenblatt 1978, 1991, 1994, 2005). The reader's conscious or unconscious adoption of a stance guides the act of selection from one's stream of consciousness (1994, 2005). Linguistic events have both private and public meanings. A reader's stance or attitude determines which elements in her/his linguistic-experiential reservoir she or he calls forward to attention and which are nudged to the periphery. As Rosenblatt explains,

A stance reflects the reader's purpose. The situation, the purpose, and the linguistic-experiential equipment of the reader as well as the signs on the page enter into the transaction and affect the extent to which public and private meanings and associations will be attended to. (2005, p. 10)

A reader's stance falls somewhere along an efferent-aesthetic continuum (Rosenblatt 1991, 1994, 2005).

Efferent stance. The term *efferent*, from the Latin *efferre*, meaning to carry away, refers to "the kind of reading in which attention is centered predominantly on what is to be extracted and retained after the reading event" (2005, p. 11). The reader who adopts a primarily efferent stance attends to the more public or outward referents. An efferent stance is focused more on "what will remain as the residue *after* the reading—the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the actions to be carried out" (1978/1994, p. 23). For example, a mother whose child has just ingested poisonous

liquid would likely read the bottle as quickly as possible in an attempt to acquire information about the antidote. Her attention is focused on what the words point to in order to concentrate on what she should do after she has finished reading (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994). Reading a newspaper, legal brief, or textbook often yields a predominantly efferent stance. In an efferent reading, “[m]eaning results from abstracting out and analytically structuring the ideas, information, directions, or conclusions to be retained, used, or acted on after the reading event” (2005, p. 11).

Aesthetic stance. The predominantly aesthetic stance is located on the other half of the continuum. An aesthetic stance is focused on “what happens *during* the actual reading event” (1978/1994, p. 24). During a primarily aesthetic reading, “the reader adopts an attitude of readiness to focus attention on what is being lived through during the reading event. Rosenblatt adopted the term *aesthetic* because the Greek source “suggested perception through the senses, feelings, and intuitions” (2005, p. 11). A reader who adopts an aesthetic stance “pays attention to—savors—the qualities of the feelings, ideas, situations, scenes, personalities, and emotions that are called forth and participates in the tensions, conflicts, and resolutions of the images, ideas, and scenes as they unfold” (p. 11). Whereas with the efferent stance, meaning results from the information or ideas that are extracted and retained or acted on after the reading event; meaning from an aesthetic stance is lived-through in relationship to the text. “This meaning, shaped and experienced during the aesthetic transaction, constitutes ‘the literary work,’ the poem, story or play. This ‘evocation,’ and not the text, is the object of the reader’s ‘response’ and ‘interpretation,’ both during and after the reading event” (p. 11).

Rosenblatt wrote that “[e]fferent and aesthetic reflect the two main ways of looking at the world, often summed up as ‘scientific’ and ‘artistic’” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 12). She rejected the more traditional, binary tendency to think in either-or or opposing terms about the aesthetic and efferent stances. Rather, the stances are points along a continuum. Rosenblatt elaborated:

The efferent stance pays more attention to the cognitive, the referential, the factual, the analytic, the logical, the quantitative aspects of meaning. And the aesthetic stance pays more attention to the sensuous, the affective, the emotive, the qualitative. But nowhere can we find on the one hand the purely public and on the other hand the purely private. Both of these aspects of meaning are attended to in different proportions in any linguistic event. (2005, p. 12)

Stance then guides readers (and writers) toward activating particular aspects of consciousness. Rosenblatt wrote:

In any reading, many personal, textual, and contextual factors will at any moment influence which of these aspects a reader will pay attention to. A reading event is like a journey. Some reader—perhaps a student who faces a true-false test about it—may be focusing mainly on what he is to remember after the reading journey is over. Another may be focused on just enjoying the journey itself, mainly paying attention to the ideas, scenes, characters, and feelings lived through during the actual reading. Another, without a clear purpose, may end with a blurred, shallow impression. (Rosenblatt, 2005, pp. x-xi)

A reader's stance or purpose is her/his focus. It brings to attention particular aspects of her/ his linguistic-experiential reservoir. Because each reading act is an event in a particular context, the same text may be read efferently or aesthetically. No two readings, even by the same reader, are exactly the same. "Still, someone else can read a text efferently and paraphrase it for us in such a way as to satisfy our efferent purpose. But no one else can read aesthetically—that is, experience the evocation of—a literary work of art for us" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 14).

Text. *Text*, as defined by Rosenblatt is "a set of signs capable of being interpreted as verbal symbols" (2005, p. 7). To distinguish *text* from *poem*, Rosenblatt provided the following distinctions: "'Text' designates a set or series of signs interpretable as linguistic symbols" (1978/1994, p. 12). She further explained, "I use this rather roundabout phrasing to make it clear that the text is not simply the inked marks on the page or even the uttered vibrations in the air. The visual or auditory signs become verbal symbols, become words, by virtue of their being potentially recognizable as pointing to something beyond themselves (p. 12). "Far from already possessing a meaning that can be imposed on all readers, the text actually remains simply marks on paper, an object in the environment, until some reader transacts with it" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 7). From readers' responses, Rosenblatt (1978/1994) argued in "The Poem as Event" that it is possible to see two major functions of the particular pattern of signs constituting a text: activation and regulation.

First, the text is the stimulus that focuses the readers' attention so that elements of past experience—concepts linked with verbal symbols—are activated. Second, as

the reader seeks a hypothesis to guide the selecting, rejecting, and ordering of what is being called forth, the text helps to regulate what shall be held in the forefront of the reader's attention. (p. 11)

Communicative signs become a text when a reader transacts with them. The text activates and regulates the reader's attention to her or his prior knowledge and experiences as s/he proceeds through the meaning-making process.

The poem. Rosenblatt's use of the word *poem* does not refer to a specific genre of literature (i.e. "poetry"); rather she sought to use the word to refer to the *meaning* a reader *made* from a text. This meaning, created through an aesthetically-oriented transaction between a reader and a text in a context, constituted the "poem." "Poem," wrote Rosenblatt, "presupposes a reader actively involved with a text and refers to what he makes of his responses to the particular set of verbal symbols." "The poem' seen as an event in the life of a reader, as embodied in a process resulting from the confluence of reader and text" was central to her theory of literature.

In *The Reader, the Text, The Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (1978/1994), Rosenblatt's use of the word *poem* indicates that she had in mind the range of literary texts a reader might make meaning with:

"Poem" stands here for the whole category, "literary work of art," and for terms such as "novel," "play," or "short story" ...I shall use the term "poem" to refer to the whole category of aesthetic transactions between readers and texts without implying greater or lesser "poeticity" of any specific genre." (1978/1994, p. 12)

However, it is clear, especially in her later writings, that *poem* referred to the *meaning* a reader made during the lived-through transactional experience with any type of text, literary or non-literary, print or non-print. Rosenblatt used the terms “poem” and “meaning” synonymously in the preface to the fifth edition (1995) of *Literature as Exploration*:

Transaction...permits emphasis on the to-and-fro, spiraling, nonlinear, continuously reciprocal influence of reader and text in the making of meaning. The meaning—the poem—“happens” during the transaction between the reader and the signs on the page. (p. xvi)

The term “meaning” replaced the word “poem” in “The Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing,” first published in a 1994 research handbook for The International Reading Association and later republished in the 2005 collection of Rosenblatt’s works, *Making Meaning with Texts: Selected Essays*. In 2004, Rosenblatt wrote “To My Readers” as the introduction to her 2005 collection of essays and chapters, “Meaning—whether scientific or aesthetic, whether a poem or a scientific report—happens during the interplay between particular signs and a particular reader at a particular time” (p. x).

Essential to Rosenblatt’s conception of *poem* is that it is an *event*. Rosenblatt wrote:

The poem, then, must be thought of as an event in time. It is not an object or an ideal entity. It happens during a coming-together, a compenetration, of a reader and a text. The reader brings to the text his past experience and present personality. Under the magnetism of the ordered symbols of the text, he marshals

his resources and crystallizes out from the stuff of memory, thought, and feeling a new order, a new experience, which he sees as the poem. This becomes part of the ongoing stream of his life experience, to be reflected on from any angle important to him as a human being. (1978/1994, p. 12)

Thus, meaning—the poem—is “the experience shaped by the reader under the guidance of the text” (p. 12). “‘The poem’ comes into being in the live circuit between the reader and ‘the text’ ” (1978/1994, p. 14) “The finding of meanings involves both the author’s text and what the reader brings to it” (p. 14). The reader and text in a particular context produce an event—the meanings we call poems, plays, novels, scientific reports (Rosenblatt, 1978/1994; 2005). “The term *reader* implies a transaction with a text; the term *text* implies a transaction with a reader. “Meaning” is what happens during the transaction” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 7).

Making meaning in this narrative investigation. Through this narrative investigation I sought to understand how two beginning teachers make meaning from classroom events. In the theoretical framework guiding this study I envisioned teachers as readers and writers of the classroom as text. The core of this Classroom Literacy theoretical framework is an extension of Louise Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading and writing.

In Rosenblatt’s transactional theory, the meaning of a piece of literature is not transferred to a reader as her/his eyes pass over the words on a page. Meaning is not an *a priori* object, a “thing” that pre-exists outside of the reader or writer. Meaning is generated in the process of transacting with a text. It is created in the “live circuit”

(Rosenblatt, 1978/1994, p. 14) between an individual reader and a text in a particular context. Meaning is made, and this making is an event.

Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading and writing grew from her investigation into how readers make the meanings we call poems, plays, and novels. Her work attended to readers' processes of making meaning rather than just the final product. As a result, Rosenblatt documented the active role that readers play in relationship to the text. Namely, the stance a reader unconsciously or consciously adopts the reader's attention to textual cues. A reader's reservoir of experiences as well as public and private associations with language guide her/his expectations of the text's meaning and allow the reader to formulate an interpretation of what she/his is reading. The reader continues adjusting her/his interpretation, seeking to confirm or disconfirm her/his ongoing interpretation, as she/he progresses through the text. Because meaning-making is a transactional event, the meaning a reader makes from reading a text may confirm or disconfirm the ever-growing "storehouse" of language, experience, associations, and expectations a reader brings to future reading events. Thus, the transactional process of making meaning is continuous and reciprocal.

As Rosenblatt (1938, 1978, 1994, 2005) and contemporary scholars (e.g., Langer, 1995, 1998; Keene & Zimmermann, 1997, 2007; Tovani, 2000; Wilhelm, 1997, 2008) remind us, the meaning readers make from texts is reciprocally connected to readers' lives: their sense of self, understanding of others, and perception of the world in which they live.

How then is the aforementioned pertinent to beginning teachers? The implications of Rosenblatt's transactional theory have profound implications for language and communication. Communication is a critical component of teaching (Allen, 1995; Cooper & Simonds, 2007; Hurt, Scott, & McCrosky, 1978). Also, Rosenblatt (1994, 2005) stated that her transactional theory covered all modes of reading. In the theoretical framework guiding this study I posited that teachers too are readers—readers of not only the curricular texts present in a classroom but also the entire classroom situation *as text*. Conceivably, beginning teachers enter into teaching with a lifetime of personal experiences as students, some ideas about how to teach, what it means to be “teacher,” and how students might learn. It is plausible that these initial ideas about teaching could be confirmed or disconfirmed as teachers continue to interpret these ideas in light of their teaching experiences. Extending Rosenblatt's transactional theory to the context of teaching provides teachers, teacher educators, and researchers with a “window” into teachers' processes for making meaning. Understanding garnered from this study: illumine the transitional process from being an expert student to becoming an experienced teacher; provide new insight into persistent problems in learning to teach; and extend notions of reading and literacy to the professional context of teaching.

Experience

In this study's Classroom Literacy theoretical framework, experience is a transactional and narrative construction. In the following section, I assert that these two qualities—transactional and narrative—are both rooted in and connected by Dewey's (1938) philosophy of experience.

Experience and education. Prolific on the subject of experience (e.g., Dewey, 1934, 1938, 1958), John Dewey positioned experience as the crux of meaningful learning. In his 1938 publication, *Experience and Education* Dewey argued for a philosophy of education based on a philosophy of experience. This philosophy of experience had two connected criteria: continuity and interaction. The principle of continuity asserted that all experiences are connected through an experiential continuum. This principle of continuity is a narrative view of experience. The second criterion for Dewey's philosophy of experience was the principle of interaction. Interaction posits that individuals live through a series of situations or transactions with their environments at particular times. This principle of interaction is a transactional view of experience.

A transactional view of experience. Although it would be another decade before John Dewey would adopt the term *transaction* (Dewey & Bentley, 1949), to characterize his epistemological perspective, he described a transactional view of experience in his 1938 treatise, *Experience and Education*. This transactional view of experience is articulated in his presentation of the criterion of interaction for educative experiences.

The criterion of interaction states that experience both influences and is influenced by environment. "Every genuine experience," wrote Dewey, "has an active side which changed in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had" (1938, p. 39). That is to say, "experience does not occur in a vacuum. There are sources outside an individual which give rise to an individual" (p. 40). Any experience includes the interplay of both internal and objective or environing condition (Dewey,

1938; Eisner, 1985). Together, in their interaction, they form a *situation*. Situation is individuals' transacting with internal and external contexts. Dewey wrote that:

The statement that individuals live in a world means, in the concrete, that they live in a series of situations. And when it is said that they live *in* these situations, the meaning of the word "in" is different from its meaning when it is said that pennies are "in" a pocket or paint is "in" a can. It means, once more, that interaction is going on between an individual and objects and other persons. The conceptions of situation and interaction are inseparable from each other. An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment....The environment, in other words, is whatever conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had. Even when a person builds a castle in the air he is interacting with the objects which he constructs in fancy. (pp. 43-44).

The transactional nature of experience, as described in Dewey's principle of interaction, connects the external, environmental conditions (or the context, as Rosenblatt called it in her transactional theory of reading) to the internal, attitudinal quality of an experience; it also connects these enviroing conditions to past and present experiences through a continuum of experience—a principle Dewey referred to as the continuity of experience. Dewey's principle of the continuity of experience is a narrative view of experience.

A narrative view of experience. Dewey's principle of continuity in the philosophy of experience claims that "every experience lives on in further experiences" (1938, p. 27).

Dewey elaborates:

[E]very experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences. For it is a somewhat different person who enters into them... It covers the formation of attitudes, attitudes that are emotional and intellectual; it covers our basic sensitivities and ways of meeting and responding to all the conditions which we meet in living. From this point of view, the principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after. (p. 35).

For Dewey, "educative" experiences were those that contributed positively toward the desire and ability to go on learning in future experiences. Dewey's criterion assumes a narrative view of experience, one that recognizes temporality—that the present is connected to a past and a future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). The connection between Dewey's philosophy of experience and a narrative view of time is also addressed in the context of a review of narrative inquiry in Chapter Three of this study.

Experience in narrative inquiry. It is from Dewey's transactional and narrative views of experience narrative inquirers (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Xu & Connelly, 2009) research teachers' experiences as stories. Narrative inquirers study

experience; this has been a constant in the “mapping” of narrative inquiry as a methodology (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006). Clandinin and Connelly explain in their prologue to *Narrative Inquiry* (2000) that in their view of narrative inquiry, narrative is a way of understanding experience; “experience is the stories people live. People live stories, and in the telling of these stories, reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones. Stories lived and told educate the self and others” (p. xxvi).

A Dewian view of narrative inquiry. Dewey’s writings on the nature of experience have provided a “conceptual, imaginative backdrop” (2000, p. 2) for Clandinin (2006), Clandinin and Connelly’s (e.g., 1995, 2000) and Connelly and Clandinin’s (e.g., 1988, 1990) narrative research. Specifically, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) construct or imagine a conceptual framework for narrative inquiry influenced by Dewey’s view of experience as 1) both personal and social, and 2) continuous. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) write that Dewey’s view of experience transforms a “commonplace term” to an educator into an inquiry term and provides “a term that permits better understandings of educational life” (p . 2).

In Dewey’s transactional paradigm¹², experience is both personal and social. Although people are individuals, they cannot only be understood as individuals, for they are always relating to their social contexts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Similar to

¹² Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use the word *interaction* rather than *transaction* in their discussion of Dewey’s influence on their work; however, the transactional view of humans in a reciprocal relationship with their environments is paramount in their work. As stated earlier, it was not until 1949 that Dewey adopted the term *transaction* to describe this epistemological view; his earlier works (e.g. 1938) use the word *interaction*.

Clandinin and Connelly's writing that Dewey's view of *experience* as both personal and social permitted them to study a child's learning (2000) while understanding that that learning took place in the social context of classrooms and communities, so too does it permit my inquiry into two individual beginning teachers' experiences while attending to the larger social professional and personal contexts in which these experiences take place.

Dewey's criterion of continuity in experience holds important implications for thinking about experience, education, teaching, and narrative research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The idea of continuity in experience asserts that an experience grows out of prior experiences and leads to future experiences. "Wherever one positions oneself in that continuum—the imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future—each point has a past experiential base and leads to an experiential future" (Clandinin & Connelly, p. 2) To think about a particular teacher's experiences is to acknowledge that "there is always a history, it is always changing, and it is always going somewhere" (p. 2). For Clandinin and Connelly (2000), this notion of continuity is a narrative construction, one that provides narrative unity as a way of thinking about the connections between narrative and life.

Working in a landscape that imagines, as did Dewey, "research as the study of experience," Clandinin and Connelly (2000) write that "the social sciences are founded on the study of experience. Experience is therefore the starting point and the key term for all social science inquiry" (p. xxiii). People live and tell stories as a way of organizing experience, making meaning of it, affirming it, interpreting it, re-envisioning it, sharing it, and communicating it with self and others (Bruner, 1986; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin

& Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Dyson & Genishi, 1994; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Experience, education, and research are connected in a transactional paradigm—an epistemological stance that views humans in a reciprocal relationship with their environments. This view generates a narrative view of experience. Indeed, for Clandinin and Connelly (2000), “narrative became a way of understanding experience” (p. xxvi). In the prologue to their seminal work, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (2000), Clandinin and Connelly wrote:

For Dewey, education, experience, and life are inextricably intertwined. When one asks what it means to study education, the answer—in its most general sense—is to study experience. Following Dewey, the study of education is the study of life—for example, the study of epiphanies, rituals, routines, metaphors, and everyday actions. We learn about education from thinking about life, and we learn about life from thinking about education. This attention to experience and thinking about education *as* experience is part of what educators do in schools.

(pp. xxiii-xxiv)

In Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) and Connelly and Clandinin’s (2006) view of social science research, experience, and narrative are related. Narrative inquiry, then, is a view of human experience—“the study of experience as story” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477). Narrative inquiry is a way of thinking about experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006) and a way to study the knowledge that is

represented through, embodied in, and underpinned by teachers lived and told stories (Elbaz, 1981; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

With narrative as a “vantage point,” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxvi), there is a ground to stand upon to study experience and to represent peoples’ experiences in research texts. “In this view, experience is the stories people live. People live stories, and in the telling of these stories, reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones. Stories lived and told educate the self and others...” (p. xxvi). Story “is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which his or her experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477). Story, then, is an appropriate way to think about how teachers might read and compose their classroom experiences as texts—texts that they read, live, and tell. Through story, it is possible to consider how teachers make meaning from the stories of experience that they live and tell.

Chapter Synthesis

In the first section of this chapter, I provided the readers of this study with an outline of the Classroom Literacy theoretical framework—a framework through which I envision teachers as readers, writers, and meaning makers of their classrooms as dynamic texts. Next, I summarized Louise Rosenblatt’s transactional theory, descriptions of her theory’s philosophical and historical contexts, and definitions of her theory’s key terms. In writing this section, I sought to explicate a central construct in the research questions I have posed. I also sought to provide readers of this study with additional information about the central theory informing this study’s theoretical framework. In the third section of this chapter, I attended to the construct of experience as it relates to the study’s

research questions and theoretical framework. I also connected a Dewian view of experience to narrative inquiry, educational research, and story as a way to study teachers' experiences.

Conceptually, Dewey's philosophy of experience is the connecting thread between Rosenblatt's transactional theory of meaning-making and Clandinin and Connelly's idealization and development of narrative inquiry as a method for studying experience in education and in life.

From a transactional view of experience, Dewey (1938) wrote that people live in a series of transactional experiences with their internal and external environments. These experiences are called *situations*. Rosenblatt (1969, 1978, 1994, 2005) attached Dewey's concept of transaction to the specific context of reading. She made this connection because (a) she sought to discover the process by which readers arrive at their meanings, and (b) she found that Dewey's concept of transaction captured what she found to be at work her students' process of making meaning from texts.

Standing on Dewey's shoulders, Rosenblatt's theory has stretched across disciplinary boundaries to contribute to literary theory, pedagogy, educational theory, and even philosophy (Connell, 2008). Rosenblatt worked the oft ignored reader into the fabric of the reading experience. Implications of her work have penetrated classrooms and empowered individual readers—of all ages—to make meaning from texts (Beers, 2005).

Standing on Rosenblatt's shoulders, I look about my own classroom, filled with prospective and practicing teachers, and I wonder: How do teachers make the meanings

called teaching? And in this narrative inquiry, I ask: How do teachers make meaning from classroom events?

Chapter Three

Methodology

In the previous chapter, I discussed the transactional paradigm and a narrative view of experience—two constructs in the research questions and theoretical framework of this study. These two constructs connect Rosenblatt's (1978, 2005) theory of reading and Dewey's (1938) theory of educative experience in a theoretical common ground. In this third chapter, I continue to map the terrain of this theoretical common ground by connecting narrative inquiry methodology to it.

Purpose and Overview of the Study

Living, telling, and talking about stories are meaning-making endeavors (Brochner, 2005; Bruner, 1990; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Gee, 1985; Mishler, 1986; Reissman, 1993, 2008; Richardson, 1990, 2005). In this study, I inquire into layers of living, telling, listening to, talking about, reading, and interpreting stories for purposes of awakening to a more meaningful understanding of learning, teaching, and researching. More specifically, the purpose of this narrative inquiry is to examine the stories teachers tell and live in order to understand how two beginning English teachers make meaning from classroom events.

In order to contextualize the purpose of this study within existing scholarship in English education and teacher education, Chapters One and Two of this study described a

theoretical framework in which I view beginning teachers as “readers” who make meaning of the complex, dynamic “text” of their classrooms. Broadly defined, *text* here referred to the everyday, verbal and nonverbal communicative signs relating to classroom experiences.

In Chapter Two I also connected existing, sociocognitive and sociocultural conceptions of literacy—literacy is thinking like a literate person (Langer, 1987) and using literacy skills to acquire and construct new knowledge (National Council Teachers of English [NCTE], 2008) that is both influenced by and influences the culture in which it is constructed (Gee, 1996, 2008)—to the context of teaching when I described what I refer to as teachers’ “classroom literacy.” Through the Classroom Literacy framework, I envisioned teachers as readers, writers, and communicators who acquire and use literate thinking and skills for educative purposes. More specifically, (a) teachers, like readers, draw from their linguistic-experiential reservoir (Rosenblatt, 2005) to guide their process of interpreting and understanding classroom events; (b) teachers, like readers, are guided by the stances they adopt; (c) teachers, like readers, compose understanding in social contexts; (d) teaching, like reading, is a transactional experience; (e) and teacher education, like English education, can benefit from studying the meaning-making processes of “readers.” Guided by this theoretical construct, I attended to teachers’ cognitive and social processes for meaningful understanding. I also acknowledged that as a transactional experience, teaching could shape a teacher’s professional identity, knowledge, and view of others, similar to how the exploration of literature through reading transactionally influences one’s sense of self, the text, and the world beyond (Rosenblatt, 1938). Finally, just as a transactional view of reading argues that readers

compose new texts as they read (Rosenblatt, 1978, 2005; Smagorinsky, 2008), teachers compose “texts” of their teaching experiences.

Narratives are “a primary way individuals make sense of experience,” writes Riessman, “this is especially true of difficult life transitions” (1993, p. 4). For beginning teachers, transitioning from a lifetime of school experienced from the student side of the desk to being the teacher can be difficult—a transition that Christenbury (2006) likens to a “loss of innocence” (p. 37). Since “[l]ife’s narratives are the context for making meaning of school situations” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 3), inquiring into beginning teachers’ stories offers teacher education a window into better understanding how teachers make meaning from teaching experiences during the transitional stage of beginning teaching.

Research Questions

To guide my inquiry in this study, I asked the following central question (Creswell, 2007):

1. How do two beginning English language arts teachers make meaning from classroom events?

In order to address this central question, I answered the following sub-questions:

- (a) What stories do two beginning English teachers live and tell about their classroom experiences?;
- (b) What are the contexts of these two beginning English teachers’ stories?;
- and (c) What critical events or turning points do they identify in their stories?;
- and (d) What knowledge, language, or experiences do they use to make meaning from classroom experiences?

In the spirit of bracketing myself *into* the study and providing an account of who I am in relationship to the study and study participants (Campesino, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Connolly, 2007; Connolly & Reilly, 2007), I also asked a second question:

2. How do I, as a beginning teacher educator and educational researcher, make meaning from research events?

To mirror the sub-questions designed to understand the meaning-making of the participants, I also asked: (a) What research stories do I live and tell?; (b) What are the contexts of these research stories?; (c) What critical events or turning points do I identify in these research stories?; and (d) What knowledge, language, or experiences do I use to make meaning from research experiences?

Overview of the Chapter

Research stance. Creswell (2007) has stated that research methods proceed from a researcher's philosophical and theoretical stances. Theoretically and philosophically, my stance as a narrative inquiry researcher is best summarized by Louise Rosenblatt (2005): "Every reading act is an event, or a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular pattern of signs, a text, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context" (p. 5). In designing this study, I viewed the participants as readers of their classroom text; I viewed myself as a reader of the field texts I collected, analyzed, and composed; and I viewed the academic community as readers of this narrative inquiry text. Each of us was/is actively constructing meaning, using our own background knowledge

and the texts before us as guides. The meaning that we each construct is a transactional event, influenced by time and place and context.

Study design. The design of this study is intimately connected to the theoretical and philosophical stances guiding my investigation. Therefore, in this chapter I have openly and self-consciously situated this study in narrative inquiry methodology—a methodology that resonates with the theoretical framework I have described in Chapters One and Two and summarized in the preceding section of this chapter. The philosophical basis of both Classroom Literacy and narrative inquiry methodology, as developed by Clandinin and Connelly, is a Deweyan, transactional, narrative view of experience. The congruence between the theoretical framework and the methodological framework is further explicated in the design section of this chapter.

Seven narrative inquiry considerations (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) guided my research design choices. These considerations were based on three narrative inquiry commonplaces: temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). I describe these three commonplaces and the seven design considerations in later sections of this chapter.

In order to address the aforementioned research questions, I have focused this inquiry on both the stories that the participants *told* about their beginning teaching experiences during interviews, recorded conversations, and writings about their teaching experiences and on the stories that participants *lived* out during classroom observations and the conversations the participants and I had in the midst of those teaching experiences. Furthermore, to contextualize the data I collected during this investigation

(January to May of 2011), I also considered archival data (collected from January of 2008 to May 2009) in order to respect the experiential continuity of these two participants as they transitioned from being students of teaching in university related contexts to being teachers in their own classrooms (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Craig, 1995). Nevertheless, to tell the participants' stories was to also tell my own story, to describe the way that I make meaning of research by "reading" and transacting with the participants and their stories as our life-worlds connected, transacted, and constructed meanings. Therefore, the secondary focus of this study addressed how I make meaning from research events.

Bricolage (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) guided my thinking about data analysis, as I moved back and forth from using the following data analysis techniques during five stages of data analysis: critical events analysis; a theoretical reading of data; analysis focused on meaning, as well as analysis focused on language (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Polkinghorne, 1995; Riessmann, 1993, 2008; Webster & Mertova, 2007). The purpose of the selected data collection and analysis techniques was to provide both a panoramic and an up-close depiction of these teachers' meaning-making of classroom events. This met the criteria of "broadening" and "burrowing" for quality narrative sketches (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; Webster & Mertova, 2007). My ability to "zoom" an analytical lens "in" and "out" allowed me to consider the connections between details and events in the stories of these teachers' experiences in the context of the larger story of these participants' ever-unfolding lives. This stance is consistent with narrative reasoning. As Richardson (1990) has written, "Narratively...the connection between the events is the meaning" (p. 21). My narratively

informed data collection and analysis techniques are later represented in Table 1 and are further explicated in the later section of this chapter devoted to describing the study.

Chapter organization. In the sections that follow, I first provide a brief context for narrative inquiry in general and then for narrative inquiry as employed in educational research. These contexts are intended to communicate the values guiding my design of this study. I then describe the philosophical assumptions I employed to guide this narrative inquiry. The purpose of this description is to connect a Deweyan view of experience to the methodology of narrative inquiry as developed by Clandinin and Connelly. Third, I summarize Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three commonplaces of narrative inquiry in order to provide readers of this study with a description of the study's methodological framework. Fourth, I describe seven design considerations that Connelly and Clandinin (2006) have proposed for narrative inquiry. Fifth, I describe the specific research procedures proposed for this study. A chapter summary concludes this chapter.

Narrative Inquiry

Although narrative has a long, interdisciplinary, intellectual history (Clandinin, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Riessman, 1993, 2008), narrative inquiry is a new methodology in the social sciences; it is a methodology still in the making (Chase, 2005; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2006; Riessman, 2008).

Narrative inquiry is the study of narratives, stories, or descriptions of a series of events (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Although scholars disagree about the origin and definition of narrative inquiry, and although there are different approaches to narrative

inquiry (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Riessman & Speedy, 2007), narrative inquirers generally view stories as one of, if not *the*, fundamental way humans account for and make meaning of experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Elbaz, 1991; Polkinghorne, 1988, 1995; Richardson, 1990). Thus narrative inquiry begins with experience as expressed in lived and told stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, 2006; Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Daynes 2007); these experiential starting points are “informed by and intertwined with theoretical literature that informs either the methodology or an understanding of the experiences with which the inquirer began” (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p 5). The focus of narrative inquiry is the experiences of individuals as well as the many social, cultural, and institutional narratives in which individuals’ storied experiences and are composed, shaped, communicated, and enacted (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Citing Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) write that essentially, “narrative inquiry involves the reconstruction of a person’s experiences in relationship to the other and to a social milieu” (p. 5).

As a qualitative research methodology, narrative inquiry is guided by assumptions about interpretation and human action. In sharp contrast to the assumptions guiding positivistic and post-positivistic research paradigms, narrative inquiry does not conduct research in order to control or predict; narrative inquiry seeks to understand (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

Narrative inquiry as I have conceptualized and presented it in this study aligns with the view that narrative inquirers study individuals’ experiences in the world, experiences that are lived and told in stories. Understanding individual teacher’s storied

experiences can also contribute to understanding the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within the educational contexts in which these stories take place.

Turning toward narrative inquiry. Many researchers have noted that social science has taken a turn toward the interpretive (e.g., Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Geertz, 1973, 1983; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Riessman, 1993, 2008). Citing Denzin and Lincoln (2005), Creswell (2007) explains that since the mid 1990's,

the interpretive qualitative research approach, focusing on the self-reflective nature of how qualitative research is conducted, read, and advanced, has become much more dominant in the qualitative discourse, and has, in many ways, been integrated into the core of qualitative inquiry. The role of the researcher, the person reading a textual passage, and the individuals from whom qualitative data are collected play a more central role in the researcher's design decisions. (p. 3)

Narrative inquiry—a form of qualitative research that focuses on experience, story, meaning, and understanding—“extends the ‘interpretive turn’ in the social sciences” (Riessman, 1993, p. 1).

In their historical analysis of narrative inquiry, Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) identified four turns that researchers take when they move toward narrative inquiry. “By *turns*,” Pinnegar and Daynes explain, “we mean a change in direction from one way of thinking or being toward another” (p. 7). These four turns include: (a) a change in the relationship between researchers and participants; (b) a move away from numbers and toward words as data; (c) a change from focusing on the general and universal toward the specific and local; and (d) an embrace of “blurred genres of knowing” (p. 3). Pinnegar

and Daynes (2007) are careful to note that (a) these turns are not changes one must make in order to be a researcher, and that, (b) for researchers who take these narrative turns, the four turns happen in different orders and to different extents. Nevertheless, they also write that

we become narrative inquirers only when we recognize and embrace the interactive quality of the researcher-researched relationship, primarily use stories as data and analysis, and understand the way in which what we know is embedded in a particular context, and finally that narrative knowing is essential to our inquiry. (p. 7)

Furthermore, assert Pinnegar and Daynes, the extent to which a researcher moves in her thinking across these four turns is indicative of how fully a researcher embraces narrative inquiry. “Those who most fully embrace narrative inquiry are those who, like Clandinin and Connelly (2000), simultaneously embrace narrative as a method for research and narrative as the phenomenon of study” (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 7).

These four turns—the turn toward a relationship with participants in which both the participants and I will change as a result of our interactions; toward the study of words as data in order to understand the meaning of human interactions; toward a deeper understanding of complex and contextualized rather than generalized experiences; and toward an embrace of multiple ways of knowing—as well as the embrace of narrative inquiry as both method and phenomena represent the values guiding this narrative inquiry.

Philosophical assumptions of narrative inquiry. As Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) point out in their historical review of narrative inquiry, the movement toward narrative inquiry represents a shift away from the basic philosophical assumptions of what Bruner (1986) calls a paradigmatic way of knowing. First, the turn away from numbers and toward language as data questions the paradigmatic assumption of reliability. Numbers are associated with the assumption of reliability through a realist perspective that what we study can have an “independent, objectlike existence with no intrinsic meaning” (Smith, 1983, p. 7 as cited in Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 29). Rather than rely on statistical inferences from numbers to provide the criteria for knowing, narrative inquiry embraces the understanding that all research is constituted in language, whether it be the language of discourse or numbers. “[N]arrative inquirers embrace the metaphoric quality of language and the connectedness and coherence of the extended discourse of the story entwined with exposition, argumentation, and description” (p. 29).

The second assumption, objectivity, is closely related to the assumption of reliability and characterizes the relationship between the researched and the researcher. This assumption posits that research is a neutral activity, presents what is researched as an object separate from the researcher, “denies human connectedness and growth” (p. 29), and fails to account for how the researcher’s choice to study one phenomenon over another reflects interest, passions, curiosity, stance, or insight that connect the researcher in a non-neutral way to his or her research. “What fundamentally distinguishes the narrative turn from ‘scientific’ objectivity is that knowing other people and their interactions is always a relational process that ultimately involves caring for, curiosity, interest, passion, and change” (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 29).

Third, as narrative inquirers turn toward valuing rather than dismissing the local and complex for the allure of universal prediction and control, they turn away from the paradigmatic assumption of generalizability. “What distinguishes narrative inquirers is their understanding that understanding the complexity of the individual, local, and particular provides a surer basis of our relationships and interactions with other humans” (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 30).

Finally, as narrative inquirers turn toward the embrace of multiple ways of knowing the world, they turn away from the assumption of validity. The concept of validity is rooted in a positivistic epistemology that values an objective relationship between the researched and researcher, the use of reliable numbers to control or manipulate in order to apply generalizable findings. “What distinguishes narrative inquirers is their desire to understand rather than control and predict the human world” (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 30).

Narrative inquiry in educational research. Narrative is increasingly used in educational research focused on educational experience (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006). The justification for this is that “humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead stories lives” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). To study narrative is to study “the ways humans experience the world” (p. 2). “Life’s narratives,” write Connelly and Clandinin, “are the context for making meaning of school situations” (1990, p. 3). Elbaz (1991) writes:

Story is the very stuff of teaching, the landscape within which we live as teachers and researchers, and within which the work of teachers can be seen as making

sense. This is not merely a claim about the aesthetic or emotional sense of fit of the notion of story with our intuitive understanding of teaching, but an epistemological claim that teachers' knowledge in its own terms is ordered by story and can best be understood in this way. (p. 3)

People live, think, experience, and communicate in and through stories. They help humans organize experiences, make connections, discover and express meanings. This is especially true for school experiences where the dynamic intersection of learning, teaching, living, communicating and relating forge new stories of experience. As Webster and Mertova (2007) write, "Narrative is well suited to addressing the complexities and subtleties of human experience in teaching and learning" (p. 1).

Clandinin and Connelly are considered to be the progenitors of narrative inquiry in educational research because they "established the educational importance of narrative inquiry as a research methodology" (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 22). The term *narrative inquiry* first appeared in their 1990 article in *Educational Researcher*, and was used to describe their work in teacher education focused on storytelling (Clandinin et al., 2007; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Their work posited that what teachers know is expressed in stories of educational experience (Beattie, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; Webster & Mertova, 2007). What distinguished Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) work from previous studies or reviews of narrative (e.g., Coles, 1989; MacIntyre, 1981; Polkinghorne, 1988) was that they situated their ideas "as narrative and inquiry, as phenomenon and method" (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 22). They connected the "theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived" with "educational experience as lived"

(Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 3). The first narrative inquiry handbook, edited by Clandinin (2007), has just recently been published in order to map out the methodological terrain and borderlands of narrative inquiry methodology.

Story, narrative, and narrative inquiry. In their 1990 article, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) write that “narrative is both phenomenon and a method” (p. 2) To distinguish the two, they refer to the phenomenon as “story” and the method as “narrative” “Thus, we say that people by nature live storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience” (p. 2).

In their definitions of story, narrative, and narrative inquiry, Connelly and Clandinin (2006) simultaneously distinguish the terms from each other while connecting their meaning through a Deweyan view of experience:

Arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry come out of a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which his or her experiences of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Viewed this way, narrative is the phenomena studied in inquiry. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as methodology entails a view of the phenomena.

To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomena under study (2006, p. 477).

Philosophical Framework: A Narrative Perspective of Experience

Because the still newly forming methodology of narrative inquiry in the social sciences has generated much talk of stories, their function in our lives, and their place in composing our collective experiences (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007), Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) have called for a more precise philosophical distinction between the terms *narrative* and *narrative inquiry*.

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) cite Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998, p. 1) who attributes a “narrative revolution” with the defeat of post positivism as the sole paradigm for social science research. Paul (2005) has written that although logical positivism was found to be an untenable philosophy of science sometime after the mid-20th century, positivistic principles still guide much research in education and the social sciences. Lieblich and colleagues argue that narrative inquiry is a needed methodological response to positivist and post positivist paradigms. For Clandinin and Connolly, this methodological turn is connected to ways of thinking about experience (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007).

Narrative inquirers study experience; this has been a constant in the mapping of narrative inquiry as a methodology (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006). Clandinin and Connelly explain in their prologue to *Narrative Inquiry* (2000) that in their view of narrative inquiry, narrative is a way of understanding experience; “experience is the stories people

live. People live stories, and in the telling of these stories, reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones. Stories lived and told educate the self and others...” (p. xxvi).

Central to narrative inquiry methodology in this study is a Deweyan (1938) philosophy of experience. As discussed in Chapter 2, a Deweyan view of experience links this study’s purpose, theoretical framework, and methodological framework. This transactional view of experience is central to the epistemology and ontology of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007) as described by researchers who situate their work in Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (e.g., Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007; Clandinin & Rosiek 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Xu & Connelly, 2009).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Connelly and Clandinin (2006) have described a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space based on Dewey’s view of experience. This three-dimensional space demarcates a landscape of narrative inquiry through the identification of three narrative inquiry commonplaces: attention to temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007).

The narrative commonplace of temporality relates to Dewey’s criterion of continuity in experience. Present experiences are connected to those that come before it and those that will come after it. Thus, narrative inquirers attend to a temporal continuity; they view and describe people, events, and actions as having a past, present, and future (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). The commonplace of sociality connects with Dewey’s criterion of interaction. In any experience, people are always in an interactive or transactional (Dewey & Bentley, 1949) relationship with the personal and social contexts

in which experiences take place. “Framed within [a Deweyan] view of experience, the focus of narrative inquiry is not only on individuals’ experiences but also on the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals’ experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, pp. 42-43).

Methodological Framework: Three Narrative Inquiry Commonplaces

In education, narrative inquiry is an attractive methodology for studying experience; nevertheless, as Connelly and Clandinin (2006) argue, the meaning of the term *narrative inquiry* has lost some of its meaning due to “lack of disciplined thinking” (p. 477) and to misconceptions that the methodology is *simply* telling stories when in actuality, the methodology is surrounded by complexities at all stages of narrative inquiry (Clandinin et al., 2007). Before a study even begins, narrative inquiry necessitates the researcher’s ability to think narratively (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). It also requires the researcher to attend to experiences with “particular kinds of wakefulness” (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 21).

In order to further demarcate the “complex dimensions” of narrative inquiry (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 21), Connelly and Clandinin (2006) provide a conceptual framework, intended to be “checkpoints” (p. 479) for directing narrative inquirers’ attention when conducting narrative inquiry (Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). These dimensions are identified as “three commonplaces of narrative inquiry—temporality, sociality, and place—which specify dimensions of an inquiry

space” (p. 479). Connelly and Clandinin’s (2006) narrative commonplaces¹³ are based on Dewey’s criteria of experience: continuity, interaction, and situation. Narrative inquiry is a “simultaneous exploration of all three commonplaces” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479).

The commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place serve as this study’s methodological framework.

Temporality. Temporality is a central feature in narrative thinking. Narrative inquirers do not describe an event or a person as it “is”; rather,

When we see an event, we think of it not as a thing happening at that moment, but as an expression of something happening over time. Any event, or thing, has a past, a present as it appears to us, and an implied future. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 29)

Narrative inquirers respect that “events under study are in temporal transition. Narrative inquirers do not describe an event, person, or object as such, but rather describe them with a past, a present, and a future” by considering and providing an account of their “temporal history” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479, 480). Because “events and people always have a past, present, and a future” (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 23), it is

¹³ The notion of multiple commonplaces that must be attended to simultaneously is drawn from Schwab (1962). Schwab, influenced by Aristotelian ideas, developed four commonplaces of curriculum: teacher, learner, subject matter, and milieu. Schwab wrote that curriculum’s four commonplaces must be attended to simultaneously in order to consider the complexity of curriculum (Clandinin et al., 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

important to adopt a view that seeks to “understand people, places, and events as process, as always in transition” (p. 23).

Sociality. Narrative inquirers are concerned with both personal and social conditions (Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). *Personal* refers to “the feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions of the person, whether inquirer or participant” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480). *Social* refers to “the existential conditions, the environment, surrounding factors and forces, people and otherwise, that form the individual’s context” (p. 480). The commonplace of sociality:

allows narrative inquirers to distinguish their studies from highly personal studies that focus mostly on a person’s thoughts and feelings. This commonplace also allows narrative inquirers to distinguish their studies from studies that focus mostly on social conditions that may treat the individual as a hegemonic expression of social structure and social process. A narrative inquiry attends to both. (p. 480)

This means that, for example, to describe a particular teacher’s personal feelings toward a classroom happening, the narrative inquirer also considers the teacher’s social conditions—such as the context of administration or community that shape the teacher’s part in that context (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Also, in the larger design of a narrative inquiry study, a researcher must connect narrative accounts of the personal to the larger social context to which these up-close views of experience relate. To answer questions such as *So what?* And *Who cares?*, narrative inquirers address both the personal and the

larger social and educational issues or conditions relating to the academic communities in which the study is situated (Clandinin et al., 2007).

The commonplace of sociality also includes the relationship between the researcher and the participants (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin et al. 2007). “Inquirers are always in an inquiry relationship with participants’ lives. We cannot subtract ourselves from relationship” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480). This aspect of sociality considers how the inquirer negotiates, maintains, and collaborates with the participants. Thus, narrative inquirers give an account of who they are and who they are in relationship to their participants. “In contrast to the common qualitative strategy of bracketing inquirers out, narrative inquirers bracket themselves in to an inquiry” (p. 480).

Place. Place or the sequence of places constitutes the third narrative inquiry commonplace (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin et al., 2007). *Place* refers to “the specific concrete, physical, and topological boundaries of place where the inquiry and events take place” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480-481). The essence of this commonplace is that “all events take place some place” (p. 481). Rather than ignore place in favor of being able to generalize, narrative inquirers acknowledge the influence of place on the study (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

Place or sequence of places changes in relationship to temporality. A teacher in a particular classroom, for example, was educated in other classrooms; a narrative inquirer considers the influence of these other places. Considering where interviews take place is another example of attending to the narrative inquiry commonplace of space (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

Narrative inquiry considers all three commonplaces—temporality, sociality, and place; narrative inquirers asks questions which attend to each (Connolly & Clandinin, 2006).

Seven Considerations for Designing Narrative Inquiry

Connolly and Clandinin (2006) argue that becoming a narrative inquirer means more than just selecting methods of data collection and interpretive processes for the data collected. In other words, narrative inquiry is not just some-*thing* that a researcher *does*; rather, it is first a narrative way of thinking about inquiry—a way of thinking that begins “from the outset as studies are being designed” (p. 481). Connolly and Clandinin (2006) provide seven considerations for designing a narrative inquiry based on their methodological framework of temporality, sociality, and place: (a) imagining a lifespace; (b) living and telling as starting points for collecting field texts; (c) defining and balancing the commonplaces; (d) investment of the self in the inquiry; (e) researcher-participant relationship; (f) duration of the study; (g) relationship ethics and narrative inquiry. Although these considerations are not necessarily unique to narrative inquiry, argue Connolly and Clandinin (2006), they “are crucial to it and to the habit of thinking narratively” (p. 481).

Design consideration 1: Imagining a lifespace. For the narrative inquirers, the first consideration in designing a study is “an act of imagination”; they must imagine their selected topic and participants “as existing in an ever shifting space” (Connolly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 481). Drawing on Dewey’s (1938) view of experience as existing on

a continuum along which each experience grows out of past experiences and leads to new experiences, Connolly and Clandinin (2006) write that narrative inquirers must imagine their study as existing in an experiential continuum which includes a temporal continuum and a personal and existential continuum. “In this way we think of our inquiry phenomena, topics, participants, and puzzles as taking place in this multidimensioned, ever changing life space. To plan a narrative inquiry is to plan to be self-consciously aware of everything happening within that space” (p. 481). It is to imagine and re-imagine the study, in a reflective and reflexive back-and-forth as lives and contexts change during the study (Clandinin, et al., 2007).

Design consideration 2: Living and telling as starting points for collecting field texts. Connolly and Clandinin (2006) assert that “the most profound differences in kinds of narrative inquiry are captured in a distinction between living and telling” (p. 478). The primary difference between telling and living “is often a difference between life as lived in the past (telling) and life as it unfolds (living)” (p. 482). Most narrative inquiries begin with telling; that is, inquirers interview participants who tell. Another way to begin narrative inquiry is to begin with participants’ living. Connolly and Clandinin (2006) describe beginning with participants’ living as being “more difficult, time-consuming, intensive, and, yet, more profound method” because “in the end, narrative inquiry is about life and living” (p. 478) This method is rich with possibilities and also poses potential danger to the inquirer because of the control participants have over the living. Between “the extremes of life as it was and life as it unfolds” are studies in which “the two starting points complement one another” (p. 482).

Narrative inquiry based on telling mainly focuses on storytelling (Connolly & Clandinin, 2006). Storytelling refers to both the process by which the narrator tells and the product of what is told (Kramp, 2004 as cited in Connolly & Clandinin, 2006). For narrative inquirers focused on telling (e.g., Wortham, 2001), more emphasis might be placed on the interpreted meaning that the researcher makes of the stories told rather than on the told stories as the unit of analysis (Connolly & Clandinin, 2006).

Design consideration 3: Defining and balancing the commonplaces. Defining the narrative inquiry commonplaces refers to “the analytic task” (Connolly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 482) of examining and describing the features of temporality, sociality, and place (as discussed in the previous section of this chapter) within the study. As Connolly and Clandinin (2006) note, this often creates tension for narrative inquirers who must simultaneously imagine the narrative life space of the study but also define and describe it, all while keeping the study’s design in an imagined, changing whole. Balancing these three commonplaces requires the inquirer’s ability to be “self consciously aware of everything happening” within the narrative space (p. 481). It also means that the research questions that are asked as well as the field texts (data) that are collected and composed (analyzed and produced) keep in mind all three commonplaces of narrative inquiry (Clandinin et al., 2007).

Design consideration 4: Investment of the self in the inquiry. Narrative inquiry, especially studies that investigate participants’ living, commonly lead inquirers to become “heavily involved” and “intimately intertwined” with the participants’ lives, the field texts collected, and with the written research texts (Connolly and Clandinin,

2006, p. 482). For this reason, Connelly and Clandinin (2006) write that narrative inquirers must be “self-conscious of their potentially intimate connection,” and, in designing the study, “need to deliberately imagine themselves as a part of the inquiry” (p. 482). Examples of how narrative inquirers (e.g., Campesino, 2007; Connolly & Reilly, 2007; Murray Orr, 2005; Pushor, 2001; Ruskamp, 2009; Wortham, 2001) demonstrate their awareness of self in the study include positioning oneself in the study, keeping field notes, maintaining a researcher’s journal, writing letters from the field, using metaphors for guiding one’s presence in a study, exploring one’s role with the aid of a colleague, and writing one’s “narrative beginnings” (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 25) that disclose the researcher’s interest in and relationship to the study.

Design consideration 5: Researcher-participant relationship. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) write that, while it is possible to have no direct relationship with participants, in narrative studies that focus on participants’ living and studies that take place over longer periods of time, it is likely that a researcher will develop deep relationships with the participants. Citing MacIntyre (1981), Connelly and Clandinin (1990), state that relationships are joined by “the narrative unities of our lives” (p. 4). In narrative inquiry, especially those that take place over time, the researcher and participants can each be empowered through a relationship where both feel a sense of voice and connectedness to the inquiry’s purpose or to the community to which the study contributes (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Hogan, 1988; Noddings, 1986). Rather than view participants as “objects” of study, narrative inquirers view their participants as being in a collaborative relationship. Narrative inquiry, write Connelly and Clandinin (1990), is “a process of collaboration involving mutual storytelling and restorying as the

research proceeds” (p. 4). This means that researchers must be aware that they are constructing relationships with participants—relationships based on connectedness, respect, and care—relationships in which the voices of participants and the researcher are heard.

Design consideration 6: Duration of study. Considerations of the duration of a study relates to the study’s starting point and to the researcher-participant relationships. For narrative inquiries focused on participants’ living, researchers need more time in the field in order to become acclimated to the classroom, gain trust, and “insert themselves into the ebb and flow of school life” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 483). While in the field, narrative inquirers collect field texts and tend to find “themselves capturing different, more ephemeral, and often otherwise hidden elements of the living not available in interview” (p. 483).

Design consideration 7: Relationship ethics and narrative inquiry. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) write that the consideration of ethics is central to narrative inquiry. “Ethical considerations permeate narrative inquiries from start to finish: at the outset as ends-in-view are imagined, as inquirer-participant relationships unfold, and as participants are represented in research texts” (p. 483). Even from the beginning—in imagining the lifespace of a narrative inquiry—as narrative inquirers start to draft their own narrative beginnings, they begin to consider ethics—a consideration and negotiation of relationships to research texts, to scholarly interests, to imagined participants, to ways in which they might write and share research (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Huber & Clandinin, 2002).

The idea of relationships is vital to the ethics of narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Huber & Clandinin, 2002). Thinking in responsible and responsive ways about how narrative inquiry can influence the experiences of those with whom we engage is a part of how narrative inquirers ethically proceed in navigating relationships (Clandinin, 2006; Huber & Clandinin, 2002). In their reflection on relational ethics in working with children, Huber and Clandinin (2002) wrote that they began to see how narrative inquiry “needed to be guided by relationships, by the shared narrative unities of our lives” alongside participants (p. 797). “Engaging with one another narratively,” write Huber and Clandinin, “shifts us from questions of responsibility understood in terms of rights and regulations to thinking about living and life, both in and outside classrooms and off school landscapes” (p. 797). In an article on narrative inquiry methodology, Clandinin, 2006 writes about ethics:

For those of us wanting to learn to engage in narrative inquiry, we need to imagine ethics as being about negotiation, respect, mutuality and openness to multiple voices.... We must do more than fill out required forms for institutional research ethics boards. (p. 52)

Narrative inquirers must think and respond in responsible ways that make sense not only to ethical review boards, but to living and life; after all, narrative inquiry is ultimately concerned with life experiences.

According to Connelly and Clandinin (2006), “the most serious ethical problems arise between texts and readers” rather than between the researcher and participants (p. 483). Relationships are typically negotiated in favor of the participants, and when they

are not, the participants may withdraw from the study. However, there is another kind of relationship that needs careful, ethical consideration—that of representing participants and representing the relationships between the researcher and her participants in the written text of the study. Since readers tend to make judgments of participants' lives and about the researcher-participant relationship based on the written research text, Connelly and Clandinin (2006), citing Schultz (1997), advise narrative inquirers to negotiate research texts with participants to ensure that “the representations of participants' experiences are ones that are resonant with their participants” (p. 483).

A Critical Events Approach Nested within Narrative Inquiry Design

Rationale for a critical events approach. The theoretical basis of this study's conceptual framework is Rosenblatt's (1978, 2005) transactional theory of reading. Seeking to discover how readers make the meanings called poems, novels, plays, and the like, Louise Rosenblatt formulated a theory of the reading process that speaks to “all modes of reading” (2005, p. 1) as well as “all modes of language behavior” (p. xxxi) including spoken communication and writing. In the 2005 articulation of her theory, she wrote about the “total context” of her theory and made explicit connections to the classroom environment:

Here we return to our basic concept that human beings are always in transaction and in a reciprocal relationship with an environment, a context, a total situation. The classroom environment, or the atmosphere created by the teacher and students transacting with one another and the school setting, broadens out to include the whole institutional, social, and cultural context. These aspects of the

transaction are crucial in thinking about education and especially the “literacy problem.” (p. 26)

Rosenblatt also called for educational research, particularly qualitative approaches dealing with “problems in the context of the ongoing life of individuals and groups in a particular cultural, social, and educational environment” (2005, p. 34). She advocated for use of a post-Einsteinian research paradigm which removes the “limitations on research imposed by the dominance of positivistic behaviorism” (p. 30). Rather than researchers’ treating reading related activities as anonymous, isolated skills, “research on any aspect should center on the human being speaking, writing, reading, and continuously transacting with a specific environment in its broadening circles of context” (p. 30). This narrative inquiry investigates how teachers—seen as readers of the communicative texts in their classroom and school contexts—make meaning from classroom events.

The crux of Rosenblatt’s transactional theory is that “[e]very reading act is an event, or a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular pattern of signs, a text, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context” (2005, p. 7). It is the idea of reading as an *event*—a meaning-making event—that takes place between a reader and a text in a context that relates to the design of this narrative inquiry and to the selection of a critical events approach to narrative inquiry. The theoretical framework guiding this study views teachers as readers of their classrooms as texts. Extending Dewey’s (1938) philosophy of experience and Rosenblatt’s (1978, 1994, 2005) transactional theory of reading to the context of the classroom, an “event” may be defined as a transactional experience. In the sections below, I provide a brief summary of a critical events approach

to narrative inquiry. This critical events approach to narrative inquiry has been developed by Webster and Mertova (2007) for use in research on learning and teaching.

Webster and Mertova (2007) write that their critical events approach to narrative is integrally connected to Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) suggestion that narrative inquiry in education "generates a new agenda of theory-practice relations" (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 88). This is done through allowing "time and experience to work their way in the inquiry" (p. 88), and through incorporating both participant and researcher stories into the inquiry, allowing for a collaborative nature of storytelling. The goal of this study was to (a) contribute awareness to understanding teachers' learning and meaning-making experiences as they transition from being expert students to novice teachers, and (b) potentially inform the ongoing development of frameworks for teacher education; taken together, these two purposes hope to add to existing scholarship as well as potentially generate a "new agenda of theory-practice relations" (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 88).

A critical events approach. Webster and Mertova (2007) assert that narrative is an "event-driven tool of research" (p. 71) and propose that narratives can be analyzed through a critical events approach to narrative. They advance a framework for narrative research using critical events revealed in stories of experience as a method of research based on narrative inquiry. This approach focuses on highlighting and capturing critical events in the stories of experience for purposes of understanding human understanding and action.

Since people often recall life experiences in terms of specific events, and since peoples' memories of past events often lead them to "adapt strategies and processes to apply to new situations," (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 71), Webster and Mertova (2007) explain that identifying key events and the details surrounding them is useful for "getting at the core" (2007, p. 71) of what is important in a study. For a researcher, holistically studying critical events can be "an avenue to making sense of complex and human-centered information (p. 77). A critical events approach is also a strategy for managing the "the complex series of interrelationships between data sources" (p. 73).

Definition of critical event. "A critical event as told in a story reveals a change of understanding or worldview by the storyteller" (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 73). Quoting Woods (1993a, p. 102), Webster and Mertova (2007) note that when an event has the "right mix of ingredients at the right time and in the right context" it becomes critical (p. 73). Citing Fay (2000), Webster and Mertova write that events can be critical when an individual struggles to adapt an idealized world view in light of the reality of their experience. The conflict between experience and belief "promotes the development of a critical event as the storyteller struggles to accommodate a change into their worldview" (2007, p. 75). Essentially, what makes an event "critical" is the impact or change it has on the storyteller; this impact can only be identified after the event has taken place. Critical events can be positive or negative in nature (Webster & Mertova, 2007; Woods, 1993b). Negative critical events are those that might "lead to personal or educationally retrogressive consequences" (Woods, 1993b, p. 357).

Webster and Mertova (2007) also review the research of Woods (1993a, 1993b) who has investigated critical events in relationship to teaching and learning. Woods argues that critical events are crucial for change and promote understanding in accelerated ways. Critical events can also confirm one's sense of identity or reality in the pressure of challenging or opposing forces. In the context of teacher education, Woods (1993b) describes critical events as

unplanned, unanticipated and uncontrolled. They are flash-points that illuminate in an electrifying instant some key problematic aspect of the teacher's role and which contain, in the same instant the solution. The dramatising of the incident elevates teacher-pupil interactions to a new level, and ensures that it is imbued with a new meaning on a permanent basis. There might be a higher proportion of such incidents during critical periods, such as ones initiation into teaching. They are key factors in the socialization of teachers and 'in the process of establishment' (Ball, 1980) in the classroom. (p. 357)

Woods (1993b) draws from existing research and scholarship to argue that the learning that takes place in critical events is "real learning" (p. 359). Woods describes real learning as that which is holistic and connected to lives and interests of the learners. Thus, Woods explains that real learning is that which is freed from the artificial controls of traditional schooling so that learners are liberated or empowered in the sense that they have acquired resources with which to face the world (Freire, 1970). Real learning is connected to a sense of self which helps to build on students' prior knowledge within and across subject areas (Hargreaves, 1991). Real learning focuses on real situations, issues,

or problems of value or importance, or it constructs situations similar to those that they represent, uses resources or evidence collected for oneself, involves doing things oneself, or doing things that have a realistic purpose. Real learning is holistic; it includes both modes of thinking, “not only rationalist, algorithmic modes of thinking which are so dominant in the official curriculum...but also aesthetic experience...and ‘poetic’ thinking” (Woods, 1993b, p. 360). Real learning is also characterized by a focus on discovery and experience (Dewey 1934) and by a constructivist learning theory (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1986) in which the teacher serves as an active guide for facilitating students’ interaction and learning (Woods, 1993b).

Types of Critical Events. In this study, I consider several types of critical events, including extrinsic, intrinsic, and personal critical events. In addition, critical events can be positive or negative.

Extrinsic, intrinsic, and personal critical events. Webster and Mertova (2007) outline Measor’s (1985) three types of “critical phases” in the teaching profession in order to delineate types of critical events as being extrinsic, intrinsic, or personal. According to Measor (1985), *Extrinsic* critical events can be produced by external factors such as historical and political events. *Intrinsic* critical events occur within the natural progression of a career. In a teaching career she highlights several critical periods, including: entering the teaching profession; first teaching practice; first 18 months of teaching; three years after taking the first job; mid career moves and promotion; and the pre-retirement period. Finally, *personal* critical events might be those events that relate to one’s family, illness, etc. (as cited in Webster & Mertova, 2007, pp- 74-75).

Positive critical events. Woods (1993b) focuses on positive events that can be can be critical in four ways: (a) they promote learning and development in accelerated ways in terms of attitudes toward learning, understanding self or relating to others, development of skills, or acquisition of knowledge; (b) they are critical for teacher development or change in that the teachers take pride in their work, have a feeling of accomplishment, or experience self-realization; (c) they can restore ideals and commitment in teachers and can help teachers to maintain a vision of reality and identity against the pressure of opposing forces; and (d) they can be critical for the teaching profession as a whole by boosting teacher morale or informing the profession of developments for advancement (pp. 357-359).

Critical, like, and other events: Categories for data analysis. Events are deemed critical because of their impact on the individuals involved (Woods, 1993b). In a narrative view of experience, life's events are interconnected, and the connections between them are points of meaning production. Storytelling is one way for researchers to explore critical events (Webster & Mertova, 2007). To aid in the analysis of stories Webster and Mertova (2007) suggest that critical events can be categorized into the categories of (a) critical events, (b) like events, and (c) other events. Categorizing events is a way of "approaching the complexity and extent of data that might be collected" (p. 79). Webster and Mertova define these three categories in the following manner: (a) a *critical event* is selected because of its unique, illustrative and confirmatory nature; (b) a *like event* is an event that occurs at the same level as the critical event and further illustrates, confirms, or repeats experience of the critical event; and (c) an *other event* is a

further event which takes place at the same time and context of the critical and like events.

An example of a *like event* in a teaching and learning situation might be one that takes place with a different group of students. Reviewing like events allows the researcher to confirm or broaden understanding of critical events. Examples of *other events* include informal conversations at lunchtime or in the hallways as well as “the many informal associations which intuitively inform the critical events” (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 78). Findings from the analysis of *other* events are woven into the analysis of *critical* and *like* events (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Operational definition of critical event. In Chapter One of this study, I defined an *event* as a transactional experience; an experience from which meaning was made. A *critical event* was defined as one that “reveals a change of understanding or worldview by the storyteller” (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 73). In light of these definitions, a classroom event will be considered “critical” when either the classroom teacher as storyteller or the narrative inquiry researcher as storyteller identifies an event as having had an impact on one’s self, on the lesson, on students, the teacher, or the researcher. Impact could be a positive or negative influence; the influence could have a professional, relational, or personal (as in influencing one’s perception of self, or influencing one’s cognitive, social, emotional, or physical state) influence.

Description of the Narrative Inquiry: Collection, Analysis, and Representation of Field Texts¹⁴

Overview of the study. In this narrative inquiry I investigated how two beginning English teachers made meaning from classroom events. Understanding gleaned from this study contributes to making more visible the often “invisible” process of transitioning from being a student of teaching to becoming a teacher. Beginning teachers are often challenged by the problems of (a) a view of teaching constructed from their stance as a student engaged in sixteen-year long apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), (b) a growing awareness of the complexity of the classroom (Jackson, 1968, 1990) which may differ considerably from a more limited and discrete (Shulman, 1986) understanding of teaching and learning constructed in the context of their university preparation, and (c) the challenge to enact (Kennedy, 1999) the pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills they have in the context of actual, sustained teaching experiences. Closely attending to the experiences of two beginning teachers illuminated *how* two beginning teachers made sense of events in their stories of experience during this transitional phase in their life stories.

In this narrative inquiry, I investigated the stories of experience and the turning points in those stories that two beginning teachers tell and live, the contexts in which they tell and live their stories, and the background knowledge they use to make meaning of events in their stories. Narratives were the phenomena of investigation in this study, and they were also the method of inquiry. This investigation considered the stories

¹⁴ *Field texts* is the term for data in narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, 2006; Connelly 2007).

participants lived, told, and talked about between January of 2008 and May of 2011. Viewed narratively, these stories were considered as parts of these participants' pasts and anticipated futures. Therefore, contextualizing the stories told in the present, I kept in mind archival data documenting the participants' university coursework experiences and internship teaching experiences; I collected this data with the students' permission during the academic year of 2008-2009, two years prior to this investigation (e.g., Craig, 1995). Although the focus of this study is on the present—each participant's meaning-making during their second year of teaching—the present is connected to the past and to the anticipated future. Considering the present as it connects or relates to the past provides a context for inquiry that respects the continuity of participants' lived experiences over time (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Craig, 1995). This view is consistent with a narrative view of experience and with narrative inquiries in which stories are both a phenomenon and method of investigation. To address the research questions guiding this study, I used multiple approaches to data collection and analyses.

Table 1 depicts the research questions, data, and data analysis techniques I utilized during this narrative inquiry. I constructed this figure to provide readers with a topographical “map” of the intended inquiry landscape I propose to navigate. However, since a narrative inquirer must simultaneously define a study's inquiry space and still allow that space to remain open and flexible in the context of the ever-changing life-space of the study (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006), I present this map as a three-dimensional configuration of an inquiry space rather than a fixed, two-dimensional, prescriptive chart.

Table 1: Data Matrix

Research Question	Data	Data Analysis
<p>1. How do two beginning English teachers make meaning from classroom experiences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stories do two beginning English teachers live and tell about their classroom experiences? • What are the contexts of these stories? • What critical events or turning points do they identify? • What knowledge, language, and experiences guide their meaning-making? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Stories Told</p> <p>Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews about participants’ teaching experiences • Teaching artifacts connected to stories • Writings: • Participant-researcher conversations <p>Archival Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews: internship, spring 2009 • Lesson plans, written teaching reflections, field experience reflections, symbolic sketch, and “My Name” writing spring and fall 2008 <p style="text-align: center;">Stories Lived</p> <p>Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom experiences (observations) • Field notes • Participant-researcher conversations • Researcher journal 	<p style="text-align: center;">Bricolage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Events Analysis: identify critical, like, and connected events • Theoretical Reading: Reader, Text, and Context • Analysis focused on Meaning: Meaning condensation and meaning interpretation • Analysis focused on language: linguistic analysis
<p>2. How do I make meaning of research events?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What research stories do I live and tell? • What are the contexts of these stories? • What critical events or turning points do I identify? • What knowledge and experiences guide my meaning making? 	<p>Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes • Researcher journal • Narrative sketches • Interview transcripts <p>Archival Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence • Written comments on participants’ coursework documents • Memory reconstructions • Researcher Journal • Researcher’s recorded Dictations 	<p style="text-align: center;">Bricolage Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical Reading: Reader, Text, and Context • Meaning analysis • Linguistic analysis • Writing as data analysis

In the sections that follow, I describe the participants in the study, explain the data collection and analysis features indicated on Table 1, and then I discuss the composition of research texts and criteria for verisimilitude. A chapter summary concludes this chapter.

Participants

Sampling. Purposeful sampling guided my selection of two, first-year English language arts teachers as participants for this study. Creswell (2007) describes purposeful sampling as the inquirer's selecting participants and sites that can "purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 125).

I selected beginning teachers because of the potential understandings that could be gleaned from investigating teachers' meaning-making during the transitional time frame between being students of teaching in university settings and becoming members of the teaching profession. Like Piaget who observed the knowledge development of the young, contemporary scholars have recognized novice teachers who are transitioning from being expert students to becoming novice educators as potential windows to see, "in high profile and in slow motion," teachers' knowledge growth (Shulman, 1987a, p. 4). For instance, Shulman (1987a) wrote "[novice teachers'] development from students to teachers, from a state of expertise as learners through a novitiate as teachers exposes and highlights the complex bodies of knowledge and skill needed to function effectively as a teacher" (Shulman, 1987a, p. 4). As someone who has spent the past five years preparing prospective teachers in a college of education, I also have an interest in learning from these beginning teachers; participants' stories are potential windows into learning how

new teachers transition from the university to the teaching profession. Furthermore, narrative inquiry is a particularly appropriate methodology for understanding challenging transitions (Riessman, 1993) such as transitioning from being an expert student to a novice teacher. Finally, the National Commission on Teaching and America's future (1996, p. 6) reminds us that "[w]hat teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn"; stories of beginning teachers' lived experiences offer a unique window into understanding how teachers know and do, thus potentially making the invisible process of making meaning of teaching events more visible.

English language arts teachers were purposefully selected (Creswell, 2007) because the disciplinary connection to narrative and story through literature, composition, and communication in the English language arts classroom generates a fertile ground for a narrative study, especially to a researcher concerned with understanding the development of teachers' classroom literacy and in a study focused on how teachers make meaning of teaching events. The literate environment of an English language arts classroom was also an attractive attribute and complement to this study's theoretical framework.

Although narrative studies often only involve one participant (Creswell, 2007), I invited two participants in order to provide multiple accounts of how beginning teachers make meaning from classroom events. The purpose of this study was not to compare and contrast the two participants; nevertheless connections and distinctions were informative. Having two participants allowed for some "breadth" of exploration while still limiting the sample so as to provide the "depth" of an up-close view of research phenomena characteristic of narrative studies.

Finally, my own background as a secondary English language arts teacher was an influence in my choice to invite two beginning English language arts teachers to participate in this study. As a researcher, my research interests were not born in a vacuum; rather, they were developed in connection to my experiences, readings, and questions in relation to the English language arts background in which they were conceived (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007; Kilbourn, 2006; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Maxwell, 2005). In Chapter One, I provided an account of how the context of my work teacher educator connects to the research in which I am now engaged. I chose to make my own connection to this study explicit; not only did this align with my theoretical framework where teachers are viewed as readers whose meaning-making of their classroom “text” is influenced by contexts, but also this allows readers of this study to be more informed as to how my own position as a researcher might further or limit my research design and findings. After all, my stance is that revealing the “stitching” of this study, rather than concealing it, opens opportunities for discourse about educational research. Although I conceived this study in light of disciplinary connections, and I focused on beginning teachers in a secondary English classroom, I did not believe that this study’s purpose, research questions and design are limited to this population; a similar study could potentially generate understandings for teacher education by inquiring into the meaning-making of more experienced teachers, teachers who were non-traditionally prepared, teachers in other disciplines, teachers or teacher cohorts participating in professional development, as well as teachers instructing in elementary, post-secondary, or even non-academic contexts. In future studies I may include these populations.

Selection of participants. When conceptualizing this investigation, I immediately identified two participants who could potentially contribute to my central research question and to my ongoing understanding of the concept of teachers' classroom literacy. Each beginning English language arts teacher met the previously described purposeful sampling criteria. Each participant was also a recent graduate from an NCATE accredited English education program in a college of education housed within an urban-fringe research university in the southeast United States. These two recent graduates were my former students; each had taken three English education courses that I taught at the university from which they graduated. During the spring of 2008, they were enrolled in separate sections of a Methods of Teaching High School English course, and during the fall semester of 2008, both participants were enrolled in the Methods of Teaching Reading in the Secondary English Classroom course and the Methods of Teaching English: High School Practicum field experience courses that I taught. During the spring semester of 2009, when both participants were completing their final, full-time internship, they both elected to participate in a phenomenological investigation focused on what classroom literacy means to prospective teachers. The participants were no longer students of mine at the time of the 2009 investigation. Because these participants had been former students and research participants, I knew their cognitive, verbal, and pedagogical faculties well enough to identify them as being likely to be able to talk about their teaching experiences in detail, and to potentially be able to talk about how they made meaning of classroom events; thus, these two beginning English teachers were at the top of my purposeful sampling list. Furthermore, because these participants and I had already established a participant-researcher relationship of mutual respect, collaboration,

and candor, these two teachers were ideal candidates for a narrative investigation where such relationships are paramount (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Huber & Clandinin, 2002).

Through email correspondence, I invited each teacher to participate in the study and provided them with a description of what the study entailed; both agreed to participate. A copy of this invitation is in Appendix A. At the time of invitation, I informed participants that I would be making a contribution to their classroom resources in appreciation for their participation. Participants were given the choice between receiving a Netbook computer (valued between \$199.00 and \$299.00) in order to facilitate their ability to write about their experiences during this study, or a gift certificate (valued at \$250.00) to a bookstore for purposes of building their classroom library. Based on my prior experience working with these individuals, I believed that a thank-you gift would not be the reason that these teachers would select to participate in the study; over time, this hunch was validated by the participants' responses to my invitation and by the tone excitement toward the idea of continued collaboration through research. in our correspondence since that time. Each of these participants finds joy in learning, and they expressed joy in the idea of learning from research. Because I respected participants' time and energy, and I wished to positively contribute resources to their classroom even if they chose to withdraw from participating in the study.

Description of participants. As previously noted, each participant is a female, second-year English language arts teacher. Both participants teach in the same school district. As one of the nation's ten largest school districts, it serves a diverse population

and is geographically located in close proximity to the university from which the participants graduated. Each of the participants taught diverse populations of students with a high percentage of the lowest-level readers according to state standardized assessment tests.

“Helen.” One participant, “Helen,” taught tenth grade English and eleventh grade honors English in a traditional urban-fringe high school. Helen completed her internship and first year of teaching in this same school setting.

“Amy.” The other participant, Amy, taught sixth-grade language arts, intensive-intensive reading, and AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) in a middle school setting during her second year of teaching. This participant taught eleventh and twelfth grade English at a Career Center for students who are at least one grade level behind and who want to graduate with a standard diploma, an Exceptional Education special diploma, or a work skills certificate during her first year of teaching. She taught eighth-grade language arts in a magnet partnership school for grades K-8 during her internship.

Chapter Four of this study provides a detailed account of the participants and the contexts in which they teach in relationship to the data collected and analyzed.

Data Collection

In the sections below, I provide a description of the collection procedures from this study. Table 1 in the earlier Overview section provides a map of the narrative inquiry

landscape that I navigated, including research questions, data collection and data analysis procedures.

Telling and living as starting points for data collection. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) assert that “the most profound differences in kinds of narrative inquiries are captured in a distinction between living and telling” (p. 478). Like most narrative inquiries, this study began with telling (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006); that is, I began by interviewing participants who told stories about their classroom experiences. *Story or stories* in this study refers to “narratives that combine a succession of incidents into a unified episode” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 7). The primary focus of data collection then, was on the stories participants told. This focus complements the critical events approach to narrative inquiry, since critical events are identified after they take place (Webster & Mertova, 2007; Woods, 1993a, 1993b). Critical events were collected through story, identified, and then analyzed in the context of the stories participants told about their classroom experiences in order to address this study’s central research question and three issue sub-questions about how beginning teachers make meaning from classroom events.

In addition to collecting stories participants told, I collected field texts that captured participants’ living; that is, participants’ teaching stories as they unfold in the every-day context of classroom life. Participants’ living was documented through my participation in classroom experiences, researcher-participant discussions, audio-recorded class sessions, and field notes as I actively constructed accounts of classroom events (Connelly & Clandinin 1990) in order to provide an account of how participants’ narratives developed (e.g., Ellis 2002 as cited in Connelly and Clandinin, 2006). The

purpose of collecting narratives of participants' living was to supplement and complement accounts of stories told (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) as well as to attend to the narrative unity in which these stories connected. Inserting myself into the ebb and flow of classroom life provided me with a more holistic "reading" of participants' life worlds (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) as I observed and noted the contexts in which stories developed and took place. Attending to the contexts of participants' stories is consistent with the narrative inquiry commonplace of sociality (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000, 2006; Clandinin, 2007) as well as with this study's theoretical framework which asserts that meaning making is a transactional event between a reader and a text in a context (Rosenblatt, 1978, 2005).

Interviews. In narrative inquiry, interviews were the primary method for gathering data (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Mishler, 1986; Riessman, 2008). In this narrative study, interviews served as the primary source of data. Mishler's (1986) frequently cited study of interview in narrative inquiry posits that stories are natural linguistic and cognitive forms through which humans organize experiences and communicate meaning and knowledge. Interviews understood as narratives point to the temporal, social, and meaning structures in participants' responses (Mishler 1986 as cited in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Interviews with open-ended questions tend to invite participants to tell stories, and offer researchers a way to study critical events in teaching and learning experiences (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Thus, interviews which create opportunities for participants to tell stories of classroom events are an appropriate method for collecting field texts focused on participants' telling and for inquiring into participants' meaning-making.

Role of the interviewer. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), narrative interviews focus on stories participants tell. These stories may be elicited by the interviewer or spontaneously offered by participants. After the participant begins sharing a story, the primary role of the researcher is to actively listen to what is said and how it is said, listen for what is not said, pose questions for clarification, and encourage the participant to tell her story. Because the researcher is considered to be the research instrument through the questions she asks and through the silences, nods, smiles, probes, and active listening and meaning-making during the interview, the researcher is seen as a co-producer of the narrative elicited through narrative (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In this study's second question I attended to how I, as the researcher, made meaning from research events. The later data analysis section of this proposal speaks to how I accounted for my participation and interaction in the construction of field texts.

Sequence of interviews. In this study, I conducted two extended initial interviews. Each of these was two to three hours in duration and conducted at the end of each participant's first semester of their second year of teaching (January, 2011). The purpose of the first interview was to encourage participants to identify and talk about stories of their teaching experiences. To begin these interviews, I asked participants to talk about what experiences stood out to them. Follow-up questions were posed to probe for additional details, seek clarification, inquire into temporal relationship, or to check interpretation. Approximately three weeks after the initial interview, I conducted a second, follow-up interview. The purpose of the second interview was to clarify, probe for additional details, member-check initial interpretations, and allow participants to

comment further on previously discussed stories, or to talk about new stories (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This follow-up interview was also two to three hours in duration.

The second set of interviews (interviews 3-4) were conducted toward the end of participants' second semester of teaching (May, 2011). The first interview in this set asked participants to talk about stories from their second semester teaching experiences as well as to comment, clarify, or elaborate on second-semester narrative accounts expressed in writings or through researcher-participant conversations. Two to three weeks after this interview, a follow-up interview was conducted for purposes of clarifying, member-checking interpretations, elaborating, or sharing additional stories (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Each of these interviews were two to three hours in duration.

Interview protocols. Interview questions began by asking participants open ended questions about their teaching experiences. Probing questions attended to the temporal, social, and meaning structures in participants' responses (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Mishler, 1986). Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009, p. 135-136) nine types of interview questions served as a general framework for the kinds of questions I asked participants. These included: introductory questions; follow-up questions; probing questions; specifying questions; direct questions; indirect questions; structuring questions; silence; and interpreting questions.

Overall, the transactional nature of meaning-construction I described in this study's theoretical framework also describes the relationship between the researcher and the participants during interviews. In other words, the participants and I actively

constructed narrative field texts through interaction in conversation. Therefore, my role as a researcher during interviews was not limited to reciting questions I composed before the interview began; rather, I kept each interview's purpose in mind, and I remained open to the interview situation and modifying, adding, or subtracting questions in the context of the actual interview situation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Most interview questions were formed during the interview in response to participants' stories as I sought additional details or checked my ongoing interpretation of what they were saying.

Recording, transcribing, and storing interview data. Interviews were recorded on a digital recording device. Digital files were saved under participants' pseudonyms and stored on my personal computer in a password-protected file folder. Back-up copies of digital files were saved onto an external hard drive and are password protected. Data files will be saved for five years and then destroyed on or before summer of 2016. Interview files were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriptionist and verified by the researcher as I listened to data while reading the transcripts. Participants also had the opportunity to read and verify transcripts. Transcription include comments made by the researcher, stutters (such as "um," "uh"), as pauses and hesitations were signs of active meaning-making.

Researcher-participant conversations. Between the two sets of interviews, recorded researcher-participant conversations were a way to capture both the participants' and the researchers thinking about classroom events and to talk candidly about how these two teachers made meaning from their experiences. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe a conversation as "composing a field text in face-to-face encounters between

pairs or among groups of individuals” (p. 108). They further characterize a discussion between a researcher and participant as marked by equality between speakers and by a flexibility that allows participants to talk about topics that are important to them in the context of the inquiry. In comparing conversations to traditional interviews, the directional nature of an interview is not usually marked by equality since the researcher primarily does the asking, and the participant does the answering (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Although it is possible for an interview to slip into a conversation (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000), conversations are distinguished from interviews by the joint nature of topic selection, talk and meaning-making. Like interviews, conversations entailed probing for additional details; however, this probing took place in the context of situations that entailed listening, trust, and care for the experiences being described (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

In this study, conversations were mutually constituted talk that transpired while I engaged with participants in their workplaces. These conversations were recorded and transcribed when possible. For example, I would tape a lunchtime conversation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) or an after-school conversation about classroom experiences that took place earlier in the day. Conversations are also often spontaneously peppered into the ebb and flow of daily living, making it challenging to capture some conversations on tape; in this case, I wrote field notes about the details of our conversations, and I recorded audio reflections of what I remembered and thought immediately afterward. In this study, interviews did “slip” into conversation. These conversations were critical events; they were events where a participant and I worked together to make meaning. Rosenblatt (1978, 1994, 2005) referred to a conversation as

the most basic example of a linguistic transaction. In this study, recorded conversations about classroom events demonstrated how both the participant and I made meaning from experiences.

Selecting to include conversations as a source of data attends to the narrative inquiry commonplace of sociality (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) and respects the social nature of meaning-making participants and I engaged in together as part of a meaning-making research relationship. Conversations were critical contexts for exploring and making meaning.

Classroom artifacts. Citing examples of narrative research, Clandinin and Connelly (1990, 2000) write that teaching plans, newsletters, personal philosophies, metaphors, picturing, and class rules or guidelines are narrative data sources that can provide context for the work of a narrative study. In this study, teaching artifacts that connected, extended, or otherwise contributed to understanding data collected through interviews, classroom observations, or researcher-participant discussions were considered for this study. Examples of teaching artifacts reviewed included handouts to students, samples of student work on display in the classroom, and classroom art such as posters and pictures.

Classroom experiences. Data collection began with participants' telling stories of classroom experiences and then contextualized these stories in the life world of participants' daily classroom experiences. Beyond the collection of stories as a unit of analysis, attending to the connected nature of how stories came together and were lived out—composed and revised—in the everyday context of life was to consider the broader

landscape of narrative inquiry as lived. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) have written that understanding the process of narrative inquiry entails grasping that “people are both living their stories in an ongoing experiential text and telling their stories in words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others....a person is, at once, engaged in living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories”(p. 4). By spending time with participants in their classrooms, I gathered data that is more holistic than collecting participants’ stories alone. This dual attention to stories told and stories lived also acknowledged and attended to the complexity of participants’ experiences as lived—a complexity that needs to be considered if this educational research is to understand and meaningfully contribute to the profession it studies (Wittrock, 2003). Rather than isolate stories told as a thing to be examined, inserting myself into the life of participants allowed me to consider the contexts and processes of how and where these stories happened and how they connected to the stories that participants told. Being in participants’ classrooms also allowed me to consider and understand the more subtle nuances of these teachers’ thinking (Hillocks, 1999).

Participating in classroom experiences. Rather than use the term “classroom observations”—a term that is likely familiar in the academic research community—I have selected to use the phrase “participation in classroom experiences” to denote the research methods described here. Participation rather than observation more accurately conveys the transactional nature of the theoretical framework guiding both the design of this study and my presence in the field. As a narrative inquirer, my role in participants’ classrooms was an active one characterized by a collaborative process of mutual storytelling and meaning-making with participants as the research proceeds (Clandinin &

Connelly, 1990, 2000). Thus, in the traditional language of academic research, my role could be described as that of a participant-observer (Creswell, 2007). However, as this participation entails the experience of reading and interpreting events that I observe, my role is much more active than the term “observation” may imply. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) observe, “[t]he narrative researcher’s experience [in the field] is always a dual one, always the inquirer experiencing the experience and also being a part of the experience itself” (p. 81). As far as participating in classroom activities and curriculum events, the primary research question guiding this study is focused on the teacher’s meaning making; thus, my participation in classroom events was physically peripheral so that I could observe the teacher in context with her classroom as opposed to participating in the lesson with students and focusing on the students’ meaning-making of classroom events.

Negotiation of entry. Narrative inquirers typically provide an account of how they enter a field situation. This entry is seen as both an ethical consideration and as a relational consideration that requires negotiation with participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000). Because I respected that participants had been living out their stories before I came alongside them and that these stories will continue after I am gone (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000, 2006), I negotiated the extent, schedule, and duration of classroom observations with participants after concluding the first set of interviews. Rather than impose a number of observations based on my own convenience or even that which has been done in other narrative studies (which, of course varies greatly, depending on the inquirer’s purpose), I used the first two interviews as a gauge for co-constructing a meaningful plan of classroom observations. The number of

days that I spent in each participants' classroom ranged between five and seven. The purpose of being in participants' classrooms was not to log some arbitrary number of hours; it was to insert myself into the flow of classroom life—to become a part of the quilt fabric being sewn. The day, times, and durations of observations were negotiated with participants. I allowed them to take the lead in recommending classes to observe, and then each participant and I worked out the details from there. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) have written that being in the field means “getting a feel” (p. 76) for it and becoming connected to the fabric of the narrative:

In order to join the narrative, to become part of the landscape, the researcher needs to be there long enough and to be a sensitive reader of and questioner of situations in an effort to grasp the huge number of events and stories, the many twisting and turning narrative threads that pulse through every moment and show up in what appears to the new and inexperienced eyes of the researcher as mysterious code. (p. 77).

As a participant in classroom experiences, I was in classrooms long enough to “be a sensitive reader and questioner of situations” (p. 77) so that I could better understand the narrative nature of how participants make meaning from classroom events. To account for this, I provided a detailed account of my entry into the field and of my experiences in classrooms as I made meaning from research events (this study's second research question) through field notes and by keeping a research journal.

Field notes. Clandinin and Connelly (1990, 2000) hail field notes as one of the primary tools of narrative inquiry work and one of the most important field texts for

recording the daily interactions in the field—notes out of which narrative inquirers tell their stories of stories of experience. “[F]ield notes are constructed representations of experience” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 106) and are “collected through participant observation in a shared practical setting” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p. 5). Field notes were a vital tool for both constructing and representing the meaning I made of my interactions with participants.

Field notes can influence and are influenced by the researcher’s relationship with participants and by the researcher’s role in the field (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In light of the transactional theoretical framework guiding this study, I envisioned my role as a narrative researcher as a “reader” and meaning-maker of both the texts told to me by participants, and lived out with participants. Reading a text is not a passive activity, but also involves a simultaneous composition of a text as the reader makes meaning of what is being read (Rosenblatt, 1978, 2005; Smagorinsky, 2001, 2008). From the moment a narrative researcher enters the field—whether the field is the location where stories are told through interviews or a classroom where a teacher is living out her stories with her students—they begin to compose field texts (Clandinin, 2006). As a researcher, I acknowledge that I was composing research texts as I read them; field notes were one account of the reading and meaning-making that I did as I actively observe and interpret or read field texts. Field notes facilitated my meaning-making process as I observed teachers living out their stories in the context of their classrooms and as I listened to or reflect on the stories participants tell; they also served as a record and a source of data that can inform the second central research question guiding this study—how I, as the researcher, made meaning from research events.

Researcher journal. Field notes combined with journal writing created a “reflective balance” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 104) in this study. As a narrative inquirer, my own stories of experience connected and transacted with the stories of participants’ experiences. To provide myself with space to process, record, and reflect on how I was involved with, relating or responding to, and experiencing the study, I maintained a research journal.

Archival data. Whereas *data* or *field texts* referred to data collected during participants’ second-year of teaching (2010-2011), *archival data* referred to data collected, with participants’ permission, during university coursework and field experiences, including their internship teaching experiences (2008-2010). The use of artifacts as archival data, although typically just referred to as data or field texts (Creswell, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2000) and not necessarily distinguished as “archival,” is a common feature in narrative inquiry. In this study, I distinguished data from archival data for purposes in order to clarify the origin of this data and my relationship to participants during the time that the data was collected. The primary focus of this investigation was on data collected from participants’ second year of teaching; however, as a narrative study, data collected is not just a reflection of what *is* or what appears to be, but was connected to participants’ pasts and anticipated futures (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Considering how archival data from participants’ university coursework and field experiences connect to their second-year teaching experiences was to attend to their temporal and social histories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, 2006). Furthermore, since the theoretical framework for this study proposed, participants’ meaning-making of their classroom events was likely guided by their personal and

professional linguistic-experiential reservoir (Rosenblatt, 1978, 2005), using archival data—data collected over time—attended to the narrative inquiry commonplace of temporality and provided a narrative context for participants’ meaning-making of classroom events.

University coursework artifacts. Archival data included artifacts from participants’ coursework experiences. These artifacts consisted of assignments that participants completed during their university courses during the spring 2008 and fall 2009 academic semesters. Artifacts were collected with participants’—then students’—permission, including: (a) lesson plans; (b) lesson plan reflections; (c) field experience reflections; (d) symbolic sketches of what teaching and learning meant to them; (e) a life learning map, and (f) blogs.

Interviews. Archival data also included two interviews conducted during participants’ internship. In the spring of 2008, I conducted a phenomenological study focused on what classroom literacy means to beginning teachers; this study was conducted in conjunction with my doctoral course work, and included two interviews with each participant during their final, full-time internship. The first interview was a semi-structured interview conducted in March, approximately four to five weeks into the participants’ ten-week internship. The second interview was conducted approximately three weeks later and consisted of clarifying questions, probing questions, and follow-up questions about participants’ teaching experiences and conceptions of classroom literacy. During the course of these interviews, participants talked about their reasons for wanting to teach as well as teaching experiences. Including this data into the present investigation

will allowed for a narrative understanding of participants' meaning making that more fully attended to the narrative inquiry commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). These interviews were transcribed verbatim in the spring of 2008.

Summary of data collection. I collected data, also referred to as field texts, during two phases.

Phase one. In summary, this study began by focusing on the stories two beginning teachers told about their classroom experiences. A second interview followed approximately three weeks after the first, and focused on clarifying, probing, member checking my initial interpretations, and offering participants the opportunity to further comment on their experiences. The first two interviews were designed to address the study's first research question and its related issue sub-questions by inquiring into what moments stood out to participants from their teaching experiences.

Phase two. The second phase of data collection continued to address these research questions by attending to both the stories participants lived and told in relationship to their every-day professional lives. During this phase, participants had the option to write about their classroom experiences by maintaining a blog or emailing reflections or stories to me. Occasionally participants did write. These events were positive events through which participants took heart. I also spent time with participants in their classrooms, observing their classroom interactions, conversing with them, and interpreting how they make meaning from classroom events. Participants and I engaged in conversations about their classroom experiences, and I made field notes about these

events. Several recorded conversations during participants' lunch or planning period or after school took place. These conversations were opportunities to talk about questions I had from observations, opportunities to check interpretations, or engage in conversational meaning-making. A final interview after exiting the classroom and composing narratives in the research text provided a final opportunity to member check the interpretations I had made and to clarify details participants shared in earlier interviews, conversations, or writings. This final interview also served as a point from which participants continued to make meaning as they read, talked about, and made new meanings in relationship to reading the stories I had written.

Throughout these two phases, I maintained a research journal, field notes, analysis notes, and audio recorded reflections immediately following interviews and classroom observations. I also composed narrative sketches from the stories that participants and I lived and told. These were sources for me to analyze my own meaning-making process.

Finally, archival data was used in order to attend to participants' temporal and social narrative histories by considering participants' meaning making of classroom events in various contexts over time. Although the focus of this investigation was on participants' experiences during their beginning (first two) years of teaching, archival data contributed to a more holistic understanding of participants' meaning-making.

Figure 4 below provides a graphic summary of the data collection procedures and timeline for acquiring data.

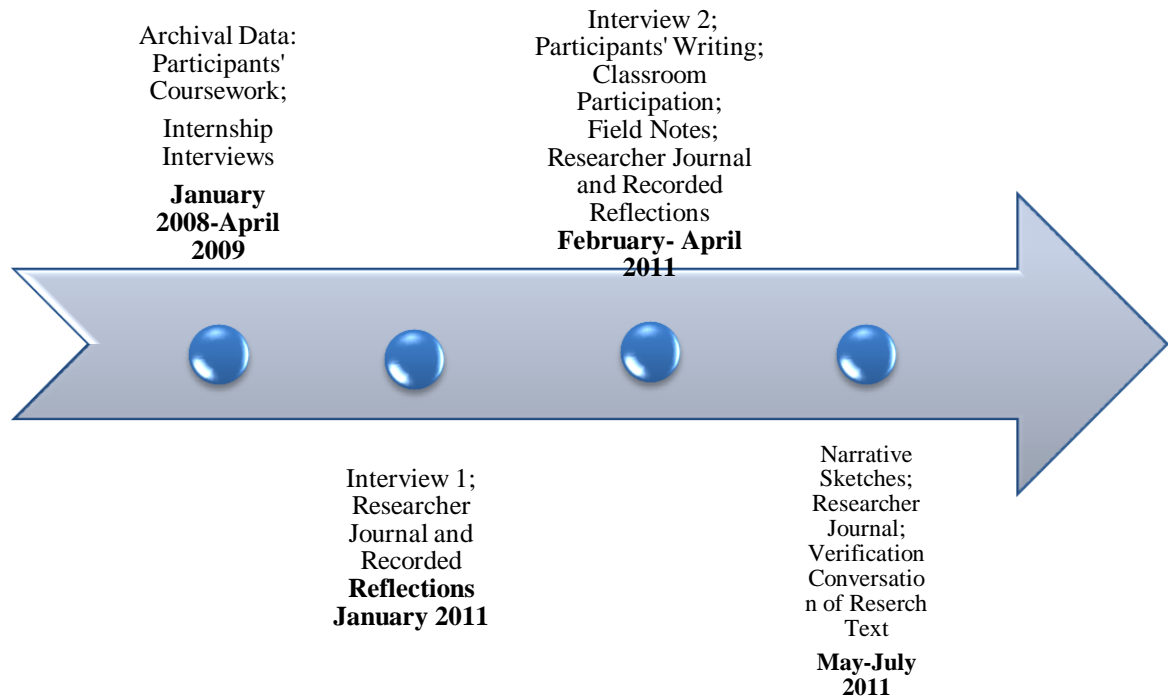


Figure 4: Data Collection Timeline

Analysis of Field Texts

Stories lived and told were the phenomena investigated in the field texts I gathered. Examining these stories, I sought to understand participants' meaning making primarily through narrative analysis that paid attention to the connections between events, to the context in which the stories were told, the turning points and critical events participants identified in their stories, and the language, experience, and knowledge the participants used to make meaning from their classroom experiences. Thus, the research "story" I tell in this chapter attends to the stories participants lived and told during their early field-based teaching experiences while they were students in a college of education

and to the stories they lived and told as second-year English language arts teachers; however, the research story presented in this chapter focuses on the stories participants lived and told during the spring semester of their second year as English language arts teachers within the context of the stories they have lived and told over time. This focus respects the narrative inquiry commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connolly; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) as well as the central tenet of this study's theoretical framework, that meaning-making is a transactional event between a particular reader and a particular text in a context (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1999, 2005).

From Field Texts to Research Texts: Six Phases of Data Analysis

Answering my inquiry questions took me through five phases of data analysis: Phase one focused on identifying stories; phase two focused on identifying critical events and turning points in participants' stories by interpreting the function of individual stories in relationship to the narrative whole; phase three focused on my own meaning-making from research events; phase four focused on a theoretical interpretation of the connections between the previous three phases of data analysis; and phase five used writing as a data analysis technique. I now turn to explain each of these phases in more detail.

Phase one: Identifying stories. In order to answer my inquiry questions, I first identified stories in the field texts I gathered. In this study, *story or stories* signifies “narratives that combine a succession of incidents into a unified episode” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 7). Stories are narratives that have both a distinguishable shape—a beginning, middle, and end or a situation, transformation, and situation—as well as a subject matter

that includes or invites human values (Scholes 1981). I identified stories in the field texts using the above definitions as guides. I also used a linguistic framework adapted from Labov (1972, 2001) to attend to participants' linguistic orientations to the beginning of a story through phrases such as "Like yesterday, I..." signaling the beginning of a story meant to serve as an example. Linguistic cues also guided my identification of the continuation of a story by attending to words like *and*, *but*, and *so* used to connect segments of story. Structural features such as conflicts or complicating actions followed by an evaluation of those events (Labov, 1972, 2001) or a statement of the meaning made from the story or the telling of the story often signaled the conclusion of a story. Frequently, participants began and concluded their stories with statements of meaning. Finally, I used my general knowledge of plot—"what orders narratives" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 225)—to help identify stories in participants' field texts. Finally, I kept in mind Frosh's (2007) psychoanalytic critique of narratives (as cited by Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) when I considered that stories are not always told in neat, straightforward, unified wholes; stories can be fragmented and interrupted by participants' making meaning through their stories as they tell them.

Phase two: Analyzing participants' meaning making. After my initial readings of the field texts and identification of the stories participants lived and told, I then examined events in participants' stories. Extending Dewey's (1938) philosophy of experience and Rosenblatt's (1978, 1994, 2005) transactional theory of reading to the context of the classroom, an "event" may be defined as a transactional experience. I conducted a narrative analysis of events in participants' stories, considering the context in which they were told, their relationship to other events in stories lived and told, the

language used to tell or to talk about them, and the explicit and suggested meanings participants made from these events in their stories. Guided by Webster and Mertova's (2007) critical events method of analysis for narrative inquiry, I next identified events participants deemed critical and transitions they identified in their stories of classroom experiences during their first two years as teachers. A critical events approach focuses highlighting and capturing critical events in the stories of experience for purposes of understanding human understanding and action. Webster and Mertova (2007) explain that identifying key events and the details surrounding them is useful for "getting at the core" (2007, p. 71) of what is important in a study. For a researcher, holistically studying critical events can be "an avenue to making sense of complex and human-centered information (p. 77). A critical events approach is also a strategy for managing the "the complex series of interrelationships between data sources" (p. 73).

In this study, *critical event* refers to an event that influences a participant's or the researcher's understanding or world view. In relationship to story and narrative, a *turning point* is a point when the conflict, story line, or sequence of events changes direction. In relationship to meaning making, a turning point refers to a change in awareness, thinking, or having an awareness about an event's significance (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Therefore, I identified critical events in participants' stories through their statements of how those events influenced their thinking, awareness, understanding, or world view. I identified turning points through the structure of participants' stories, looking for points in which their stories changed direction. I also identified turning points in participants' meaning-making from classroom events through identifying their statements about the meanings they made from classroom events and then identifying changes in their

awareness or in the storyline of their thinking. Participants verified that events were critical from their perspective. Said another way, through analysis of participants' stories, I identified their statements about the changes between the time that they were student teachers (interns) to the present time when they are second-year teachers. I then identified the events which participants indicated influenced these changes. Stories that spoke of critical events and related to participants' turning points were then identified for additional analysis. From these selected stories, I analyzed how participants made meaning by addressing the sub-questions guiding this study. I noted the context in which the stories were told, the language participants used to tell their stories, and the knowledge and experiences they referred to when telling their stories. These data analysis steps are appropriate in light of the research questions, theoretical framework, and narrative inquiry design guiding this inquiry. While the first phase of data analysis focused on identifying and understanding the stories participants told, this second phase of interpreting the field texts was focused on understanding participants and how they make meaning through the stories they live and tell about classroom events.

Phase three: Analyzing the researcher's meaning making. To guide my own meaning-making from research events, I used *bricolage*, an analytical qualitative research stance that allowed me to select a variety of analytical methods and tools in response to the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Under the umbrella of *bricolage*, the analytical tools I utilized included a) those that focused on the meaning of what was communicated, and b) the linguistic forms through which meaning was expressed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, Labov, 2001) to make meaning of the data. More specifically, these data analysis techniques included: a) an analysis of narratives (Labov,

1972; Polkinghorne, 1995) to identify stories by their structure within field texts; b) narrative analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Richardson, 2000; Riessman, 1993, 2008; Polkinghorne, 1995) to move back and forth through the data, examining the meaning of the event in relationship to the study as a whole (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000; Richardson, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1995) during multiple readings of the field texts gathered and analyzed; c) writing as narrative data analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995; Richardson, 2000; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005); d) a theoretical reading of data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Lather, 1995) to be mindful of my own way of reading data; e) concept-driven coding (Gibbs, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) to code portions of interview data in relationship to my narrative inquiry questions; f) meaning condensation (Giorgi, 1975; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) to abridge critical events and turning points into short phrases; g) meaning interpretation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) which included hermeneutical interpretation of meaning to continually move back-and-forth between parts and the whole as well as meaning interpretation focused on participants' self-understanding, critical commonsense understanding, and theoretical understanding (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) of meaning making; and h) linguistic analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) to consider the metaphors, personal and impersonal pronouns, use of active and passive voice to analyze the meaning of statements in stories of participants' critical events and turning points in verbatim transcripts (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The relationship of data analysis tools used to make meaning of field texts is represented in Figure 5.

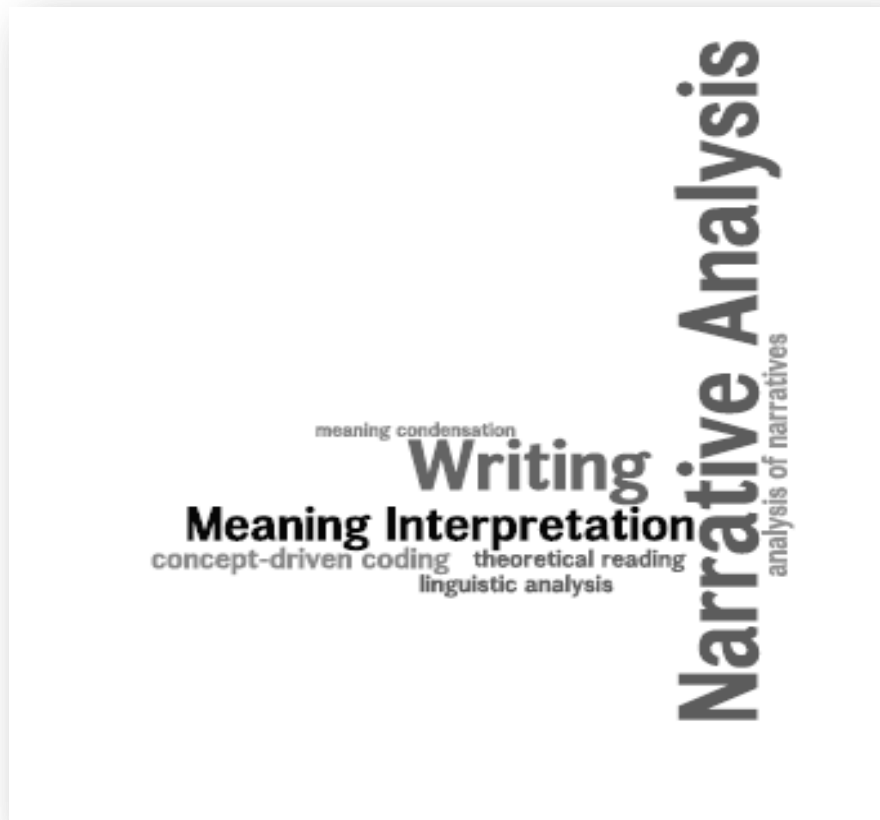


Figure 5 Bricolage: Relationship of Analytical Tools Used

Given the complex nature of meaning-making, *bricolage* is an appropriate methodological stance that provides the strength and flexibility needed to analyze data from multiple analytical perspectives, that keeps the relationship between data in mind, and that provides opportunities for the researcher to select and use multiple analytical strategies in response to a variety of rich field texts collected over time (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Taking an analytical approach that was free to move about in response to the contents of the data made sense to me as someone who has spent her professional life using a variety of tools and stances to analyze and make

meaning from texts; it also made sense in the context of the theoretical and methodological frameworks guiding this study; and finally, it provided a window into my own meaning-making process, allowing me to address this study's second question, how I make meaning from research events.

This *bricolage* approach generated the many meanings I made from reading, interpreting, and analyzing participants' stories of critical events and turning points. These meanings took the form of data charts, schematics, coding and notes on transcripts, written narrative sketches, written stories, and journal writing. The meanings I have made are threaded throughout this chapter, through the structure, content, and specific meaning statements I make from reading and interpreting participants' stories in the research story I tell later in this chapter. My meaning making is also presented in Chapter Five when I take a step back from the study to situate my meaning making in the broader context of existing research and scholarship to revisit my earlier understanding of teachers' meaning making that I expressed in the theoretical framework with which I approached this study.

Phase four: Analyzing connections between the participants' and researcher's meaning-making. My analysis of field texts, however, did not stop after identifying stories, after analyzing the stories of critical events and turning points that participants lived and told, or after making meanings from these field texts. The combination of narrative analysis, my theoretical framework, and the research questions guiding this study, led me to take a step back from the field texts collected, from the participants' stories and from my own writing and analytical notes to look for connections between the first three phases of the data analysis in light of the whole study.

Doing this, I entered a fourth phase of data analysis that considered meanings in the study as a whole. This process seemed to come about in response to writing the texts I lived and read; nevertheless, in retrospect, I came to see that I was enacting my own theoretical framework—a meaning I made from this very process—by stepping back from the study to read and make meaning from the research texts as a whole. At this point, the focus and shape of this chapter shifted away from presenting stories lived and told and shifted toward presenting meanings I made *from* the study *through* participants’ stories of classroom events and my own research stories. This shift created a critical event in the plotline of this narrative inquiry. I re-read meanings made from the first three phases of data analysis in light of the *Classroom Literacy* theoretical framework. In other words, while the first phase focused on identifying and understanding stories, the second focused on understanding participants’ as meaning-makers, the third focused on understanding my own meaning-making process, and the fourth looked for connections among the previous three phases of data analysis.

Phase five: Writing as data analysis. During this composition phase, I considered the meanings I made during the fourth phase and I began recomposing the stories that illustrated these meanings into narrative sketches. Writing these narrative sketches necessitated a back-and-forthing (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000) between parts of the data and the whole, between data and archival data, between thinking about the context of the stories participants and I lived and told, and moving back and forth between field texts and the unfolding narratives or research text.

Phase six: Reading as data analysis. Finally, the written form the narrative sketches composed during phase five were presented to each participant to read and respond to. As a researcher, my concern during this phase was to learn if what I had written represented each participant's experiences. Before participants began reading these sketches and the research "story" comprised of these sketches, I asked each participant, "Do you see yourself in here?" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Our shared experience reading these stories created a sixth phase of data analysis. During this sixth phase, participants read the stories I reconstructed from the many stories they lived and told, and they frequently stopped their reading to think aloud, remember, respond to, comment on, and confirm the meaning I had made through the construction of their stories. During this phase of reading, reflecting, and talking, the participants and I read and analyzed their stories as texts; we noticed patterns, and further connected "pieces" of experiences and meanings we previously made. This phase of analyzing and responding to the written text was a shared data analysis experience as well as another opportunity to extend our meaning-making.

These six phases are represented in figure 7. Additional information about the data analysis procedures I utilized follows this figure.

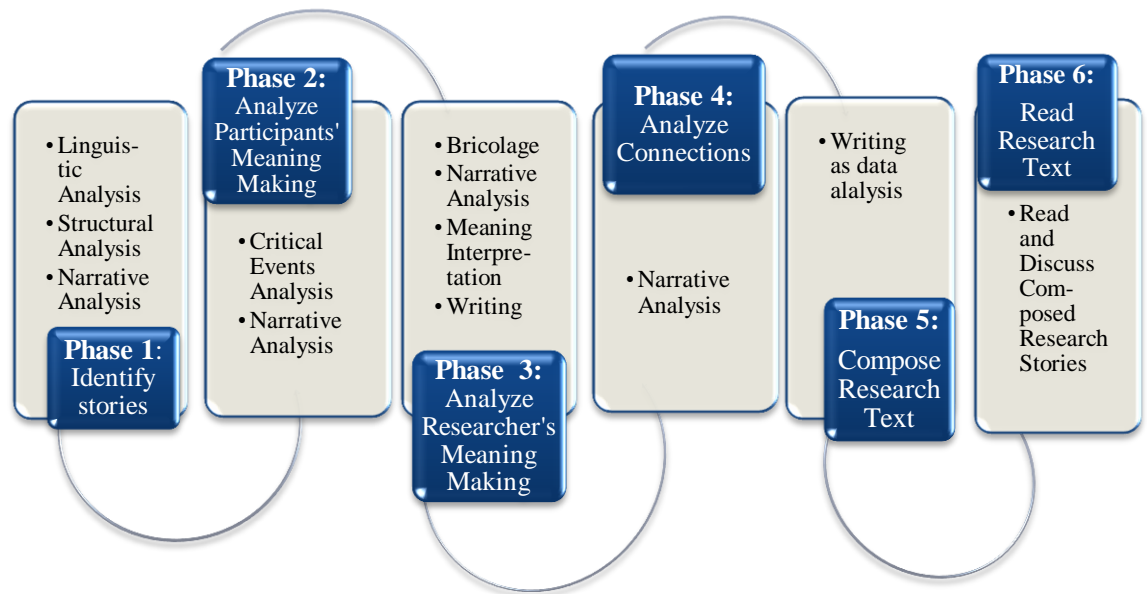


Figure 6: Six Phases of Data Analysis

Bricolage as an Approach to Making Meaning from Field Texts

Bricolage, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) is a common, general approach to interview analysis described as an “eclectic form of generating meaning—through a multiplicity of ad hoc methods and conceptual approaches” (p. 233). The bricolage interpreter is someone who “adapts mixed technical discourses, moving freely between different analytic techniques and concepts” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 233). For instance, a researcher might read through interviews to gain an overall impression, then return to interesting passages, note patterns or themes, cluster to see which things tend to go together, compare and contrast, note relations, and create metaphors to convey key understandings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994). A bricolage is a construction created from diverse tools, resources, or methods. Meaning generated

from bricolage may take several forms, including words, figures and flow charts, numbers or a combination of these (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Bricolage describes my analytical approach toward making meaning from field texts. This choice is consistent with narrative reasoning, and allowed me to use my theoretical and disciplinary knowledge to analyze and make meanings of research texts. The analytic techniques I employed under the “umbrella” of bricolage are described in the sections that follow. Figure 5 is a graphic depiction of the relationship I imagine these techniques having at this point in this study.

Narrative analysis. I employed several narrative analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Polkinghorne, 1995) techniques. Narrative analysis is guided by narrative reasoning (Bruner, 1985, 1986) in order to consider participants’ meaning-making from events within the context of narrative whole (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Polkinghorne, 1995). Narrative analysis generally included the consideration of how “pieces” of data related to the whole and looking for connections in the data. More specific forms of narrative analysis was a critical events analysis (Webster & Mertova, 2007) of the stories the teachers lived and told as well as a theoretical reading of data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009); each of these considered the relationship among the participants’ stories, their contexts, and the meaning participants’ made.

Theoretical reading. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) define *theoretical reading* as “a theoretically informed reading of interviews.” (p. 235). Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading (1969, 1978, 1994, 2005) informed both this study’s theoretical framework and constructs represented in the study’s research questions. Rosenblatt

theorized that reading is a meaning-making event, created through a transaction between a reader and a text in a particular context. Rosenblatt and Dewey both asserted that there is a transactional relationship between a person and her or his environment as well as that knowing implies a knower and a known. This study's theoretical framework posits that teachers and researchers are also readers—readers of their classrooms and their studies (respectively) *as* dynamic texts. The purpose of this study was not to “confirm” or to “prove” a theoretical relationship between Rosenblatt’s theory of reading and teachers’ reading classrooms as texts. Nevertheless, Rosenblatt’s theory describes a way in which I will think about field texts when I read them: Who are the “readers” in this study? What are the contexts in which they make meaning? What “texts” do they read, interpret, construct, and evaluate in the stories of their experience? What meanings do these teacher-readers make? What meanings do I make as a researcher-reader?

A theoretical reading of interview transcripts should provide a way to begin thinking about my research questions: How do these beginning teachers make meaning from classroom events? How do I make meaning from research events? A theoretical reading could also allow me to notice new dimensions and relationships in the familiar setting of classroom teaching and learning. It could allow me to make connections between existing research in reading and in teacher education that could produce new meanings for teaching and for teacher education (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, one could argue that a theoretical reading of field texts may imply biased interpretations that lead me to ignore aspects of the data that do not fall into the theoretical lens. To balance bias created by a theoretical lens, I made analytic questions guiding my interpretations explicit, reflected on my presuppositions and assumptions in my research

journal, played “devil’s advocate” by posing alternate or contrasting interpretations, analyzed field texts through multiple approaches, and provided readers of this study with sufficient data to support the warranted assertions that I make (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Critical events analysis. I identified critical events, like events, and connected/other events in both present and archival data. Categorizing events into the categories of *critical*, *like*, and *connected* (also referred to as *other*) provided a way to manage data, to show the relationships between events in the context of participant’s lives, and organized data in a way that contributed to the narrative sketches I wrote to represent findings in the data. Highlighting critical events and attending to how these relate to like and other/connected events provided me with a way of focusing on *how* participants made meaning from classroom events.

Analysis focused on meaning. To analyze transcripts, I used two analytic tools for qualitative interviewing described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009): meaning condensation and meaning interpretation. Analysis focused on meaning is inspired by hermeneutic text interpretation (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Analysis focused on language. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), interviewing is a linguistic interaction that produces a language text. Linguistic analyses focus on the characteristics of language in an interview as well as the use of grammar and other linguistic forms. Therefore, linguistic analyses may address participants’ use of metaphor or other figurative language, shift in pronoun reference, verb tense, use of passive or active voice, and spatial or temporal references. Attending to linguistic

features in interviews complements analyses focused on meaning in that it may generate or verify the meaning of statements (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Even pauses and hesitations can be meaningful, and in this study, pauses, hesitation, stutters, half-finished thoughts, place fillers like “um,” and “you know?” corresponded to active meaning-making during face-to-face interactions such as interviews and conversations. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) note that linguistic analyses in qualitative studies necessitate verbatim transcription and linguistic training. Interviews in this study will be transcribed verbatim. My degree in English and the decade I have spent professionally reading and teaching texts as linguistically meaningful serves as my expertise in this study. I have also applied a linguistic analysis to interview texts in previous qualitative research (e.g., Edge, 2008b; Edge 2008c; Edge 2009a).

Representation of Field Texts

Narrative inquiry is not simply collecting data and turning them into stories (Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007). Engaging in narrative inquiry means working from “a set of ontological and methodological assumptions and the questions of representational form follow from those assumptions” (Clandinin, et al., 2007, p. 31). This study’s theoretical framework envisioned the participants in this study, the researcher, as well as the readers of this study as “readers” who made meanings from the texts that they read. These meanings generated new texts (Smagorinsky, 2001). In this study, I analyzed the stories teachers lived and told about their teaching experiences, and from these stories I constructed narrative sketches that illuminated critical events in

teachers' stories of experience and demonstrate how these teachers make meaning of their classroom experiences.

Narrative sketches. Narrative sketches which detail the context, the characters, and the events aid the researcher's ability to identify critical events (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Webster & Mertova, 2007). As Webster and Mertova (2007) describe them, narrative sketches are informed by data that contribute to the context and description of critical events. Writing narrative sketches aids the researcher's attention to "a holistic view of their investigation and enables them to classify occurrences into critical and supporting events, which are often overlooked or not revealed through traditional empirical methods. These events then become reportable findings and outcomes of the research" (p. 71).

The narrative sketches I composed eventually became the research story I told in Chapter Four; this process included consideration of the connections between individual sketches and their contexts and between individual sketches to the ever-unfolding narrative inquiry experience.

(Re)Consideration of the classroom literacy theoretical framework. In the introduction to Chapter 1, I shared how the questions and theoretical framework guiding this study grew out of observations and wonderings about teacher's own literacy—their reading, composing, and making meaning from classrooms as texts—in light of research and scholarship from the disciplines of English language arts and education. As a way of addressing my second research question, how I made meaning from research events, I revisited this theoretical framework in light of understanding garnered from this

investigation. Meaning, Rosenblatt (1978, 1994, 2005) reminds us, is made through the transactions of a particular reader and a particular text in a particular context. Guiding this meaning-making is the stance a reader adopts and her/ linguistic-experiential reservoir. Finally, the meanings a reader makes confirm or disconfirm the trial knowledge with which one began (Noddings, 2005; Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005). It is in light of this, I returned to the meaning I brought into this study and (re)consider it in light of this narrative investigation. This is not an attempt to generalize to a large population; rather, a narrative way of considering the meaning of the whole in relationship to its parts.

Verisimilitude

As Webster and Mertova (2007) point out, “There is a consensus in the literature on narrative research that it should not be judged by the same criteria as those that are applied to more traditional and broadly accepted qualitative and quantitative research methods” (p. 89). The criterion of reliability and validity, even triangulation of data are not fitting for narrative research (Bruner, 1986; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, Polkinghorne, 1988, 2007, Reissman, 1993, 2008). Polkinghorne (1988) writes that in narrative research, validity is associated with meaningful analysis. A finding is “significant” if it is important, and results are “valid” if they are trustworthy. Taking up this argument, Webster and Mertova (2007) cite Huberman (1995) to say that what is sought in narrative research is: access to context, process, and construction of knowledge; honesty; verisimilitude; authenticity; familiarity; and economy.

In thinking about the way in which I demonstrated the verisimilitude in this study, I find that I agree with Riessman (1993), who wrote, “All forms of representation of

experience are limited portraits. Simply stated, we are interpreting and creating texts at every juncture, letting symbols stand for or take place of the primary experience, to which we have no direct access” (p. 15). Nevertheless, the texts we create interpret our meaning and reveal “the truths of our experiences” (Personal Narratives Group, 1989 as cited in Riessman, 1993, p. 22). Narrative “truths” are interpretive and require interpretation (Riessman, 1993). Finally, I agree with Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) that “validity” is not a separate aspect of an investigation, but is threaded throughout the research process. Throughout the construction of this study, I have made “visible” the theoretical and experiential “threads” from which I have stitched this study. This stance was built into the very fabric of my research questions. The second research question I asked inquired into how I make meaning of research events. Attending to this question, to my interpretive process of constructing narrative sketches, and to the relationship between critical events, like events, and other events, I demonstrated how participants made meaning from classroom events, how I made meaning from research events, and I provided readers with the opportunity to make their own meanings from this research text.

Chapter Four

Making Meaning with Readers and Texts

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to understand how two beginning English teachers—“Helen” and “Amy”—made meaning from classroom events. Understanding garnered from this study provides insight into how beginning teachers know and do and offers contributions to frameworks for teacher education.

Focus of the Study

Narratives are a primary way humans organize and convey the meaning of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 1993). In this study I focused on the stories two beginning English teachers lived and told about their teaching experiences; I considered the contexts in which participants lived and told their stories; and I attended to the interpretive processes for constructing, living, and communicating their stories (Brochner, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, 2006; Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Daynes 2007).

Research Questions

The purpose and focus of this study is reflected in the questions I posed to guide this narrative inquiry:

1. How do two beginning English language arts teachers make meaning from classroom events?

To answer this central question, I addressed the following sub-questions: (a) What stories do two beginning English teachers live and tell about their classroom experiences?; (b) What are the contexts of these two beginning English teachers' stories?; (c) What critical events or turning points do they identify in their stories?; and (d) What knowledge, language, or experiences do they use to make meaning from classroom experiences?

In the spirit of bracketing myself, the researcher, into the study and providing an account of who I am in relationship to the study, study participants, and interpretations of data gathered and analyzed (Campesino, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Connolly, 2007; Connolly & Reilly, 2007), I also asked:

2. How do I, as a beginning teacher educator and educational researcher, make meaning from research events?

To mirror the questions designed to understand the meaning-making of the participants, I also asked: (a) What research stories do I live and tell?; (b) What are the contexts of these research stories?; (c) What critical events or turning points do I identify in these research stories?; and (d) What knowledge, language and experiences do I use to make meaning from research experiences?

In this chapter, I address the two aforementioned research questions through an examination of each question's sub-questions. Stories lived and told were the phenomenon of investigation.

Overview of the Chapter

The research text I present in this chapter was constructed during the process of moving through six phases of data analysis. In the first phase, I focused on identifying and understanding the stories participants lived or told. Out of the many stories that participants lived or told, I first identified stories that participants' communicated were critical. Participants' identification of critical events was at times explicit; other times, I identified an event as critical based on participants' statements about the impact of that event. In the case of the later, I verified with participants that this was a critical event from their perspective. In the second phase of data analysis, I focused on understanding participants and how they made meaning through the stories they lived and told about classroom experiences. In the third, I focused on how *I* made meaning from research events. Guided by narrative analysis, the Classroom Literacy theoretical framework, and my research questions, I took a step back from the field texts I collected, from the participants' stories, and from my own writing and analytical notes to look for connections between the first three phases of data analysis in light of the whole study. Doing this, I entered a fourth phase of data analysis that considered meanings in the study as a whole. At this point, my focus and writing shifted away from presenting stories lived and told and toward presenting meanings I made *from the study through* participants' stories of classroom experiences and my own research experiences. At this point, I

identified the meanings I made and began recomposing stories to illustrate these meanings. To do this, I selected stories from the pool of critical events that were also turning points or critical events in the narrative inquiry—that is, stories of participants’ critical events that also critically contributed to understanding how these two beginning English teachers made meaning from classroom events. Each story was drawn from the field texts collected for this inquiry, interpreted in light of participants’ individual narrative histories and the tensions and turning points that they communicated through stories. This fifth composition phase necessitated additional meaning-making as I reconsidered and discovered additional connections between events *as* I wrote; this led to additional understanding of participants’ and my own meaning-making. Finally, the written form of this chapter was presented to each participant to read and respond to. As a researcher, my concern during this phase was to learn if what I had written represented each participant’s experiences; nevertheless, our shared experience reading these stories created a sixth phase of data analysis. During this sixth phase, participants read the stories I reconstructed from the many stories they lived and told¹⁵, and they frequently stopped their reading to think aloud, to remember, to respond to, to comment on, to provide additional details, and to confirm the meaning I had made through the construction of their stories. During this phase of reading, reflecting, and talking, the participants and I read and analyzed their stories as texts; we noticed patterns, and further connected “pieces” of experiences and meanings we each had previously made. This phase of analyzing and responding to the written text was a shared data analysis experience as well as another opportunity to extend our meaning-making. These six phases are represented

¹⁵ Interpretations were also verified by the participants during numerous other phases of the research process.

in figures 6 (in Chapter Three) and 7 (below). In this chapter, I focus on the meanings made during the fourth and fifth phases of data analysis.

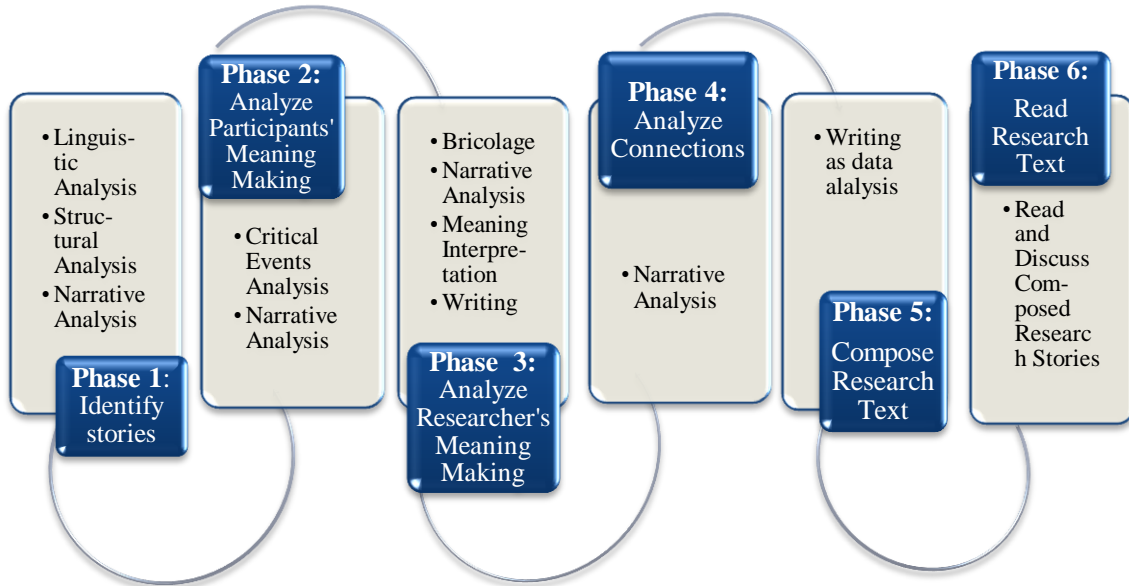


Figure 7: Six Phases of Data Analysis

Meanings made from research events. I first address my inquiry questions by stating four related meanings I made during the fourth phase of data analysis—when I analyzed a) the connections between how the two beginning teachers made meaning from classroom events and b) the connections between how these teachers made meaning from classroom events and how I made meaning from research events. These statements and their relationship to each other are represented in Figure 9. I begin with a broad statement and then follow it with three increasingly specific statements. In Chapter Five, these meanings are further discussed in relationship to the Classroom Literacy theoretical framework.

Research events as story. After I state the meanings I made from research events, I present these events as a research story. There are three sections of stories

within the overall research story that follows. In the first section, I present a story surrounding one of my own touchstone experiences. The meaning I made as a classroom teacher and then remade as a researcher provided a metaphor or frame for my thinking during the study, so I have selected to place it first¹⁶ so as to provide readers with insight into my meaning-making process. The second section focuses on “Helen” and the meanings I made with her and from her meaning-making process. The third section focuses on “Amy” and the meanings I made with her and from her meaning-making process.

The overall structure of the collection of stories (the research story) is narrated from my perspective as the researcher and is organized chronologically (Richards, 2011) as I experienced participants’ stories through interviews and then through classroom observations and conversations. Said another way, stories are told in the order in which they happened (were told or lived) in the research story rather than the order that they happened in time outside the context of this study. Intermittently, I interject stories from students’ university or full-time internship experiences as I remember them in relationship to the unfolding research story. To navigate between these stories, connections between past, present, and my voice as a narrator telling these stories, I have adapted Langer’s (2011a, 2011b) five positions for describing how a reader builds understanding of a story as the reader’s thinking moves back and forth from her or his

¹⁶ The first narrative I wrote surrounding a touchstone experience in relationship to this study is the story with which this study opens in Chapter One. That first story launched everything. The first story that I tell in the section below happened before the story in Chapter One; however, I remembered and wrote about it much later, when I actually began designing this study.

own life, to the “text world,” (2011b).¹⁷ In this chapter, I included headings meant to describe the relationship between the research story and my narrative voice as a way to make my meaning-making visible as I built understanding of how these two teachers, “Helen” and Amy” made meaning from classroom events.

True to the focus of this investigation, as communicated by the research questions, the focus of this collective research story is on participants’ meaning-making. My meaning-making process connects their stories and my own together. In other words, it is from my narrative perspective that the research story is told, and that “metanarrative” is its own story. My role is critical; however, it is not the focus.

¹⁷ Langer asserts knowledge (2011a) and understanding (2011b) grow from a person’s desire to make sense in a classroom or the world outside it. This sense making is an “envisionment” or “meaning-in-motion.” (2011a, p. 17). As readers build an envisionment, they move through five positions or stances in relationship to the text world including: 1)being outside and stepping into an envisionment; 2)being inside and moving through an envisionment; 3)stepping out and rethinking what you know; 4) stepping out and objectifying the experience, and 5) leaving an envisionment and going beyond. Langer refers to these five stances in order to describe how a reader ‘s thought process 1) moves into a story as s/he works to gather details that hint at what the story is about; 2), moves around in a story as s/he uses background knowledge and experience to develop an understanding of the text; 3)takes a step back to allow the developing understanding of a text connect to what a reader already knows and has experienced and then allows that developing understanding to guide continued reading; 4) distances her/himself from the text to reflect and to objectify her/his understanding, the experience of reading, or the text itself; and 5) (although less often) when a reader’s envisionment is richly developed, this envisionment contributes to beginning a new envisionment-building experience with a new or unrelated text (Langer 2011a, 2011b).

In the final phases of composing this research text, I discovered Langer’s most recent publications (2011a, 2011b) which are revisions of her earlier research and scholarship on envisioning literature (1995). In these revisions, she added a fifth stance. This stance corresponded with the fourth meaning I made from research events—that readers made meanings and then apply those meanings in new situations. Given the connection between her assertions and my own, I thought it fitting to use these to navigate the research story in this chapter.

Meanings I Made From Research Events

Participants made meaning through stories. An analysis of the field texts I collected and generated during this narrative inquiry revealed how stories connect a transactional paradigm with a narrative mode of reasoning to create a space through which participants made meaning. In a narrative mode of reasoning, “the connection between the events is the meaning” (Richardson, 1990, p. 21); therefore, it is fitting that analysis of the stories participants lived and told would recognize a relationship between these stories and participants’ use of connections to make meaning.

Participants made meaning by making connections. Participants made meaning from classroom events by making connections. Through living, telling, and talking about stories, participants made connections that aided their understanding of themselves, their students, and their professional milieu. Related to classroom events, stories acted as portals through which participants interpreted lived experiences, connected with others, and created bridges between life as lived and concepts considered in classrooms.

Participants drew from their reservoir of prior experience, knowledge, and language to guide their meaning-making from classroom events. Stories also demonstrated how each participant used her individual reservoir of experience, knowledge, and language to make meaning. When talking about how she made sense of classroom events, each participant referred to prior experiences and understandings that came to mind during the event or after the event as she reflected on her actions during a particular classroom experience. Each participant used her reservoir to reflect on her

teaching, to guide her ongoing assessment of herself as teacher, to attend to and interpret communicative signs, to make instructional decisions while teaching, and to anticipate future instructional, curricular, and professional choices. Thus, participants' reservoirs guided their ongoing thinking of how past, present, and future events worked together—or didn't—to help them to create an understanding of their teaching experiences, their identity as teachers, and the professional world in which they teach. The reservoirs participants drew upon to guide their meaning making included: their prior experiences as students, as pre-service teachers, and from their first two years of teaching; knowledge of human nature and human relationships, a general self-awareness, an awareness of their individual histories as successful learners, and professional knowledge garnered from their college of education coursework, professional conferences, and interactions with professionals; and language that demonstrated their ability to create a dialogic space through word choice, to interpret communicative signs such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language, and the ability to interpret and communicate meaning using figurative language and analogies.

Participants used particular prior experiences as *touchstone events* to guide meaning-making from classroom events. Furthermore, within each participant's reservoir, there emerged particularly influential critical events related to participants' decisions to teach or to their development as teachers. I refer to these as *touchstone events* to communicate that these events were existing meanings participants made from prior experiences and used to guide their continued meaning-making from classroom events. As each participant lived and told stories, she often returned to a particular prior

experience or the story of an experience repeatedly—both explicitly and indirectly in various communicative situations

A narrative analysis which considered the relationship of the parts to the whole, or more specifically, the relationship of each participant's stories in light of her ongoing life story—revealed connections between each participant's touchstone events and her stance toward teaching. The “residue” of prior meanings made from touchstone events generated, in the context of new events, a frame—a stance—for making meaning from new experiences.

New meanings confirmed, challenged, or contributes to prior meanings made through the connections participants made between events. In this way, meaning-making was ongoing. Participants' stances, broadly speaking, guided their ongoing meaning-making from classroom events, helped shape or reinforce their stated and enacted purpose for teaching, validated or challenged their identity and sense of efficacy as a teacher, guided their instructional decisions while teaching, influenced their assessment of either student learning or their own teaching, and influenced future instructional planning.

Participants' processes of coming back to these experiences demonstrated how their stance toward teaching was not only guided by meanings made from past critical events but also how their stance toward teaching was reconsidered, and reinterpreted like a text in light of new classroom events. Said another way, the residual meanings in participants' reservoirs related to their touchstone experiences served as a point of reference to guide, to reflect on, and to further construct their stance toward teaching or

purpose for teaching. Participants' stances toward education, as revealed by their stories of and references to touchstone events, showed how participants' stances were part of an internal, in-process text continually being challenged, confirmed, or brought to light through additional classroom experiences.

The meanings I have made from this narrative inquiry are depicted in figure 8, and then presented through stories and discussions of those stories in the remainder of the chapter. These meanings are further discussed in relationship to the Classroom Literacy framework in Chapter Five.

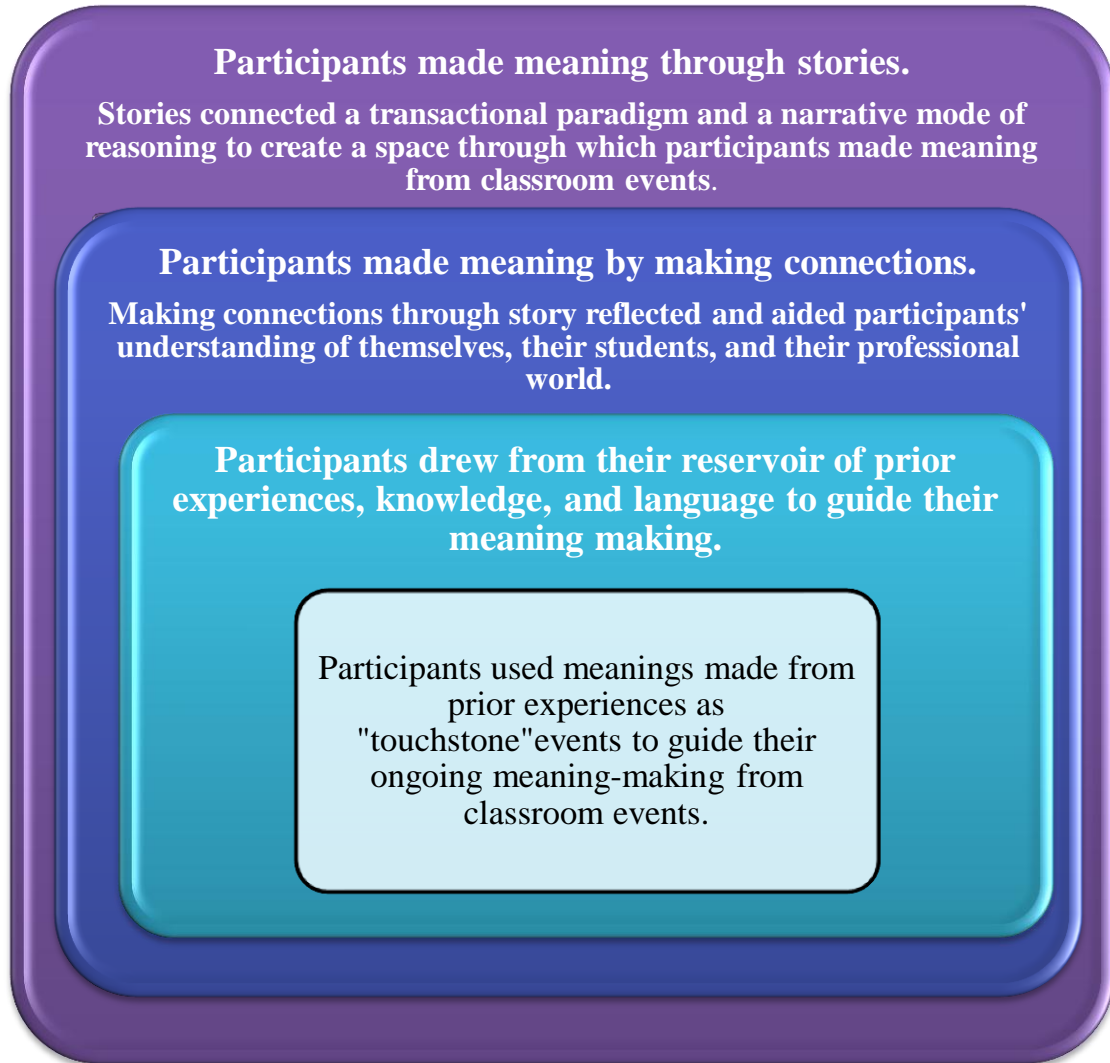


Figure 8: Meanings Made from Research Events

Making Meaning with Readers and Texts: A Research Story

“Dawning”: Being outside of and stepping into the research story-world with **Christi**. It is the moment just before dawn in August 2009. Outside, the horizon is not fully night yet not quite day either; it is the space between—as if the earth pauses to hold a deep breath before exhaling and beginning anew. Inside my home, I am not fully asleep

and not yet awake either; in a state somewhere between, the words of a poem hover in my mind. I hear them. I know them. “It was just that every morning I awoke to these canvases, passed my hand across their cloth faces, and wondered how you pieced all these together, how you shaped patterns square and oblong and round...” As I recall these words in the quiet space of mind, I remember, and I imagine.

Nudged to wake by this moment of rhizome, I push back my comforter, rise, and pad my way out to the living room, some light, and my laptop in search of the poem.

Without much effort, I find it and read:

My Mother Pieced Quilts

they were just meant as covers
in winters
as weapons
against pounding january winds

but it was just that every morning I awoke to these
october ripened canvases
passed my hand across their cloth faces
and began to wonder how you pieced
all these together
these strips of gentle communion cotton and flannel nightgowns
wedding organdies
dime-store velvets

how you shaped patterns square and oblong and round
positioned
balanced
then cemented them
with your thread
a steel needle
a thimble

how the thread darted in and out
galloping along the frayed edges, tucking them in
as you did us at night
oh how you stretched and turned and rearranged

your michigan spring faded curtain pieces
my father's santa fe work shirt
the summer denims, the tweeds of fall

in the evening you sat at your canvas
— our cracked linoleum floor the drawing board
me lounging on your arm
and you staking out the plan:
whether to put the lilac purple of easter against the red plaid of winter-going
into-spring
whether to mix a yellow with a blue and white and paint the corpus christi noon
when my father held your hand
whether to shape a five-point star from the
somber black silk you wore to grandmother's funeral

you were the river current
carrying the roaring notes
forming them into pictures of a little boy reclining
a swallow flying
you were the caravan master at the reins
driving your threaded needle artillery across the mosaic cloth bridges
delivering yourself in separate testimonies

oh mother you plunged me sobbing and laughing
into our past
into the river crossing at five
into the spinach fields
into the plainview cotton rows
into tuberculosis wards
into braids and muslin dresses
sewn hard and taut to withstand the thrashings of
twenty-five years

stretched out they lay
armed / ready / shouting / celebrating

knotted with love
the quilts sing on (Acosta, 1983, p. 393-395)

Rereading the poem, I know more than I can say. I see. I remember, and I hold a
memory, a photograph of experience in my mind. In that image, I know—something.

What is it? What is this knowing that I have called forth from memory as I remembered and reread the “My Mother Pieced Quilts” (Acosta, 1983) poem?

I see myself standing in the classroom where I once taught high school English and reading. I am facing the empty space on the classroom wall, standing between the bookcase and a desk, surrounded by quilt squares, some in my hands, many on the floor, and some I don’t yet know where to place. These images are so powerful and clear in my mind, a force like gravity, pulling all my attention to focus on them. I decide to write about this mental snapshot, and as I do, the picture becomes story. Surely the stuff of memory is black and white; but no, colors and feelings and ideas all marshal their way out from image through words as I describe the memory that I see.

Remembering “Piecing a *Classroom Quilt*”: Being in the research story-world and moving through Christi’s touchstone story-world. With the heel of one black pump perched upon the top of a student desk and the other stretched out and over onto the bookshelf, I held my balance between the two classroom fixtures while I contemplated the comings together of the student work I was attempting to piece together onto the institutional, grayish-white-colored, concrete, classroom walls. This was certainly more challenging than I had anticipated—and more amazing too.

Emerging before me was the classroom quilt I was piecing together from individual students’ quilt squares—a mosaic of diverse textiles: colors, textures, fabrics, shapes, mediums, personal histories, symbols, artifacts, and words. I picked up a piece, examined it, turned it over and around, looked up at the wall, back to the quilt piece, the wall, the floor arrayed with more quilt squares, the wall again, positioning and

repositioning, moving back and forth, searching for a meaningful pattern as I worked through another afternoon turning evening.

It was a seemingly simple lesson plan meant to rekindle classroom community after the long winter break and to refresh our thinking about the theme of celebrating diversity in world literature: first, we would read Teresa Palomo Acosta's (1983) poem, "My Mother Pieced Quilts," and then each of us would create our own "quilt" to represent who we are. I would then connect each student's personal quilt to piece together a class quilt. The idea was that each of my five sophomore English class's quilts would contribute to the walls of our shared classroom space. From individual pieces, we'd connect to make a class and a community "quilt."

But, holding one of the pieces in my hands: a denim pocket, cut from an old, once-favorite pair of jeans, now donning a tear from which (glued) pieces of candy, a few coins, a friendship bracelet, and a toy yo-yo fell from its cotton fissure. Gazing at it, I contemplated the paradoxically simple-complexity, everyday-extraordinariness of this wordless poem. I remembered the story Jenna—the otherwise shy, silent 10th grader—told so poignantly to her classmates and to me a few days prior. To her, the denim pocket represented her childhood and the world she had known, filled with sweet goodness, joy, and simple treasures. The tear represented her life now—in a state of transition, of growing up, of fearing that she was losing the parts of herself that she cherished enough to keep close to her. I stood amazed at all that Jenna and her denim pocket quilt piece communicated. And there were so many other students' pieces all around where I stood—a large hockey puck constructed out of Styrofoam, black paint, and a creative

mind that valued the challenge of competition; a shopping bag covered by a collage of labels, price tags, snapshots, and words clipped from magazines; an actual fabric quilt, sewn from clothing; a poem; a painting; a framed montage of snapshots; song lyrics composed onto a shoe-shaped piece of paper, and so many more.

Looking at each quilt piece, I thought about the details, textures, shapes, colors, patterns, and symbols in light of what I knew before and what I had come to know about each student through his or her quilt square. Standing there, I realized each not-so-square quilt piece was itself a quilt, a statement of meaning made by looking back on their lives and interpreting their pasts. Like the quilt in Acosta's poem, they connected the remnants of their memories, feelings, associations, into a meaningful pattern to say something new—to say, "This is me!" or "This is who I've been." Or "This is who I want to be." It was evident that some used the materials they had on hand to say what they wanted; others must have gone out exploring, shopping, looking for items that could communicate what they wanted to say.

Although surveying the student work moved me, the process of piecing together these many pieces into five "class quilts"—one for each period of sophomore English I taught—and then connecting those into a larger "classroom quilt" to cover the walls of the common space we all shared, overwhelmed me. This was so much more challenging than I could have imagined. What might have been a simple construction process if I had limited the size, shape, texture, weight, and medium of the assignment to say, a standard sheet of paper, was now more challenging; I had to rethink the tools I could use to help me connect these pieces. This wasn't a one-afternoon-tape-it-to-the-wall-and-head-home

process. I picked pieces up, put them up to the wall, took a step back to consider the whole, examined the pieces again, moved them around, took them down, took a step back to look at the whole, walked away and returned again, and again, and again, over many days until I found a way to connect the pieces that made sense.

Stepping outside of and objectifying Christi's touchstone story-world. When I wrote about those memories in August of 2009, I couldn't have really realized that the poem served as a space through which my experiences as a teacher would connect to my experiences as a researcher. However, my mind reached for the meaning I had made from the memory, and through story, fleshed it out and made a space through which I could imagine both "point of reference" from the meaning made by the story *and* a "horizon of possibilities" through the narrative and transactional space of the story (Langer 2011a, 2011b). Thus, the story framed my thinking and gave me room through metaphor and story to be open to new understandings of how other teachers make meaning from classroom events.

Through story, I remembered my prior experiences, and in the context of thinking about research, I made new a meaning from the them—a meaning which served as a guiding metaphor, a frame, and a stance for thinking about the relationship between participants' and my own meaning making in this narrative inquiry. Just as Acosta's poem creates a space for three layers of meaning making, I envision three layers of meaning in this study. In Acosta's poem, the mother makes meaning by selecting and connecting cloth textiles, pieces of clothing that represented significant memories which were pieced together to form a new quilt which would serve a related but new purpose.

The speaker in the poem watches her mother, interprets what she sees, creates meaning about her mother and her mother's process, and communicates that meaning in the form of a poem. Finally, readers of the poem read the poem and can make meaning from both the mother's and the daughter's product and process of making meaning. Each pieced together texts, whether they were words, fabrics, actions, or visualization. This piecing process was a process of observation and attention to detail, interpretation, and narrative reasoning as they considered how a piece of text fit into the pattern of the unfolding whole. Each a poet in the Rosenblattian (1978, 2005) sense, and each piecing process—the quilt, the poem, and the poem of meaning the reader of the poem makes—itsself a text.

Leaving Christi's touchstone story-world and going beyond: Imagining the research story-world. As a classroom teacher, I stood with one foot on the classroom bookcase and with the other on a student's desk. In the space between, I attempted to construct something from the many pieces my students offered me. As the inquirer in this study, I bring that literal and symbolic experience forward, for now I stand in the space between two established bodies of knowledge. With one foot standing on the theoretical base of Rosenblatt, her transactional theory of reading and writing, and the surrounding metaphorical "book shelves" of knowledge and experiences in the world of English language arts and reading, and with the other foot standing on Dewey's philosophy for educative experience and the symbolic student desk representing learners of all ages, I am piecing together from the many texts generated by both bodies of knowledge, a text that connects the space between. In this way, I am like the mother in the poem—collecting, piecing, finding connections between the printed texts I have read and made meaning

from as well as the living texts whose faces, words, and actions, I studied, interpreted, and made meaning from as a teacher.

I also imagine the teacher participants weaving together their lives, their classrooms, piecing together fabrics and textures—texts—of experiences, ideas, relationships, and identity into patterns of meaning, while I, the researcher, like the poet in Acosta’s poem, watch, listen, interpret, and make meanings from them in order to tell how I’ve come to understand and admire them. From the connections between the two texts—the quilt and the poem—make words and images upon the “canvas” of the research text, weaving a three-dimensional space through which other readers may make their own texts—“quilts” of meaning that connect to their life experiences and understandings and possibly even provide a way for them to discover new meanings. All so the final form of the research text could tell the storied meaning made by one generation to the next, and also whose composition might metaphorically serve “as covers/ in winters/ as weapons/ against the pounding january winds” (Acosta, 1983, p. 393) of tradition and fear so that others might be warmed into remembering that at any given moment in a classroom, there are many individual readers and texts and “poems” (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005), coming together, making many texts, many quilts of meaning—metaphorically stitching, unstitching, re-stitching ways of knowing, doing, and being into new patterns to communicate new meanings, together.

“Beginnings”: Being outside of and stepping into the research story-world

There are a few things I (Christi) have learned about literature from reading and studying texts with students during countless classroom events over the last thirteen years

I've been an educator. One is that the beginnings of stories are important. How they begin, where they begin, the images, setting, context—this and more can drop the reader into the action of the story, into the active thought process of the author, or into meanings made now told through story. And to the reader who is looking, just about everything one needs to know is right there in the opening chapter, in the opening few paragraphs, sometimes even the opening few sentences. The more complex the story, the more significant the beginning, it seems. I think of many literary favorites I've read with students: *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The House of Mirth*, *Fahrenheit 451* and many more; so much was communicated in these beginnings (May, 2010) .

Of course, when I stood at the door to the Serendipity Tea Lounge, or to the Bakery Café to begin interviewing Helen and then Amy, or when I stood at the doors to their classrooms to begin observations, or even when I stopped to remember when I met Helen and Amy, or realized that they were “struggling” to read the classrooms they were placed in during their university practicum course, in each of these experiences, I knew I was not opening the page of a printed novel.

However, I also knew there was something meaning-full. I was opening something, a door, a portal, a beginning of something else, a joining of sorts, but *what?*

And now, sitting before the field texts gathered from both participants' stories, it is clear to me that beginnings of stories lived and told about human experiences are also significant. Beginnings of told stories expressed initial frames of reference from which stories were told in order to communicate prior meanings made and brought forward in a

new context. Beginnings of storied spaces were pauses where story tellers broke from a line of thought to negotiate between the story they were simultaneously reading and composing as they spoke and made meaning.

Making Meaning with “Helen Heart”

“Beginnings with Helen”: Being inside the research story-world and moving through it with Helen. I quickly slip into an empty spot, turn off the engine, and grab all of my things—notebook, pen, digital recorders, computer bag, breath mints, water bottle—and race across the parking lot under the cloud of a nagging sensation that I am now four or five minutes late. *“Really? Today? What message does that send?”* I think approaching the Serendipity Tea Lounge. As I open the door, the ambiance spreads through me like a deep breath of calm and comfort. I remember I have been here before—at that table over there, and that one too, oh, and there’s the wall of teas to select from. I realize I’ve missed the invigorating warmth of the mango passion tea that I had the last two times I was here with Helen, two years ago, in the spring of 2009 when she was an intern.

As I walk across the Serendipity space, my attention shifts outward, and I look for and see Helen, seated on a large sofa in the back this time. She looks like she has been here awhile; she is eating spring rolls and reading on her Kindle. She looks comfortable, donned in jeans, an Arlington High School²¹ T-shirt, and black low-top Converse All-

²¹ Names of people and places have been changed to respect the anonymity of participants’. The only exception to this is the inclusion of my—the researcher’s—actual name.²² Since participants wrote about their *actual* name, not their pseudonym, I have replaced any references to their actual name with their pseudonym, and I have left out a few portions of the text that explicitly refer to her actual name. Substitutions are marked

Star sneakers. Breaking her attention from her reading, she looks up and greets me with a warm smile. I am happy to see her; she is such a pleasant, dynamic, interesting person. The sound of her “Hello!” reminds me of the strength, character, and energy in her voice. Peripherally, I notice that her eyes look tired—weary really, but I let that thought float in and through my mind without much internal conversation; after all, it is Friday, and the end of the semester. Even after having had the break of the winter holidays, the push to prepare students for exams, to gather the last of students’ work, and to get it graded, all while calling parents about failures, filling out paperwork, and preparing for the beginning of a new semester is, I remember, exhausting. Other than the weary eyes, she *appears* be the same Helen I have always known.

Stepping outside of the research story-world and reconsidering what I know:

Helen’s “Dropping a Syllable”. I pause to remember when mine and Helen’s relationship first began, when our life stories first connected. It was January of 2008. Helen was a student in a university course, Methods of Teaching High School English, I taught in the spring of my second year as a doctoral student. On the first day of class, we wrote and shared about our names as a way to build classroom community, to help me get to know my students as people and as writers, and to introduce one of the texts we would be reading that semester, Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*. It was on this occasion that Helen and I each composed and shared a text that communicated part of our

in brackets and deleted portions are denoted by four ellipsis points. The three ellipsis points in her writing are a part of the original text.

life story and identity, written in our own words and read aloud with our own voice.

Helen²² titled her piece “Dropping a Syllable”:

According to family history, I started out with a boy’s name. Before my birth, my parents decided to name me Mark Anthony—a somewhat theatrical name, I have to admit. When I finally arrived in this world, my parents were at a loss. What would they name their baby girl? My father’s version of the story is that my mother blurted out the first thing that came to mind [Helen] and the nurse wrote it down on my birth certificate before he could protest. My mother, perhaps the only person who knows the certain truth, won’t say much about it. “It’s a pretty name,” she tells me simply, “and I will never understand why you don’t like it.”

Mom is right—I have never liked it. My name has always struck me as bland, a name for Catholic saints and soap opera starlets, and it is common not only in South America but in Europe as well. Those of us with common first names will remember the grade school torment of having to ask, “Which one?” when a teacher called our name, or, worse yet, being tagged with a final initial, as if we were somehow incomplete or deficient. Not just [Helen] but [Helen H.] to differentiate me from [Helen] G. and [Helen] O.

When I lived in South America, my writing teacher always took points off of my compositions because she claimed I was spelling my name incorrectly.

²² Since participants wrote about their *actual* name, not their pseudonym, I have replaced any references to their actual name with their pseudonym, and I have left out a few portions of the text that explicitly refer to her actual name. Substitutions are marked in brackets and deleted portions are denoted by four ellipsis points. The three ellipsis points in her writing are a part of the original text.

Week after week, she would explain the rules of accents in Spanish and then mark my “i” with an accent. Week after week, I would explain the rule about proper nouns being proper nouns and therefore not subject to her spelling rules and dot my “i” with a circle the size of a quarter. I lived there for three years, and we were never able to reach an agreement. At the time, I was very resentful that my parents had given me a name I had to fight for.

Here in the United States, it wasn’t too much easier. In Spanish, at least, my name sounds crisp and clean. In English, it sounds like someone gnawing on a stubborn piece of meat.... It’s chewy and gummy sounding, but somehow it finds its way into a rather impressive list of songs....

Sometime in high school, I dropped a syllable and became [Helen]. It seems like a minor difference, but it was so much more than that. The omission of two letters meant that I could erase part of my history and create myself anew. Now, instead of “sea of bitterness,” my name means simply “mine.” And it *is* mine. It is a name I spent hours upon hours debating and choosing—it’s free of the dubious origin my birth name suffers. In writing, [Helen] is sleek and smooth, without the troublesome “i” to worry about. I have never had anyone try to put an accent on it, and there are no famous saints that I can possibly be compared to.

In two months’ time, I’ll be married. I plan to take my husband’s last name and change my first name legally, once and for all. I’ll go from [original name] to [Helen Heart], and I couldn’t be more excited about the difference. Friends and family seem surprised that I am so eager to change my name and be rid of my birth name forever, but then, they have never faced this anonymity. In

an internet search on an engine like Google [original name] yields more than 57,000 results. Athletes, professors, artists, preachers...name any field, and there is probably a [original name] in it. I might as well be a John Smith. Searching for [Helen Heart], however, yields only one hit—and it is connected directly to me. After being one of thousands, I find the solitude of one to be priceless.

As an added benefit, [singer] has never had a hit single about a [Helen], so I will hopefully be safe from strangers singing at me for the rest of my natural life. (Archival Data, January 14, 2008)

Being outside of the Research story-world and objectifying it. From the vantage point of the present, I reconsider Helen's story of her name, and I see many connections to the Helen I have had the pleasure of getting to know and learn from through her stories of classroom experiences. Here, I sense her determination in her voice; I see her narrative thinking in the language and structure of her writing; I recognize the way that while living stories, she gathers them, and then from them, composes new stories to express the meaning she makes in new contexts and to anticipate the future. In this story of her name, situated in the story of family history, she considers what her name means in light of other's stories, her own experiences, and from the various contexts and situations connected to her life. It seems to me that from these stories, she reads and interprets the story of her name, and then she rewrites it. She revises the story to tell the meaning she has made of her own name, and presumably, by telling her readers who she is not, she also communicates who she *is*. Out of this compelling narrative, one sentence especially grabs my attention; she writes, "The omission of two letters meant that I could erase part of my history and create myself

anew.” She changes not only her name’s sound and its meaning, but she also rewrites it to set herself apart and create a unique identity—an identity she brings forward into her new life as a wife. Through this crux in the story of her name as well as the whole of the story itself, I now see her narrative orientation in her thinking, her self-awareness, her awareness of the meanings others make, and how through observation and interpretation, she makes meaning from her experiences.

Stepping back inside the research story-world with Helen. Returning my attention to the present, I make my way to the couch in the back of the Serendipity Tea Lounge where Helen and I exchange hearty good-to-see-you-type greetings between sharing a quick hug and my amazement over how long it has been since we have last seen each other. I ask what Helen is reading; she tells me about her reading a “grown-up book,” *The Poisonwood Bible*, then shows me her Kindle. We talk for a minute about how the electronic text looks like the pages of a printed text, and about how electronic texts are a just another part of the literate environment of today’s generation. I briefly share with her how I found my four-year-old in his bed, having fallen asleep reading—on my iPhone—the other night. Helen slips her Kindle back into her bag, and I check the audio recorders’ proximity to our voices.

“So,” I begin. We both smile and laugh in recognition of a “here-we-go” feeling. “You were Mrs. [Heart] the intern, and now [you are] Mrs. [Heart] the teacher.”

“Mm, hmm,” she agrees and nods while sipping her beverage.

“That’s awesome.”

“Big jump!” she offers.

Being inside and moving through the research story-world with Helen:

“From the Idea of Teaching to the Reality.” “Jumping” into the “plotline of the research story, I offer Helen a choice of sorts, “Well, I have a lot of questions here that we can talk about, but my thought is just to let you start talking and then I can go from there, but—

“If [pause] I think I’d like to go with questions? If only because there is so much to, the one thing I can say is that my enthusiasm level from the last time that I talked to you has plummeted.

A bit surprised by how quickly events turn to what sounds like a *very* significant change in her view of teaching since our last meeting, I offer an involuntary chuckle, “Oh, okay, that’s an important place to start.”

Helen explains her present situation—frustration with the job of teaching:

“Yes, not my enthusiasm for teaching, but my enthusiasm for education. If that makes sense. Like the red tape of, and the, the uhm, okay, like we had exams this week. I have a [name of curriculum]. I have to teach them [that] curriculum. That’s what I’m paid to do. I have to have certain objectives on the board. I have to have [state standardized test] mini lessons planned every week. I have to do this. I have to do that. Everything is so fragmented. And that love of books, the love of writing, of speaking, of listening that I bring with me inherently as a lover of English, it gets sapped away over time because I don’t get to do any of that...I don’t have a problem with the [curriculum] inherently; I mean I like it very much,

but it's frustrating that as a teacher, I have no liberty, at all, to make the call for what's best for my kids. Because I know them, and sometimes what's in the book is going to work well for them, but other times, it doesn't fit them at all. And then, so the ability to be able to switch it up and change that is like, "Well, no, you have to, you have to teach this." I'm also given a pacing calendar, so I have to teach this in one semester and the very frustrating part is that then when [her sophomore English students] took exams this week, the average scores out of eighty-five questions were in the fifties. Not because I haven't taught them well but because the exam did not match first off the curriculum that I taught them or for that matter, the [school district's] exam review.... You know it was, [pause] It's just very frustrating. So it's not— [long pause] Like when I come home and I'll kind of vent to my husband and say, "It's not that I hate teaching, but sometimes I hate my job." Because there is that lack of liberty.

Explaining the other component in her present situation, Helen explains how her eleventh grade honors English students, for the most part, care about learning; however, her sophomores, especially sophomores in her final class of the day, do not seem to care about learning. They are rude, antsy, loud, and unresponsive. She describes them as a plague of locusts who eat away at her joy for teaching. Helen despises the person she becomes with them. She tells me,

"I just find myself saying things like, 'Who is this person?' You know, [I'm] not quite belligerent, but close: 'Well, I passed tenth grade English; I don't need to pass the exam!' I'm like, 'I can't believe I just said that. I sound like those teachers I hated in high school.' But that's the person that they force me to

become, because they don't respond to kindness. I had one of my kids tell me that I was weak-hearted because I'm so nice. Not that I'm soft, but that I'm weak-hearted."

Stepping outside of the research story-world and reconsidering what I know.

As Helen continues to explain how she has become frustrated with education, she tells many stories of her teaching experiences. These stories reveal how Helen draws upon her prior experiences and the meanings she has made from them to make new meanings the context of classroom events as a beginning teacher.

Stepping outside of the research story-world and objectifying it. Helen's stories both expressed and aided her ongoing understanding of her identity as a teacher, her understanding of her relationship to her students, and her understanding of the professional environment in which she teaches. Her stories also reveal how her stance and purpose for teaching is a kind of text composed from past events, re-interpreted, and constructed or developed in light of new meanings made from present classroom events.

During two three-hour interviews, Helen told stories about her classroom experiences. Helen first began by telling stories about her most recent events that she was still trying to understand, and from there broadened out to tell stories that included her first year of teaching, her internship, and stories from early events that influenced her decision to be a teacher.

Collectively, Helen's stories reveal how she was in the process of working to understand how her many teaching events and turning points connected—or didn't—to form a meaningful whole within the broader context of her ever-unfolding life story. Told

in the broader contexts of her a) overall life story of becoming a teacher and b) transition from her internship to her second year of teaching, Helen told c) the story of making meaning of her experiences as beginning teacher—a story Helen called “Adapting to the Reality of Teaching.” Figure 9 depicts the narrative context of this story.

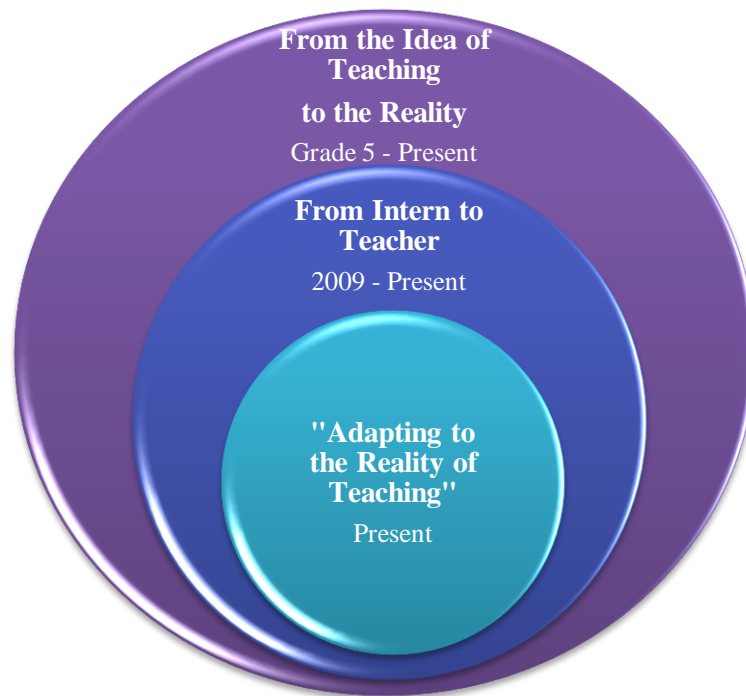


Figure 9: Narrative Context of Helen’s Story, “Adapting to the Reality of Teaching”

Within the composite story of Helen’s adapting to the reality of teaching, Helen tells many stories of her classroom experiences. These cluster around three related realizations Helen has in response to her experiences. The nature of these realizations relate to her overall growing understanding of the reality of teaching. More specifically, Helen expresses an ongoing understanding of: a) her identity as a teacher as she shares stories related to her understanding she is “not a suit” kind of teacher; b) her

responsibility and care for her students as she shares stories related to her understanding that the students she teaches are not “borrowed” like they were in her internship; these are her “kids”; and c) her professional milieu as she tells stories about her frustrations related to the *job* of teaching. As her stories demonstrate, these three realizations are turning points in her overall life story of journeying toward becoming a teacher. These are meanings she is in the process of making. Furthermore, these turning points develop in relationship to each other. This relationship is depicted in Figure 10.



Figure 10: Turning points in Helen’s Teaching Story, “From the Idea of Teaching to the Reality”

During interviews with Helen, her stories communicated turning points (see Figures 9 and 10) related to her understanding of herself, her students, and her professional environment. Considering that Helen’s past experiences demonstrate how she observed and interpreted situations in order to successfully help others, it makes

sense that Helen would be frustrated with teaching during her second year. As her stories and analogies communicate, Helen sees herself as becoming more “fluent” in teaching. She likens her development as a second-year teacher to the fluid movement of a ballerina who once walked like Frankenstein during her pre-internship and internship experiences. Explaining her analogy, Helen told me:

Think about the way Frankenstein walks. “Ugh!” One step. Okay, next step...As an intern, everything you do is a conscious decision. First I do this. Now I do this. If a kid asks “blah blah blah” then I answer this. Okay. Now it’s very instinctual...I just know it. I live it. It’s in my cells. I don’t have to think about it anymore.

She also uses the story of her learning to drive as an analogy to express her development as a teacher. Since Helen did not learn to drive until the semester before she began her internship, she described in great detail her early driving abilities as “white-knuckled” and overly cautious. Fearing she would get lost, she used a map to go anywhere, didn’t deviate from the plan, allowed an hour to drive a few blocks, and focused her attention on the individual elements of driving—rearview mirror, speedometer, seatbelt, key in the ignition, rearview mirror, gear, mirror. Now, after only a few years of driving, she just gets in the car and goes, singing to the radio and contemplating life as she drives.

Both the analogy of dancing and driving communicate Helen’s assessment of her teaching as fluid. Nevertheless, in her professional environment, “everything is so fragmented.” Her job is regulated by checklists of discrete, mandated elements: a word

wall, an objective worded a specific way, mandated grammar warm-ups, literacy strategies, and test preparation exercises that are all separate from the curricular texts her students read and write, all of which is not connected to the semester exams her students take—exams used to measure her performance as a teacher. The fragmented nature of teaching is frustrating for Helen who has in the past used her knowledge of people to select relevant examples to help them make connections that promote their understanding. Shaped by “red tape” and “checklists,” her professional environment does not allow her to do what she knows.

Within the context of her professional environment, Helen has become aware of the intricate relationship a teacher builds with her students. Helen’s analogies, images, and references to her prior experiences indicate that she thinks of her students in familial terms. She has stated that she sees herself as a “mother” who feels responsibility for “her kids”’ academic success and character development. Helen also shared that this feeling of responsibility creates elation and pride when a student succeeds academically, garners self-confidence, or broadens his or her perspective, and the responsibility creates frustration and guilt when students stumble, shut down, or fail.

During her first two years as a teacher, Helen has also made meanings about her identity as a teacher. Using the metaphor of a “suit,” Helen talks about how she has come to understand that she is “not a suit kind of teacher”; she is more of a jeans, nice shirt, and Converse sneakers kind of teacher. Her stories tell of how she began her first year of teaching by putting on a physical and mental suit; however, through her interactions with her students, learning their needs, and teaching in a way that made sense to her for

helping her students to make connections, she gradually shed the suit. For her second year of teaching, she began as herself. She also explains this turning point with a drama analogy. She likened internship to “play-acting” and then, through what I recognize as transactional classroom events—moments when she and the students were connected and making meaning together and in response to each other and the texts they were reading—she “broke through the fourth wall,” communicating that there was a breach between the imaginary wall that separates the “play” and the audience. These connective moments transpired in direct relationship to moments when she and the students make meaningful connections during curricular experiences when she deviates from the expectations of her profession to teach in response to observing and interpreting her students during classroom events.

The connected nature of these three aspects—her identity as a teacher, her relationship with her students, and her professional context are communicated in the following statement about the transition from internship to teaching, told at the end of her second interview following stories she told about her teaching experiences:

And I think [pause] you know there’s the [pause] I guess as an intern, you’re starting to recognize the reality of the situation, ‘cause that’s, you know, where the dreams, the dreams that you had of being a teacher, “And I’m gonna teach them about books and we’re gonna do reading, you know, reader’s theater [laughter suggesting her ideas were naive]. We’re gonna do all these wonderful things. I’m gonna be such a great teacher, and I’m gonna love those kids, and they’re gonna love me!” That’s all dream phase. And then you get to internship,

and you're, and those things aren't happening, you say, "Oh, it's okay, 'cause I'm an intern. And, and I don't know what I'm doing yet. And these kids aren't really mine, I'm only spending half [the semester], you know.... [very long pause] But then when you get on to like real teaching, and it's a real situation, you're not just play-acting anymore, and those things still aren't happening, it's like the tarnish starts to show and things aren't so shiny anymore. And it's like, "Well, is there enough of a gleam here that I want to hold onto this, or is it just too tarnished, so [do I] I just want to get rid of it?"So, I think the, the part that's, that gets me now, and I don't know whether this fits into your research or not, but is to figure out how Act Three is gonna go. So that's the biggest conflict. [pause] Because now it's like, "Okay, I know what it was like as an intern. I know where I am now. Do I wanna to keep reading this play or do I wanna jump ship and go read something else?"

In the above statement, not only can I see how Helen is working to make sense of her present situation as a second-year teacher in light of her past experiences, I can also see how she is wondering about her future from a frame of uncertainty constructed from the tensions generated by her experiences and the meaning she is presently making about teaching. Phrased in a question, it is evident that as Helen teaches and as she continues to live and tell stories about her classroom experiences, she is reading her classroom as a text, looking for answers to the question she now has: Do I still want to be a teacher?

I see a reminder too, that Helen is using her observational and interpretive skills to help me to learn from her. I have shared with her a brief description of the questions

and theoretical framework of this study as well as my overall purpose to learn from beginning teachers so that I can aid prospective teachers transitioning from being students of teaching to becoming teachers. The research situation is the context in which she and I tell, listen to, talk about, and create stories. Her stepping outside what she perceives as the situational context is a reminder of the influence of the context on her (and my own) meaning-making. However, her ability to identify that she is stepping outside the research context and speaks anyway is indicative that Helen's frame of thinking is open to making new meanings and to understanding through telling and living stories of classroom experiences. She is not telling stories to feed a pre-determined point; rather, she is using stories to explore and understand from the frame she has approached the situation from. Her frame or stance is open; her meaning-making is fluid.

Also evident to me as I consider the scope of the stories lived and told in the context of this narrative inquiry, this is a moment of making new meaning through the telling of stories. Throughout this investigation, participants' speech patterns demonstrate a difference between talking about prior meanings that they have made and new meanings. Prior meanings are spoken fluidly, and usually rapidly, whereas new meanings are marked by pauses, verbal fillers such as "um," interjections such as laughter or "Oh," a change in the direction of thought marked by unfinished sentences, unfinished words, or the repetition of words before saying something else, and are often surrounded by comparisons often evident by the use of the word "like" to denote an analogy.

Finally, evident here and in the overall pattern of meaning-making evident throughout this narrative inquiry, this meaning-making takes place as Helen steps back

from the stories she has lived and told to distance herself—evident in her use of the second-person pronoun *you*—before making a statement about that speaks to the new frame she has gathered from this process to bring forward and guide future meaning making.

“Maybe I Can Go Catch a Few”: **Being outside of the research story-world and reconsidering what I know.** During Helen’s internship, I interviewed her twice. The first time was a couple of weeks into her internship, just after she began assuming full teaching responsibilities. At that time, I asked her to share with me her reason for wanting to become a teacher. In my mind, I remember this story by the title I gave it—a title taken from her own words in this story expressing her dual motivations for teaching and referred to through allusion numerous times during other stories about her teaching experiences—stories through which she continued to reflect on her ongoing sense-making of her purpose for teaching and stance toward teaching.

Christi: In the methods class, we talked a little bit about why we wanted to teach. Would you refresh my memory about why you wanted to teach?

Helen: The why I wanted to teach was that I was realizing how many people go through this world without basic functional literacy. And the main reminder for that is my mom, because she has a third grade education, and just watching her struggle to pay bills. And when my parents got divorced when I was in middle school, for her to understand the divorce papers, she would come to me. And I was in 8th grade. She’s like, “Can you help me understand these, you know, packets of legal terms?” “Uh, no, I can’t. You know, I can try my best, I can use

my dictionary, but I don't know all this terminology. You know, I'm, I'm thirteen." So, watching her struggle with that was, I was thinking, how many other people, go through their lives like this? They're, they go to class, whatever, and they sleep, and then when they're sixteen they drop out and they go get a job, cleaning or doing manual labor and stuff, but then when they're getting, you know, a notice for jury duty, or when they're getting their bills, they're not, you know, they don't really get it when they go to a hospital and they go to sign all those papers. *I struggle* through those papers; I'm a college educated person, so what must it be like, what must it be like for these other people? So that was kind of my motivation. Maybe I can go catch a few. And, so that they don't have to go through what my mom went through. So that was like the basic literacy part.

And, then, for teaching the *joy* of reading, it was my brother. Because he was, he had gotten to second or third grade and just abhorred reading, couldn't bear the thought of it. If he had to read a *story*—like picture a story book—burst in tears at the thought of it, because he hated reading. And I couldn't figure out *why*, and then I realized it was because he couldn't, he couldn't visualize to save his life. He could *read* the words, you know, physically, for lack of a better word, but he couldn't, couldn't get any meaning out of them.

So then, what I did with him was I read the first five *Harry Potter* books, out loud, which is a couple thousand pages of reading, but I guess maybe that's why my friends always say that I have a wonderful reading voice. [My husband] always teases me about that—"If you're ever losing your kids, just read to them, because they'll love to hear you read." [laughter] So, that's a plus. [laughter] So I

read him all five books, and they're huge tomes, each one of them, but I did all the *voices*, and I'd stop, and, it was funny because I was only, I must have been in 10th grade then, so I didn't have any teacher training yet, but I'd stop and go, "Okay, so what's happening? What do you think is going to happen next? Do you think Harry is going to die?" and then he'd say, like, "No, 'cause we have three more books." [laughter] Right. Good. Thinking ahead [laughter]. And predictions, making predictions [laughter].

So, and it's funny, it was funny when we had teaching reading²³ because then I went back, and I was like, "Oh yeah." I did that without knowing that I, that that was what I was doing, but I was trying to teach him to do that. And um, the big pride in it was that he read the 6th and 7th books on his own right when they came out, and he's an avid reader now, he does well in English, he's taking a creative writing class now, and he *loves* to read, so, *YES!* [Helen makes a "cha-ching" kind of motion with the quick jerking back of her arm and closed fist to convey her sense of victory and pride.]

So, I think those, just thinking about the different experiences for those two people.

Stepping outside the research story-world and objectifying it. As I reread Helen's story of why she wanted to teach, I notice how her story stitches pieces of new experiences into the larger pattern of the meaning she made from past experiences. Following the meaning she made from watching her mother's

²³ "Teaching Reading" refers to the university course I taught titled, "Teaching Reading in the Secondary English Classroom." Helen took this course in the fall of 2008.

struggle, she mentions people who go to class, sleep, drop out of class, and go on to struggle with basic literacy, including forms that they might want need to understand when being admitted to a hospital. Shortly after telling me this story, Helen went on to describe stories from her internship teaching experiences which she was trying to make sense of—how her students could sleep through class, even tell her that Shakespeare didn't matter because they were going to into the military or planning to drop out of school to take a construction job. Before her attention fully turned to talk about the stories of her experiences with the sleeping students who did not understand why they should care about Shakespeare, the story of her past experience connected to and helped to frame an experience she was still working to make sense of. Additionally, Helen spent a week in the hospital undergoing surgery shortly before our interview. Evident in her choice of details in this “Maybe I Can Go Catch a Few” story about the reason she wants to teach is a connection between her past—to the meaning she has made from past experiences—and her present experiences. This connection suggests that she is reconsidering prior meanings about literacy in light of present situations and experiences. Her meaning, her reason for teaching is reconsidered and further developed in light of additional experiences. Helen revisits, reconsiders, and develops her understanding of her initial sense the way that readers reconsider their understanding of a literary text in light of new details, twists in the plot, or interactions with additional characters. While a reader's overall sense of understanding—the internal text they form while reading in their mind—may or may not shift dramatically in response to the text as it unfolds, the text, the story

leads them to revisit, reconsider, re-imagine, to develop their understanding. The final segment of Helen's story also hints at this ongoing process of understanding in response to additional experiences. Helen remarks that when she took the methods course on the teaching of secondary reading with me at the university, she realized something that she had been instinctively doing all along—when reading with her brother, she helped him to imagine the story world by using voices, and she helped him to learn to think while reading by asking him questions. Helen revisits her earlier experience with her brother in light of new experiences in a college classroom. Revisiting those experience led to awareness, “Oh yeah, I did that,” that helped to connect her past life experiences with new academic concepts.

Finally, reading this story and thinking about it I notice how it subtly demonstrates the way that telling a story allows Helen a space for connecting her past and present experiences and for enacting a frame of thinking about new experiences from the residue of prior meanings in her reservoir. However, it also reminds me that while Helen's knowledge about how to help readers enjoy reading shifted from instinctual to becoming more aware of this knowledge, I am reminded that her understanding is still fluid. As she shares her stories with me in interviews and conversations about her teaching experiences as a second-year teacher, she garners additional insight and awareness. The act of telling her stories to an audience, of considering my reactions—my laughter, “uh hu's,” questions, and thoughts, Helen “reads” and responds to these cues, both reading and composing her understanding through the transactional space of telling stories and conversing in an interview situation.

In the overall story of Helen's journey to teaching, Helen identified the experience of watching her mother struggle with functional literacy and the experience of helping her brother to visualize literature in order to learn to enjoy the experience of reading as the two experiences contributing to the primary reason Helen wanted to teach. Other formative experiences include her earliest memory of tutoring. In elementary school, she spent two years going to school in South America. There, Helen had to learn Spanish, and she studied English as a second-language. Helen interpreted patterns in English grammar, and from that knowledge, she helped her young peers to learn English while learning from them how to speak Spanish. Other similar experiences from Helen's journey toward teaching include her interpreting patterns in mathematics, and then using stories or examples to help others learn. Specifically, in middle school, Helen often finished her work early so that she could help her classmates. In high school, she took pride in helping her friend bring her failing average up to a *C* in their math class. In college, she was such a successful math tutor to her struggling peers that the instructor told the class that if they didn't understand his lecture, they could stay after and Helen would help them. Once again, Helen studied the language of the subject matter in a particular context, and then she used what she described as "relevant examples" to help others understand.

The exception in the otherwise similar stories about Helen's journey to teaching is her stories about the high school English teacher Helen had for both her junior and senior years of Advanced Placement (AP) English—a teacher who reinforced Helen's decision to become a teacher. Until this point in Helen's life, she had been the one who guided others. This time, Helen was the one who needed guidance. Helen's teacher knew her

whole story, and she told her that despite Helen's situation, Helen couldn't allow herself to make excuses. Her teacher maintained her high expectations for Helen and helped Helen to see what she was capable of. This experience, Helen told me, transformed not only her personal outlook, but showed her how influential a teacher could be. As I listen to Helen's stories of her classroom experiences, I hear the AP teacher in Helen, again and again. She communicates high expectations for students, won't allow them to make excuses, and yet, she reads the situation—such as a student's mother being chronically ill, a student not having a computer to type an essay, having trouble staying awake in class because he works a full-time night shift to help support his family)—and helps her students to find ways that they can help themselves and to succeed despite the obstacles they face.

Collectively, Helen's early experiences reveal how Helen's decision to teach relate to her experiences observing and interpreting learning situations in order to help others to understand. In the stories Helen lives and tell about her classroom experiences from her second year of teaching, it is evident that these early experiences, particularly the meaning she made from helping her mother and brother, help frame her stance toward teaching and guide her meaning-making about her teaching experiences. Recognizing the connection between Helen's early experiences related to her journey toward teaching provides a frame for understanding the overall frustration Helen felt about adapting to the reality of teaching during her second year as an English language arts teacher.

“Pursuing the Dream” and “First Impressions”: **Being outside of and stepping into the research story-world.** About two months after interviewing Helen, I

spent six days observing Helen teach. During this time, Helen began a new unit of instruction with her junior (eleventh grade) honors English students, a unit titled “Pursuing the Dream” —or the “Crushing the Dream” unit Helen later quips to me as she explains her take on it— a unit that is situated in the curriculum under the umbrella theme of The American Dream. The curriculum presents this as a lesson intended to help students to research careers of interest on their own time; however, recognizing her students’ needs, she carves out the instructional time to create a unit designed to help students to reconsider their career paths and the many responsibilities and possibilities available to help themselves reach their dreams in light of educative experiences she designs for them.

I have selected to tell a particular story from this unit as an example of the stories Helen lives and how I make meaning of those stories. Part of my rationale for including this story is that it sheds light on the theoretical framework I described in Chapter One of this study and discussed in Chapter Two. This story allows me to capture three layers of meaning-making—students making meaning of Helen’s lesson as they reconsider their future career paths; Helen’s making meaning of her students’ learning and her purpose for teaching as she reconsiders the future of her own career; and my making meaning about how Helen makes meaning as I reconsider my theoretical framework. This story also hints at the connections between these layers. In the context of Helen’s life story of transitioning from the idea of teaching to the reality of it, she teaches her students a unit designed to help them to reconsider their own internal texts—their plans for their future—in light of experiences and stories that provide them with a way to connect their prior understanding to these new experiences. As a result of their experiences, Helen

hopes that students can construct a more developed understanding of their personal dreams, and extend those dreams by learning about how to reach them. Driving her instructional decision is her personal experiential knowledge and the meaning she has made from it. As *the* first-generation student to go to college, neither Helen nor anyone in her family knew how to prepare Helen for transitioning to college. As Helen said, “No one helped me, and I paid dearly for it. It’s not like I had to take out a loan or something, no, I almost got evicted, and I wasn’t eating on a regular basis.” In addition to her own personal struggle transitioning from high school to college, Helen brings forward her knowledge of her first-year students. When teaching this lesson her first year, she realized just how much her students needed someone to help them to challenge their thinking. In her second interview, and again when teaching the unit, Helen expressed that this was her favorite unit because of its impact on students. In light of this study, I interpret that part of what she values is that through acquiring additional information, students have a better understanding of what it takes to achieve their dreams, and through stories, students have the opportunity to experience situations which provide them with a space for reconsidering what they know. They have the opportunity to make a difference in their own lives.

The story I focus on is titled “Another Look at First Impressions.” This story within a story within another story, and is the second part of a two-day introduction to a professional writing project Helen is teaching her eleventh grade honors students. On the first day, they began the unit by reading a short passage in their textbook. Helen then modeled her own twenty-year timeline, detailing her life’s goals and plans from the time she was, like them, a junior in high school. Helen then asked students categorize the

details on her timeline, and students identified *school*, *work*, and *family* as the three main types of events on her timeline. Discussion of her timeline generated discussion around the short stories Helen told, alluded to, or imagined from her timeline. After students created their own timelines, she lead students through constructing a three-column “KWL” chart in which students listed what they *Knew*, and what they *Wanted* to know, leaving room for what they will *Learn* about *three* different career choices after doing some research in the computer lab. Considering three different career choices proved to be challenging for the majority of students.

From the class-wide discussion and overhearing Helen’s conversations with individual students, it became clear that most of these students had only thought of one possible future—some more realistic than others—and some had difficulty envisioning anything beyond high school graduation.

As students shared their goals and intended career paths, I began to better understand why Helen recreated this unit to go beyond what her curriculum guide asked. Students have some idea of what or who they want to be—a veterinarian, a professional athlete, a “zillionaire,” a youth minister, a paramedic, a pimp, a chef, a rap music legend, a teacher, a lawyer—but they have practically *no* idea of what they need to do to reach their dreams. Even if Helen hadn’t already told me all this in an interview through the story of teaching this unit as a first-year teacher here at Arlington High School, Helen’s knowledge of her students’ needs was evident in this first lesson. Helen’s use of her timeline to tell stories of her experiences was purposeful. It was strategic. She has observed that her students think that graduation is the purpose of education, that finishing

not learning is why they are supposed to go to school. They show up for classes, turn in papers, and expect that putting in time and passing in papers in order to complete school at graduation is *the* point of an education. Beyond that? Helen told me, they don't know. Having considered all this, she communicated in the inviting manner of a story how her current life is "Version D" of her time line, how dreams and reality sometimes clashed, how she struggled, learned, adapted, made mistakes, fell down, got up, and ultimately landed on her feet. For instance, because she didn't know anything about the application process and timeline for college applications she missed the deadline to apply to the college she wanted to attend—an "Ivy League" school within her reach with her perfect verbal scores on the SAT, yet beyond her grasp because she didn't know about the application process. As the first person in her family to attend college and as a graduate of a high school where it was assumed everyone just went to college on a merit scholarship, there was no one to help her. Helen is here to help, she tells her students. Out of Helen's lived and told stories, she creates a space for learning that invites her students to reach for their dreams while having their feet grounded on the knowledge of not only how to get there but also where else they could go.

"Another Look at 'First Impressions'": Being inside and moving through the research story-world. "Good Morning, Christi!" hails Debbie, the school secretary, from across the main office. Today there is no formal presentation of paperwork or verification of identity. I just slide my driver's license through the school's computer then smile a hello as I smooth the day's "Visitor" sticker across the breast of my shirt.

Following the short-cut Helen showed me yesterday, I make my way down the main hallway of Arlington Senior High School toward the back side of campus—well, actually, toward the fenced-in area in a former parking lot positioned between the school’s trash bins and the city’s freeway, behind campus where two long rows of temporary, trailer-like classrooms face one another to create their own hallway under a canopy of open sky—to join Helen for a second day of classroom observations. About half-way into my trek, I turn to walk past the school’s cafeteria. Centrally located, this open space connecting the school’s main arteries is presently bustling with teens, filled with the cacophony of many conversations competing to be heard above the collective chatter, and overlooked by a handful of strategically posted sentinels bearing walkie talkies. This is the path Helen walks here at Arlington.

I have arrived a bit early today, and I am glad for another look at the world in which Helen works. Yesterday, checking into the office and finding Helen’s classroom took a bit longer, so by the time I approached the cafeteria area, the students had just headed off to class. Coming closer to the cafeteria, I found myself growing increasingly incredulous, even angry at what I saw. Ketchup packets smashed on walls, an unopened cereal package and several small bags of juice lying like grenades in the middle of the floor, then trash and half-eaten food seemingly everywhere—on the floor and the tops of the tables. The sight was arresting. It was as if a thousand students had suddenly disappeared mid-bite, leaving their food and litter to fall all around where they had been. In the quiet of the aftermath, there was destruction, waste, irresponsibility, and disrespect. “Hun-uh. No way! You get back here and clean up after yourself!” I mentally demanded to the imaginary students I envisioned fleeing the scene in the voice of a mother and a

former high school teacher now fused in response to the situation. However, today things are different; I consider the world of Arlington High School through this cafeteria space in light of Helen's stories, and I see students, not what they've left behind. Judgment that was never mine to pass, begins to dissolve.

My gait slows as I try to take in the scene, to see it, to try to understand this collage of faces, their body language, their energy—all so colorful, vibrant, diverse, and astonishing. Next to the soda machine, a circle of girls parts to reveal one who is standing in three-inch heels balancing the weight of what looks like a heavy book bag and a bulging belly nearing the third trimester of pregnancy. Seeing her, I remember that Helen—who teaches sophomore and junior English—said she has several students with young children, and then I think of the story Helen told me about feeding one of her pregnant students. When a student—who very well knew Helen's "No food. No Drink." under no circumstances policy—asked, "Mrs. H., do you have anything to eat?" Helen understood that the food was for his pregnant and very hungry friend. Helen gave the two a handful of mini energy-granola-type bars, and watched as the soon-to-be mother eagerly read down the list of nutrients on the back of the package, bubbling about how good these would be for her baby. Ever since, Helen has kept some food in her desk drawer—just in case.

Turning my attention to the main eating area in the cafeteria, I see students from all walks of life; I see everything from flip flops to stiletto heels, cowboy boots to ballet-style slippers and designer sneakers—and I think of the story Helen told me about trying to understand a world where one of her students got stabbed at a bus stop with a pair of

scissors because she derided a boy's shoes. "What kind of world is that?" Helen exclaimed. Unable to "wrap her brain around" a situation like that, she expressed frustration that sometimes the differences between her world view and her students' was too vast to enable them to understand each other. Connections build understanding and learning, she explained, but sometimes the lack of connections is an obstacle she finds difficult to overcome.

Next, I see the walkway that connects the cafeteria to the majority of the school's classrooms, and I imagine the story Helen told me about one of last year's students recently flagging her down. Beaming with pride, he told her about how he just used something she taught him.

"Oh? And in what class was this?" Helen inquired.

"History."

"Hmm. What did I teach you about history?"

"We were writing letters in history class. You taught me how to write a letter!" he beamed. "And I've got all *B*'s now, Mrs. H. You'd be so proud of me!"

She was, she told me—but mostly because this *C/D* student whose habit had been to sleep through classes and make excuses, had, after her nudging, slipping an extra book across his desk, offering some paper and plenty of encouragement over the course of last year, now communicated pride in himself for his accomplishments.

I walk on, now reaching the edge of the cafeteria area, and I see the fashion and marketing students Helen pointed out to me yesterday when we walked to lunch. They

are dressed in gowns and tuxedos posing like mannequins to advertise for prom. They look stunning, and their bright-eyed smiles suggest that they are having fun with this. I guess it's their attire that triggers my memory of the "Golden Apple" story Helen told me about two months ago during an interview. After reading Zora Neal Hurston's "How it Feels to Be Colored Me" Helen was helping her students to gather ideas for writing about how it feels to be fill-in-the-blank me. Helen shared that she could write how it felt to be "wife me," "best-friend me," "teacher me," or, since it was the morning after the Oscars, how it felt to be "disappointed me" since she'll never get to get dressed up and win a Golden Apple. Although she made this remark in jest to students, Helen told me that it actually touched deeply on the ever-tarnishing reality of teaching—that, as she put it, teachers put their heart and head and time and tears into it all, and then at the end of the day and the end of the year students say "Okay, Bye!" and teachers begin again. The most they can hope for is a "Oh, Mrs. H., you were a good teacher!" as a little Oscar to file away in their memory. Nevertheless, a few days after Helen joked with her students about never going to win a Golden Apple award, one of them—the girl who gave Helen the most shockingly venomous look of hatred toward all that is school and toward Helen, a *teacher*, six months ago in the first few minutes of class on the first day of school—brought Helen an apple. "Ms. H., I know it's not a golden one, and you're probably gonna wash it, 'cause they decided to toss it around, but here's an apple for you." To Helen, this student's thoughts and actions were a sweet reminder of how rewarding teaching can be.

I exit the cafeteria area, then the school itself and approach the small inlet between two rows of portables and enter Helen's classroom. She greets me warmly, but I

can tell she is busy. It turns out that much of her morning was spent hunting down paper for the photo copier, so she is fast at work, preparing some final details for the day's classes. Since it is still several minutes before first period begins, I take the time to look around again at Helen's classroom. I spent the day here yesterday, but I was focused on Helen and her students, attending only peripherally to the classroom itself.

True to what she expressed to me in her first interview, Helen's classroom does seem to represent her as a teacher. Helen's desk is off to the side and acts as more of a workstation where she can drop off or pick up papers, grab a marker, or lean over to quickly enter attendance into the computer. I smile recalling that when reviewing the literary term, *personification*, Helen composed a quickwrite about her desk feeling lonely to both demonstrate the term and to draw upon students' frequent observations about her.

"Miss, why you don't be at your desk?"

"I'm here to teach you. I'm working with you," Helen responds.

Puzzled, they question in observation, "Yeah, but you don't ever sit down."

"Why would I go sit down over there? Then I can't help you."

And they just laugh as if to say "Miss, you so crazy!"

Helen's students, she has told me, are a bit baffled by why she works so hard, comes to school every day, and cares so much. She is baffled, at times, by why they don't come or care more.

Near the table where my laptop and I are stationed is a door and wall that has been made into a bulletin board of sorts. On it are the things Helen likes: post-card size pictures of television shows, books, authors, movies and musicians all splayed around a giant poster of Johnny Depp as Captain Jack Sparrow in *Pirates of the Caribbean*—a film I remember she used clips of during her internship to teach camera angles and lighting in a media literacy unit. The *Pirates* film wasn't the one recommended by the curriculum guide, but Helen's choice to use a visual text she knew well and liked "paid off," since the students both enjoyed and learned from the unit. To Helen who has expressed that both the joy of the experience of learning and the function of using what students learn both in school now and in their lives beyond school are her goals for teaching, students' responses meant much. Later, students wrote on Helen's mid-semester evaluation that they appreciated how she used things like *Pirates of the Caribbean* that were interesting and relevant to their lives when teaching them. Her cooperating teacher, a twenty-year veteran who had previously expressed a sense of bewilderment in how to approach teaching this new media literacy unit, was impressed and she told other faculty about Helen's creative and illuminative teaching.

To the right of the Depp poster and pictures, Helen has put up a collage that displays one of Helen's hobbies—scrapbooking. Inside transparent protector sheets, five scrapbook pages tell a story of who Helen Heart is. The display of these scrapbook pages represents, to me, the core of not only the reservoir which guides Helen's meaning-making but also how Helen makes meaning: observing, collecting and making stories, then interpreting, finding meaning, and reusing those stories to make new meanings in different contexts and for different purposes. The connection between Helen's stories,

meaning-making, and scrapbooking is a thought I reflected on just after our first interview together, but seeing these scrapbooking pages and the story they tell reminds me of this. I ask Helen if I can snap a photo of her wall and scrapbook pages, and then I consider the details in the pictures.

The first page is labeled “Mrs. H.” and has two pictures: one is labeled “Age 1” and shows a young Helen with an inflatable duck around her waist and a look of determination on her face as she climbs out of a shallow plastic pool. The other is Helen at “Age 16” and shows her with arms open wide as if saying “Ta Da!” in front of a carnival game that she and a friend created for a physics project in eleventh grade. The triumph in Helen’s body language, she later told me, was because she thought carnival games were staged. She and a friend used physics to figure out how to create a game in which players could throw a ball as hard as they could at any pin, and it wouldn’t fall down; however, if they threw it at one special pin, all the pins would fall. The juxtaposition of these two photos—climbing out of a small pool and then standing before a triumphant creation—makes me recall one of the analogies Helen used a few months ago to convey her frustration with the professional environment in which she teaches. As an intern, she knew she was treading water, and she was happy to have survived, but now, the “water wings” are gone; she knows how to swim, and she is ready to take her students to the “deep end” of the “pool,” but she is told to stay at “three feet.” Helen is someone who wants and needs to create, but feels frustrated by her growing realization that the job of teaching is filled with “red tape,” “checklists,” and “balls to juggle.” During her internship, she expected teaching to be “practicing and learning,” so she wasn’t bothered too much by the “paint by numbers” teaching days. However, since then,

Helen has had “watercolor days” with her students, and the freedom to create and compose teaching experiences that lead students to envision, create, and make [meaning] through reading and writing is what she works toward but often struggles to make room for within curricular demands, pacing calendars, and instructional check-lists.

The second scrapbook page also catches my attention as representing what I have come to know about Helen. The page is titled “Family” and contains three pictures. These pictures remind me of the three familial cultures Helen told me she drew from as she learned to code switch between different worlds—code switching that has helped her to interpret, understand, and better communicate with her students at Arlington. Two pictures share a similar occasion—Helen’s college graduation. In the first of these two family graduation pictures, Helen, dressed in her cap and gown, stands in the center of the photo between her mother and her teenage brother. In the other picture, Helen, still in her cap and gown, shares the center of the photo with her brother; flanking them, their dad and step-mother each hold a toddler—the “2.0 versions” as Helen and her brother lovingly refer to their half-brother and half-sister. In the third picture on this family page is a photo labeled “Mr. and Mrs. H.” on their first wedding anniversary. The snapshot of the happy couple appears to be one they have taken of themselves by holding the camera at arm’s length. In the first family picture—the one with her mother and brother at the occasion of her college graduation, I see the representation of the dual purposes which Helen has expressed for her reason for teaching; purposes that I recognize as the aesthetic and the efferent purposes for reading. Due to her mother’s third-grade education, Helen watched her mother struggle to read and understand and later wondered, “How many other people struggle with basic functional literacy?” Because her younger brother

despised reading as a boy, Helen read aloud to him, working with him to successfully help him to enjoy the experience of reading and to become a life-long reader. From the meanings she made observing and helping both her mother and her brother, she constructed her reason for teaching. This dual purpose is evident throughout the stories she lives and tells about classroom events.

The picture of Helen's Dad reminds me of how Helen's optimism and realism often battle within her. During her first interview, Helen explained how each day she *tries* to begin her last and by far most frustrating and challenging class with a positive attitude. And each week when it is time to collect the work students do the first few minutes of every class, she tries to be hopeful that *this* week is the week that they will turn in their work, especially since she has reminded them every, single, day. Yet, every day, they descend upon her classroom "like a plague of locusts" reminding her that every day they disappoint her. And every Friday when she collects their work and only four or five of the twenty-five hand anything in, it wounds her heart again. She explained to me,

And so I mean you can only be disappointed so many times. You can only give so many chances. And they have all run out of their second and third and thirty-sixth and eighty-seventh chances. So, at this point in the year I just have to hope, but not be so hopeful. What it makes me think of is um, my relationship with my dad.

Helen explained that as a young girl she learned that even though her dad said he would pick her up at a certain time on Friday, he likely would not be there. To protect herself from the weekly hurt and disappointment that he could show up for his business on time

but never to pick her up, she had to tell herself that if he shows up, great, but if not, she will see him next time. Helen uses the meaning she has made from her experiences with her father to express the hurt of disappointment she feels when this class, whom she cares for like family, refuses to “show up.”

The third, “Mrs. H.♥’s Disney” collage page represents the way that she enjoys the experience of not only the theme park, but also the experience of life. Disney represents a part of her; as she put it, she grew up with Mickey Mouse. She enjoys the experience of going to Disney and just enjoying a ride or watching people enjoy the experience of riding Dumbo or some other beloved character-themed ride. This year, she bought herself a season pass so that she could just be free to go whenever she wanted.

Many of her students neither know the experience of Disney World, nor understand how she could want to go alone. After mentioning to her sophomores that she went to Disney over the weekend, a student asked, with apparent sincerity,

“Who this Mickey dude, your grandpa?” After Helen explained, that no, she didn’t go visit her grandfather; she went to Disney World, the student asked, “Is Disney World like an aquarium with elephants and shit?”

Remembering that the girl who said this has a toddler, I felt a bit sad to think that her child might not get to know the spirited Disney characters through bedtime stories or visiting a place like Disney world. This square in Helen’s scrapbook story also reminded me of the frustration Helen expressed in her stories when she and her students’ reservoirs were so different that they made such different meanings about life and learning.

Nevertheless, this Disney scrapbook page also reminds me of the story Helen told about a student who was out shopping for holiday gifts for her family. When she saw a Mickey Mouse doll in a store, she thought of Mrs. H., and bought it for her. To Helen, that this student would even think of her while she was out shopping was a positive reminder that what teachers say and do, and the care that they have for their students does mean something, even beyond the walls of the classroom.

The fourth scrapbook page is all about “Tiny” her not-so-small dog. The caption between pictures of Tiny reads, “BEWARE cute DOG.” I think this also captures the way Helen characterized her approach to classroom management. She noted that rather than physical proximity, she has emotional proximity to students. Her style is communicating “between the lines,” such as “saying stern words with a smile or giving a stern ‘mommy’ look.” A look that works most of the time, she said, because it gives students room to recognize their behavior and do something about it without being embarrassed, belittled, or commanded. An exception to this is Evan, a student with Asperger’s Syndrome, a developmental disorder that limits his ability to communicate and to socialize. When Helen gives Evan the kinds of indirect cues or facial expressions that she uses to communicate with others, he just looks at her as if to say, “Why are you looking at me?” Helen expressed the challenge of needing to be direct with him in order to communicate with him. Yet when she tells him directly, “That joke was not funny. It was offensive and inappropriate,” she feels pain in watching his brows lower or his whole body cower in response. Communicating with him is difficult for her because her whole system of communication is interpretive and Evan cannot read between the lines.

Finally, the fifth picture chronicles the most recent chapter in her story—what she did over the summer. On this page, a snapshot of towering redwoods in Muir forest catches my attention. Seeing this picture, I ask if there’s a connection to the poster by her classroom door. “No, just a picture. Something I liked,” she assures me. Yet I can’t help but notice the similarity. In both the photograph she has taken and posted here on the wall chronicling her story and stating who she is as well as the poster right next to her classroom door, the focus of the pictures are on trees. In both, the camera angles up in such a way that the ground, the towering trees, and sky above are all visible. The perspective suggests someone standing in the forest, looking up to the heavens. This not only makes me remember the symbolic sketch she drew to symbolize that she was frustrated that she “couldn’t see the trees for the forest” during her early practicum experiences, it also bears a striking resemblance to the poster next to her classroom door that proclaims, “Dare to Dream.” This poster is one that she directly referenced during her first interview a few months ago. At the time, she was describing her favorite unit that she taught from her first year of teaching—the unit that she is now teaching for a second time. “Reach for the stars, but make sure your feet are on the ground,” she said was her advice to her students; her words--words reinforced by the perspective of this poster—touch the roots of why Helen teaches this unit and the core of how she makes meaning from classroom events.

Stepping outside of the research story-world to reconsider what I know. The first time I saw these photos, I only gave them a passing glance and a nod of recognition and confirmation as corroborating what Helen had already told me in interviews. I thought, “Oh yeah, there’s the bulletin board she described.” Even after spending a few

days in her classroom, I thought of how these pictures did, as we discussed in her first interview, speak to the way that Helen's classroom was an environment that was an extension of herself; that is to say, like Helen's stance toward teaching and toward life, her classroom is a place where life and learning are connected. She places her whole self—heart and mind—into the classroom. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the composite context of the many stories Helen lives and tells, I see how this bulletin board and these scrapbook pages—like the rest of her classroom's physical, emotional, social, relational, and intellectual space—symbolize, or at least act as guiding metaphors for both what and how I have come to understand Helen's way of making meaning. And in revisiting these details in light of thinking about this narrative inquiry as a whole, I see that I have been reading the text of Helen's classroom all along. That is to say, I have been both consciously and subconsciously observing and interpreting the many communicative signs that have been spoken, enacted, displayed, heard, seen, felt, alluded to in the context of her classroom, and I have been interpreting what these mean in the context of my ongoing understanding of Helen and her making meaning as additional details were revealed to me through continued interviews, conversations, classroom observations, emails, text messages, and reflective thinking about all that has transpired. For instance, on this family scrapbook page posted to Helen's classroom wall, I see a representation of how Helen makes meaning through the stories she lives and tells. Here, in the story told through pictures, beginning when she was one and “ending” with the story of what she did over the summer, there are stories within her larger life story, and these connect to other stories and through the connections both convey meanings that have been made and create space for others (her students—the intended audience—me,

and readers of this study) to connect and to make meanings about Helen, her classroom, and about themselves in relationship to her stories. Helen's family page represents Helen's reservoir of experiences, language, and knowledge that guide her ongoing meaning making from classroom events—a reservoir that both shapes her ongoing meaning making and forms her stance toward teaching, a stance that is evident in the stories she tells, and a stance or approach that is itself a text that is being composed through confirmation, juxtaposition, questioning, living, reflecting through continued stories of her classroom experiences.

Stepping inside and moving through the research story-world. While Helen and I briefly chat about the pictures on her scrapbook pages and the poster by her door, Arlington's first bell of the morning rings, alerting students to begin moving to their classes. Helen assumes her regular physical and intellectual stance: using her whole self to hold open the classroom door as she greets students and makes note of their presence on her clipboard.

Promptly after the bell rings, Helen begins with her daily greeting to the class as a whole—a greeting that she has told me is her way of expressing her mental practice of trying her best to begin each day and each class period fresh, to try to let go of any past frustrations and focus on the moment: “Good morning everybody and happy, Wednesday!” Students are quick to respond that, wow, today is Wednesday, and due to not having school on Monday, it feels strange to already be Wednesday. After mutually establishing this temporal point of reference, Helen continues. “Today, we are starting on our project I told you about yesterday, so I'm going to pass out the first flier in a series of

fliers. You are going to need a sheet of paper for today, so go ahead and get that ready.” As she passes out papers, she talks with students individually, and some of them talk quietly to each other while they reach into their notebooks to retrieve a sheet of paper.

“My stomach feel off, today,” I overhear Rodney, a nearby student say to Carter, the student next to him. It is obvious Rodney is in pain when he says this.

“Why you tellin *me*? I look like a *nurse*?” challenges Carter, a large football player who is presently on crutches and the watch-lists of several big-name college football programs.

“But ch’you *gonna* be a nurse—” Rodney light-heartedly chides, referring to what Carter identified, after some prodding from Mrs. H. yesterday, as a possible “additional career choice.” Carter was adamant about only playing professional football, but after Helen observed that professional football players tend to retire before they are forty and that some even retire sooner due to injuries, she asked him what else he might like to do after that as an additional career option. Carter expressed that he would like to do something in sports medicine, to be a medic at football games or help football players with physical therapy.

“Heh-heh,” Carter mocks in response to his peer’s ribbing. Then after a few seconds of silence, “You better go to the bathroom,” Carter says in the compassionate tone a health-care provider might use.

“I never missed none of this class before.”

“Mm.” Carter nods, in understanding.

Now that Helen has finished passing out the fliers, she turns her attention from talking to individual students to the class as a whole.

“Alright, you have a sign that says, ‘Help Wanted.’”

“Ooh,” Carter, the football player, responds with curiosity and enthusiasm.

Stepping outside of the research story-world and reconsidering what I know.

On the front of the flier underneath the large “Help Wanted” banner are descriptions of four jobs: sales clerk, shift manager, cook, and first aid supervisor. The bottom of the flier details the address and hiring manager (Mrs. H.) for the Carthay Circle Market. On the back side is a description titled “The Scenario,” a description of the project, and details about the five requirements for the project: a cover letter, application, resume, interview, and professional dress. All the components of the project are due at the time of the interview on interview day. At first, it is easy for me to gloss over the project handout—I, like her students, am quite familiar with the experience of beginning new projects. However, this flier is the handout Helen has created to introduce the professional writing project--the portion of the unit that re-creates what was suggested by her curriculum guide to accomplish her purposes for teaching based on her own personal experiences, her experiences teaching students, and her vision or stance toward education. This two-page text and the instructional activities that follow it, reveal Helen’s meaning-making and the relationship between her meaning-making and her stance toward teaching, her purpose for teaching this unit, and a rationale for the instructional decisions she makes. In other words, today’s lesson represents Helen’s stance or

approach to teaching and provides a window into how Helen makes meaning from classroom events.

Being outside and objectifying the research story-world. The handout and thus the project, is set in the storied space of a scenario. It doesn't just tell students what to do; it provides a situation, a space for them to use what they know in order to imagine what might be and to co-create an experience through which they can learn. Within the "story world" of the project handout, Helen communicates expectations for students while allowing room for students to also create part of that experience from their own reservoirs of knowledge and experience. To use one of Helen's own analogies: the project handout offers students the experiential "skeleton" and allows them to construct their own "flesh" for the experience.

To help students enter this story world, Helen uses language both on the flier and in her speech that positions students in a space which connects the present to an imagined future: "You will see four jobs that you can apply for...Imagine you are going to apply for this job."

Stepping inside and moving through the research story-world. As they read, Helen is careful to ask questions which help students to attend to textual cues that could help them to understand the flier, and she does this in a way that often suggests and at times explicitly states she is using her general knowledge about her students to shape the jobs students can apply for.

...Next we have the cook. Which skills do you need to be the cook? Right, culinary experience, so if you've taken culinary here at school, you can apply for

this job...Okay, so now we come to the first aid supervisor... So obviously I've made this one up...but what kind of program might you be in here at school to apply for this job? Yes, nursing or health....

On the back, we have what the project is actually about, so I want you to imagine that you saw this flier in a window or a newspaper. *You* saw it—*somewhere*. First we have the scenario, this is the thing we are going to imagine is going on.

As I listen and read along, I note how even in the written language, Helen asks students to imagine the future by using their prior knowledge. The scenario describes Carthay Circle Market then instructs students to “[i]magine a store similar to Whole Foods, Fresh Market, Publix, Super-Target, or Sweetbay.” The first two stories do seem similar to the description of the Carthay Circle Market; however, to me, the last two seem like a stretch from the market in the scenario. Based on the demographics and location of the school, it is unlikely that these students frequent Whole Foods or Fresh Market, higher priced, health-conscious markets that are not located anywhere near Arlington High. Nevertheless, it seems that Helen includes even the furthest reaches of similarities to the “Carthay Circle Market” so that her students can imagine a scenario based on some concrete prior knowledge and experiences that they may have. Later, Helen corroborates that this was an intentional stretch for that very reason.

Helen elaborates on the flier,

Just imagine that this is your typical grocery store, Publix, Sweetbay, and they've got a little restaurant inside where they can serve up sandwiches, soup, and salad, something little. It's a typical grocery store. And you need to imagine you are

going to apply for this job. And for the sales clerk job, I specifically made it so that so that you don't have to have had a job before, because I know that a lot of you haven't. So the idea is that when you go to get your first job, whether it's at Publix, or Target, or somewhere else, *how* are you going to deal with that situation? So that's what we're going to be practicing over the next week or two. Okay, so there are five different pieces of the project, and we're going to put them together on the same day. The first three are written.

They talk about the five pieces: the cover letter, job application, resume, interview, and professional dress for interview day. Helen quickly surveys the class:

“How many of you have experienced one of these? Two? Three of these?” Okay, so not many of you have any experience with this. Good, I'm glad you'll get something out of it...”

They begin talking about Interview Day, when students will bring the three written components of the professional writing project, come to class dressed for an interview, and then answer one interview question in front of the class. To prepare for the interview, students will practice responding to ten commonly asked interview questions; however, on interview day, they will be asked one question at random. Students' task is to do their best to convince the hiring manager, Mrs. H., to hire them. When Helen asks her students why she would ask them a random question, her first period students respond in a way that suggests they are thinking within the story world of Helen has created with the scenario:

“When we go, we won't know what they're gonna ask us,” observes one student.

“Right,” Helen responds, “you won’t have a prepared set of answerers you can read, and you don’t know exactly what they are going to ask you, and you want to make a *good* impression.”

In her second period, this question is met by silence from students. Helen tells them, “In a real interview you *never know* what they’re going to ask you. They might ask you something that you have *no* idea how to answer.” Helen follows this point with a story.

Helen transitions her tone and the direction of her point with a short chuckle, remembering a connection to the point she just made:

“Like teacher interview day when I first graduated from college, I went to this—essentially, it’s like a cattle call. They fill this school with all these teachers who are *desperate* for jobs, and schools come, and they just sit there, and they interview people. I went to interview for [a high school], and the lady said,

‘Why do you want to work here?’

And I went, ‘Uhhh, cuz it’s close to my house?’” A few students chuckle in a way that suggests embarrassment for Helen. “And if I could have just *crawled under the table and died*, cause the look that she gave me was:

‘Really? Because it’s close to your house?’” Helen is playing the role of the interviewer with eyebrows raised and using a voice that communicates scorn toward Helen. More students laugh. Helen seems to respond to their laughter; her momentum

picks up, her body language and voice(s) become more animated. In an enacted panic, she whispers as if thinking,

“And I was like, ‘wha? Why did I just say that?’ But I couldn’t think of anything else to say, because I really didn’t want to work there, so you know, that was the *honest* answer.” Students laugh, and so does Helen. “So don’t say things like that. You want to be prepared, ahead of time. I didn’t get the job at [high school]. So, I’m going to give you ten common questions to practice with, and then you’ll get one or two questions, at random on interview day.... You’re not going to go “Uh-h-h” like I did at the [high school] interview.

Stepping outside the research story-world and reconsidering what I know. After reading the project handout/ “Help Wanted” flier and talking about the “skeletal” components of the project, Helen transitions into the first conversation she has planned to help students to consider the concept of “first impressions.” As I watch and listen, I understand the curricular purpose of this story; to aid her students’ meaning-making, she uses a specific story from her own experiences to help students to bridge the abstract concept of first impressions to more concrete experiences—both those that they have had in the past and those that they might have in the future. Through the story Helen tells and through the story students and Helen live together within the storied space of the project culminating on interview day, students have the opportunity to consider and construct as well as reconsider and reconstruct their understanding of first impressions. Thus, in the space of story, students’ past repertoires of knowledge and experiences are brought forward, used to make meanings in light of this professional writing project experience.

“First Impressions”: Being inside and moving through the research story-world.

Helen first invites students to consider and bring forward their prior knowledge about the concept of first impressions.

All right, on that blank sheet of paper that I asked you to have ready, I’m going to give you two or three minutes to write about first impressions. What does the term mean? What is a first impression, and why is a good first impression important?

Brainstorm based on your own experience, your own ideas.

Students take a few minutes to write, and then share their ideas with their pod members—the other three students clustered around them—and then talk as a whole class.

“It’s important, because it can last forever,” a student offers.

Helen corroborates,

It can last a long time, forever, as Jennifer said, and that’s how you are going to come across to that person. Last year on the first day of class I had each of my students stand up and tell me one thing about themselves, and I still remember what some of those kids said, even though it was a year-and-a-half ago. I can still remember them, saying those things, because that was my first impression of them.

Helen only alludes to this story of her prior experiences in first period. I interpreted, based on her comment to me between periods that she felt she was all over the place at times, that she must have deleted this story to focus on her point. After first period, I did notice that her transitions between stories were sharper, more purposeful. She trimmed

the stories that didn't further her point, and added new ones (like the non-example answer, "because it's close to my home" from her teacher interview day) in response to students' reactions or her anticipation of their reactions and developing understanding.

"Think *way* back to August. Does anyone remember their first impression of me? And would be willing to share it? Students offer candid recollections of their first impressions of her name, physical demeanor, and even facial expressions. One student even shared that she thought Helen's smile was a trap to make them or their parents think she was a nice teacher on open house night, but then later, she would be mean and stern. "Now that it's March, how have those first impressions held up over time?"

Although Helen teaches the same class, eleventh grade honors English, four times, it is only in her first period that she alludes to her "suit" story from her first day of school last year.

What's interesting is that last year, on the first day of school, I wore a suit and high heels 'cause that's what I *thought* I was supposed to wear. Teachers wear suits, right? [Tavaris], you were in my class last year, do you remember that day? You do? What did I look like? So I looked like a business woman, kind of strict? Professional. Okay, would you say serious? A little serious. Okay. And that was the first impression that I started with last year, and this year I came in a little more relaxed. This year, I don't remember what I wore, it was probably black and black, since that's what I always wear, but I wanted you guys to feel comfortable in my room.

Now, I want you to relive that first day of school for a moment, and under no circumstances, do I want to hear any names, but, how many of you have come into a class on the first day and the teacher's eyebrows are like this (she scowls); they've got the angry eyes on, and their faces are like this (her voice suddenly gruff and her body language suggest intimidation), and you thought, 'Oh my God, this class is gonna *suck!*'?

Students immediately respond to this situation, *very* ready to share examples. "No, don't you say any names. You know who you are thinking of, and I'm thinking about my own experience as a student too. Ohhh, *I* remember." Students are laughing in a way that suggests not only are they enjoying this, but they are remembering and realizing and recognizing her point. Several nod their heads the way some might agree with a southern gospel preacher delivering a hot sermon. Others laughter and facial expressions seem to say "Oh my goodness, yes!" Several conspiratorially look toward peers with arched eyebrows that seem to allude to a story they share between them.

"The idea is, first impressions stick with you, for better or worse."

"Oh, that's right," says a student.

"They do," another agrees.

"Still..." A girl exhales, seeming to indicate she is remembering an impression.

"And that's something that we have to take into account, how we present ourselves," Helen states. She then explains how her approach on the first day of school is to be firm in order to establish a working environment right away, and then because

students come in ready to work every day, that means that they have the opportunity to laugh, joke, and have fun. “That’s something that I set up on purpose. If I came in all silly the first day, would you have taken my class seriously?”

This question is met with a resounding and emphatic “NO!” from the class.

Helen recaps her point that this initial impression was purposeful and that it created a desired effect that allows them to now learn and have fun too. Then, she transitions into a story, “First Impressions”:

So, this idea of first impressions becomes very important. So I’m going to tell you a little story about applications. Because your application to a place, realistically, as you go for your first job, is going to be, your first, impression. Now, I want to tell you a short little story about when I used to work at the mall, and I worked at the Hallmark store, and it was a first impression—that I will never forget. This girl, comes in with this whole entourage of people, like five, ten people behind her. She’s got her cell phone, up in the air.

Helen holds up her own cell phone and hip hop music begins playing. Helen’s head begins to bob to the music, and her body language shifts to convey a girl sauntering into the imaginary store.

“Yall got some applications.”

Helen says in character, the request sounds closer to a demand than a question.

Helen turns to respond in a way that suggests she is now herself observing and responding with surprise at the situation.

“I’m like, ‘Uh, yeah.’ So I gave her one. Then she stood there and stared at it.”

Pretending to be the girl again, Helen huffs,

“You gotta *pen*?”

“I was like, ‘Yeah...,’” indicting her disbelief at the girl’s actions. “So I gave her one.”

Students laugh as Helen, in character, dramatically shifts her weight, huffs again, and then erases furiously when she makes a mistake on the imaginary application. Helen continues to describe how the girl—who was dressed in shorts and a tank top—stood at the counter, smacking gum, vigorously scribbling away on the application, with her music blaring from her phone and her entourage hovering behind and blocking the little old ladies buying Hallmark cards from coming to the counter to make their purchase before she pushes the application back over to Helen and struts out of the store.

Stepping outside of and reconsidering the research story-world. Helen’s story is detailed, and she tells it well, using hand gestures, facial expressions, tones of voice. Students’ eyes are glued to her. Their faces light up. They laugh. With the exception of trying to figure out the applicant’s race, which Helen says doesn’t matter—they are with her. There is a collective sense of a shared moment, a shared experience, even if vicarious.

Being outside of and objectifying the research story-world. She then draws from the story to help students think through the details—about what kind of impression

was made, how it was made, and why in this context, it was not an appropriate or successful first impression to make.

Helen's transition from the "First Impressions" story back to the project is smooth and explicit. "So, I tell you all this to tell you, that your application is the first impression you make when you go to a job."

Helen continues to talk about when they go to pick up their application, asking students about what kind of dress would be appropriate, and referencing the Hallmark story she just told as a non-example. She uses positive statements, "You will use blue or black ink—not purple pen," and rhetorical questions to help students to consider the tasks they will soon be doing in relationship to this story. "Should you have your phone on you playing music as loud as it will go? Should you even have your phone out? Should you even have your phone turned on? Should you have an entourage of twenty people? Should you even have a friend? Sensing her students' alarm at this last question, Helen pauses here to explain that she has been in the situation where two friends go from store to store in the mall, picking up applications, and then she recommends that they go alone on separate days and leave the friend at home. She invites students to consider what kind of first impression bringing a friend might make to a manager accepting their application.

Being inside and moving through the research story-world. Helen tells her class:

So what I'm going to hand you next is a practice application. Being neat on an application is important. It makes an impression, but this is just a practice application and not the one you'll be turning in for credit, so you have a chance to

make mistakes. Now, as you get started, I'm just giving this to you, I'm throwing you into the deep end of the pool. I'm not giving you any directions yet, because I want you to see what it feels like when you're not prepared for an application. So I'm going to give you a minute to work on this practice application. Imagine that you are at the store, trying to get a job...

Through students' questions, Helen helps them to understand what information the application is asking. She continues to use analogies, stories, hypothetical situations, and references to what other students have said or asked to guide them through the experience so that they will be prepared to make a good first impression with their application.

The next day, Helen invites me to join her for lunch so that I can ask her about some of the questions I had and check some of the interpretations I made during the last two days of observations. We head to the deserted teacher's cafeteria where we talk for the duration of her lunch and planning period. At first I ask her what stood out from day three of the unit. Helen reminds me that day three—when students go to the computer lab to research their career and colleges that offer programs that will prepare them for the career they aspire to—is one of her favorite days in the whole year. As an observer, I can understand why. The morning was marked by often dramatic responses as students discovered, “How much that tuition be?” or realized, “Maybe I don't want to be a paramedic. I'll be living in a cardboard box.” With seemingly every question and realization, Helen, was right there next to her students, pointing to financial aid links on the computer screen, or helping supporting students' thinking outside the “boxes” they

came to class thinking in. For a good twenty minutes Helen shares examples of students who were making connections between the present and their future, and for better or worse, begin to consider the reality of pursuing their dreams. She reflects,

I feel like it's very much one of these things that they're learning from my mistakes. And forget as a teacher, as a person that makes me happy because I'm able to pass on my hard learned lesson to someone else, so, that feels good. I feel it's like a very maternal kind of instinct for that like, "Here, I learned the hard way I want you to learn from what happened to me." And I think because I have that, you know, very dramatic story it's not like, oh yeah I had to take out a loan, like, no, I was not eating on a regular basis. I know what I'm talking about. And they appreciate that. But I think anyway, that I'm trying to warn them and I'm trying to [pause] I try to do it in a way where I'm not doing the finger wagging, you know, don't you try to, like, I try to be positive about it, yes it is going to cost you an arm and a leg, but you can start saving pennies now, and you know, it's not going to blindside you now. You can do something about it. Here's a link to learn about financial aid and loans. If you really want this, you can work hard and do it.... Because it wasn't really about "What am I going to be doing when I'm 30?" It's "What am I going to do next year when I graduate?" And so, now, I think it makes it very real for them to have a [pause] direct connection, to this, you know, future that they've been told over and over again has to happen. And so, it's a personal choice for me to take a day out of our, you know, limited time to go down to the lab and give them that time to just, "Here. Look and research." Because I think with that, it's something that the curriculum crunch, we have so

much to cover in a year. So, we need to take a day off and just do something else, [pause] is, [pause] not *risky*, but it's a, [pause] it's kind of a weighty decision. Cause there's plenty of other things in [the curriculum] that I could have done today. But, I think it's more important for them to have that [experience]. And I think, [pause] I *imagine*, that they appreciate it. And, I can see, and I heard, and they told me that they got a lot of it. And so, that was cool.

Stepping outside of and objectifying the research story-world. Through the experience of inquiry and discovery, students were able to generate new meaning about their goals and dreams. There was an opportunity to take away an awareness that, for some seemed to confirm what they imagined would be the demands of pursuing their dreams, but for others, challenged and reshaped their understanding. And when students' mouths most gaped with surprise or shock, Helen was there to offer them words of encouragement to nudge their thinking toward taking action on their own behalf.

Being outside of and stepping into the research story-world. After Helen and I talk about the students' reactions to their research in the lab, our conversation shifts as I share a response through comment on yesterday's lesson. In the wake of my comment, Helen shares with me the frustration that because her actions are instinctual, she cannot fully explain them.

Through our conversation, we made new meanings together. Rather than narrate this conversation, I “retell” it in transcript form²⁴, to allow readers to “see” our meaning-making process.

Characteristic of moments when meaning was in the process of being made, this conversation contains exploratory speech rather than final-draft speech (Smagorinsky, 2008), filled with pauses, awkward phrasing, fillers like “uh” and “um.” When reading over this portion of the chapter, it was a bit painful for both Helen and me to read such rough thinking; however, what is of interest here in this narrative inquiry is *how* teachers and I make meaning of our experiences. In this shared meaning-making we each experience an event that is guided by our reservoirs, in general, and our distinctly different stances as “readers” of the situation, specifically. The event illuminates the often invisible process of making meaning while teaching, and for both of us, contributes to our ongoing meaning-making.

“Making Meanings from ‘First Impressions’”: Being inside and moving through the research story-world with Helen. As Helen and I sit down to lunch, I comment:

Christi: I really enjoyed hearing, your lesson yesterday. I was like “Uh, I wish I had a video tape. I mean on video things like that don’t do justice but you know

²⁴ I have included the whole conversation with the exception of the many interjections of “uh huh” and “yeah” that were communicated by both Helen and me to indicate agreement or that we were following the other person’s point. While these comments of affirmation do contribute to the meaning making process, I removed them to make the transcript a little easier to read.

what I mean, like, it's just it was really great just to see the dynamics of it. [Helen laughs] I love the props, I mean, you know, the phone yeah.

Helen: That was something that my peer [evaluator], peer observer, whatever you call 'em, she said that she could tell that the kids really *loved* that story. And I think they *do*, that's something with juniors last year just became a joke, you know, when you are just goofing off somebody would just go [humming notes from the hip hop song] and just hold this imaginary phone up and it was, you know, became this running gag and every now and again when they're doing really quiet, like when they're taking the test and bust my phone out and just play it really quiet, it would make them laugh, which I know is just so inappropriate, but it's just so funny. So yeah, they like that part. And I was like "That [indicating the Hallmark story] *really* happened."

Christi: You created a real situation or scenario, and it seemed to me so *very* purposeful, I mean it was, at a critical moment—I mean from what I'm watching—it was at a critical moment, from when you are taking them [students] from an abstract concept, you know, of "first impressions," and they wrote about it and drew from their prior knowledge, but it's still very abstract, you know. But when you created that situation that was connected to your personal experiences combined with your wonderfully dramatic, you know, presentation of the whole situation, the head bobs, and music, the whole nine yards, I mean their faces are

just like bright, they're *alive*. You know, but that moment and what follows is you're talking about, you know, first impressions in the context of filling out an actual application, which is what she was doing. So I mean, the critical point in which that story is placed is just like to me, the perfect bridge between this more abstract and—

Helen: --Here's what really gets me and here's why I feel, so, flustered as a teacher. Despite the fact that people tell me that you got, you know, you're great at it [teaching] and you do a good job, and, which I'm very proud and very honored to hear [pause] until I think about it afterwards, I didn't know why I set my lesson up that way. And I don't know if that's a bad thing because I'm not really thinking about it if it's a good thing or just instinct and I'm *that* good [laughs]. But as like, as I'm getting ready, I just know, I just *know*. I don't even have to *think* about my lesson. Yesterday, my lesson plan was: [holding up fingers] 1) applications, 2) bring phone. Like, if I had it written down somewhere that's all, I would have it written down. And in my *head* I knew that wanted to start with first impressions, go to the story, and then applications, but I didn't really know *why* [pause] until I sat down to think about it afterwards. And so that's, it's frustrating to me because I feel like I can't justify why I do the things I do, I just know that they're right. So, that's troubling for me because I don't know why they're right, I just know that they are, and I feel like I can't prove it.

Christi: And I could, you know, I can comment on that if you *want*, or later or whatever, and I think that, okay, you are nodding your head yes? You want me to comm[ent]-- Okay. I think that it is instinct, but it's more than instinct, [pause] it's a way of knowing. As I've said, I'm "outside" the situation, I'm not in your brain, you know, thank you for giving me *access*, as much as possible, to it [Helen laughs] but, uh, it's a way of knowing. [pause] And I don't think that you always have, like, clear metacognition about *all* the ways of knowing, because it makes sense to you in the context of your *whole* life, you know. So, I think that it might feel very instinctual because you know what you're doing without putting a label on it.

Helen: It's like so internalized.

Christi: Right, absolutely, internalize is a great word for it. And I can see how that would be frustrating because you can't justify it, because it's so, *automatic* that you can't necessarily put your *finger* on it either ahead of time or after like, in a conference with your peer evaluator.

Helen: Right! Like if someone had asked me what kind of, you know, teaching strategy did you used, I don't know, I came up in mind with my phone, is that a teaching strategy, no, but tell me a better way to have done it, you know.

Christi: Yeah. And I mean just to put a seed in your mind, if *you* want to, I think after you teach for a couple of years, if you decided you want to go on for your Masters [degree], I think that would be a good critical point as you start to study more theory and things like that, you'll be able to pinpoint. For me, a lot of that didn't come until my, you know, doctoral education, but it did *come*, and there is a certain sort of satisfaction in, like seeing what's been right in front of me the whole time, you know. Being able to put words to illustrate what I know. [pause] Then for me, reading Louise Rosenblatt's work, I mean when I read her earliest works, I thought, "That is everything I ever thought, and just not really known I was thinking it, because it was so just—"you know. So I guess I understand your frustration is what I'm really trying to say [Helen laughs] but...

Helen: You feel my pain.

Christi: But you know as someone who has evaluated teaching, you know, as university supervisor and teacher edu[cator]-- that I recognize—and whether it was intentional or not, that was a question I had in mind, "I need to follow up to see if this was intentional or instinctual, you know, not that it makes it any less valid, it's just—"

Helen: [laughs] Yeah, totally instinctual, I didn't...

Christi: That it was very purposeful, on what level you were aware of that [purpose] is a different matter altogether. [Helen laughs]. But I mean, it *was*. And as I look at patterns of, I mean, you tell stories or snip bits of stories—

Helen: *All* the time.

Christi: --frequently, you know, and for people who don't necessarily think that way or don't understand that, that mode of reasoning, I think it's really important because what I'm seeing, and you can tell me, like, to what extent this is right, whatever, or not right, I don't mean to assume I'm right. It seems like you used the stories very purposely always, it's not just like a random chain of thought, like, "Oh that reminds me," you know. Whereas someone who's an outsider might think, I mean they could think that, I mean I remember telling stories and wondering, you know, you could have just thought like random, you know what mean? Like you know, some casual conversation sometimes would pop, a thought pops into our head, but it seems to me when you tell stories, it's to either, [pause] like with the phone situation, for creating a *space* that students can think about a concept, the concept that you're talking about. [Helen agrees, Yeah.] So, here is like, you're talking about first impressions, you're talking about the application,

you are helping provide them with a scenario they can think through, they can think *with* you and they were definitely with you. And by following that, I mean, and most of the classes you asked questions and only in third period did you tell them, but that I understand—why you do that but. In questions that were designed to help them think about, like, why you would *not* want to hire that person, that would further the concept of making a first impression, why that first impression was important and, you know, all of those things that you did following it was just—if natural, halleluiah [Helen laughs] you know, but it was still very impressive, you know, it's very purposeful if only instinctual—

Helen: That part was *totally* not planned. Like, on my way to work, I knew I was going to start off with first impressions. I had to decide whether I wanted them to write down the quickwrite or just talk. I decided I want them to write *and* talk. Then I knew I was going to tell a story, then I knew we'd go into the application. In the moment, it was kind of like, okay let me draw on this: "Now, *why*?" And I just, I didn't even think about it I just said it. So, it was the most instinctual of instinctuals because I had not put a second thought into it before I said those words, in first period and then I realized, "Oh that worked!" and I did it again in second and forth.

Christi: Okay so, in the moment—and that answers the question I was going to ask you, perfect timing—so, in the moment, as you're like telling the story, this is

in first period? [“Right,” Helen confirms.] As you’re telling it, you realizing there’s something to *draw* on? [“Right,” she says.] You realize there’s a connection that you *can* make? [“Right,” Helen affirms.] Where is that coming from, do you know?

Helen: No- [pause] Uh, a little voice in my head told me?

Christi: Do you mean as you’re listening to your own words, or—?

Helen: Yeah, like I’m listening to myself, I’m recognizing the situation that I’m in, I’m seeing their faces and it’s just...I don’t know, little light bulb goes off.

Christi: Yeah, all of *that* is really important, you know, because *that*, is, I think, the area that we don’t really know *anything* about other than our own minds, you know. [pause and small sigh] So, you said you’re recognizing, you’re *hearing* your own words and you’re *thinking* about what you’re saying [“Right,” Helen confirms.] you’re not just saying them, [“Um hum,” she offers.] you’re noticing their faces? In that—

Helen: Yeah, noticing their faces—

Christi: --thinking about the situation...

Helen: Yeah and kind of seeing...[pause] I'm trying to think now, trying to put finger on that,[long pause]. It's like asking, like why do you move your jaw when you chew, like, you just do it. It's um, [very long pause] [Helen groans] It's like, [long pause] you know in the cartoons when characters say, "What does this button do?" It's very much so, "What would, this button do?" So, I'm like in the story and, [pause] I'm jamming and we're singing and I'm mimicking and then there's like a little light that says "Oh, there's a button here," and I can choose to press the button or I cannot press the button. Well yeah let's go. Poof! Press the button. Oh! That worked! And so, then I pressed the button again the next classes. That's really the *best* way I can think of to phrase it, like I, there's—it's just *there*. And so, I can chose to go according to plan [she says in an pretend uptight voice] and be "a suit" and not push the button. [Helen laughs]

Christi: Sure.

Helen: Or I can say, "Let's, let's see what happens!" And, and here we *go!* Sometimes those moments work, and sometimes they *don't*. Sometimes it's,

“Ahh..” [indicating an “Oh no!” reaction] Okay, then I don’t do it again the next period but--

Christi: So is it fair to say that you *revise*?

Helen: Yeah, revise the lesson and so, like if I go off on a tangent in first period and it doesn’t work, then maybe I don’t do it again in the day. Or there are sometimes when I know that a tangent—is it sad that I plan tangent in my lesson, whatever; it’s part of my day—

Christi: I understand, it’s—

Helen: [Laughs] So, I plan a certain tangent for first [period class]; second and forth have a different tangent; third has no tangent. And that’s something that I just kind of do.

Christi: And there’s a lot there. First, you said that sometimes it doesn’t work. [Um, hmm, says Helen] So, how do you know it doesn’t work? When you press that button or you’re off on that tangent?

Helen: Um...There's no *reaction*, or it's kind of like, [pause] like you asked the question and the answer's either yes or no—Alright, well that's really all we can say about that; let's move on.

Christi: And so it doesn't—

Helen: o, it was like why did I even bother asking that question?

Christi: It doesn't further the discussion, [talking over each other] doesn't make any connections, doesn't...

Helen: It doesn't contribute anything, it doesn't or maybe it doesn't make a connection that I *thought* it would make, for them, because maybe they've got different background info or whatever, whatever... So.

Christi: Different background information than you? Or what you wanted to—

Helen: Right, and that's something that I come into a lot of times that we don't have the same, uh, common experiences; despite the fact that I am very close in age to them, we just have completely different worlds. And so, I'll go and make a reference, and nope, never heard of it, and never mind! Like I was trying, with my sophomores, we were learning about tricksters in mythology. And so I had done, and this is the unit that I essentially make up because I just think it's fun and so, I thought them about the Anansi the spider who's an African Trickster; I told them about Raven who's a native American Trickster, and they we're doing an American South story and I told them about Brer Rabbit. Then I said, "How many of you have ridden Splash Mountain?" And "cricket, cricket, cricket" [indicating no response and an awkward silence]. So I was like, "Well, there goes the Splash Mountain story because they've never been "Splash Mountain," so they don't the whole "throw me into the briar patch" because they've never been to the briar patch. So, [pause] that was that button, you know, "Oh yeah!" They should connect and they didn't, so, throw the button away.

Christi: And that's really great concrete example too; I appreciate your sharing that with me. And then, you said that, um, I'm forgetting now what you said, um, [pause] you talked about the background knowledge being different, and [pause], but I think that is really important too, and I'm going to have to come back to that and think about it over time, because one of the things that *theoretically* [pause] I have in my mind [pause] is that, teachers, like readers, draw on their background information ["Um, hmm," Helen says] and the language resources that they have in hand, and they use those to make sense of whatever situation they're in, you

know. And for teachers, I would imagine, thinking outside of *myself*, you know, it's [pause] that's the point where there is no connection and when the teacher has such *different* background knowledge ["Yeah," agrees Helen, indicating she is following my train of thought] from the students, that they don't really, aren't *speaking* to each other.

Helen: Right! Well there's like that theory that, you know, your vocabulary influences your world view; the more words you have the bigger your world is. I have a completely different dictionary from what some of my kids have, because this is my world and that world not only does not make sense to them, but it's not even real, like, what planet are you from that that is your world view? And theirs is something so separate, that [what] I think is, "How can you go about your day like that?" Like, this whole concept of like *fighting* someone, based on, oh she dissed my, whatever shoes, like "Who cares? She dissed your shoes. Keep walking! Do you like your shoes? Yeah? Then why do care what she said?" "Cause she bunked my..." [indicating the student's response to her hypothetical question] "So? Move on. Don't be friends with that person anymore." But no, we have to fight about it. I had one student who was shanked with a pair of scissors at a bus stop. Because what? She had some disagreement with another boy. There is *nothing* that you can say to me that is going to make me want to go at you with a pair of scissors. You can insult my *mama*, my husband, I don't care *who* you insult, but my *shoes*? That is not worth shanking somebody with a pair of scissors.

That is *ridiculous*, to me. To them, that is like, you die with honor! [Laughs with disbelief] That is not, no that's not...[pause] That has nothing to do with like the *real world*. With *no shoes*, that is the real world. So, I feel like that difference with them, especially with English which is about language; it's about communication; it's about the relationships that you build with other people because that's the whole point of having a language. When you can't build those relationships because there is no common ground, then what do you do? And I feel like, sometimes with the sophomores that's what really difficult. Like, I had, there's one assignment in the [textbook] that asked them to come up with symbols that represent them. And one girl asked if she could write, if she could draw gang flags [pause] because that represents her. [pause] And that was like, an honest question, not trying to be facetious; she just moved here a couple of years ago from Mexico and that is [pause] that's her world. And I was like, "I can't ever wrap my brain around that." You know, gangs are something that happened in movies to me and they're in after-school specials. I never experienced gangs growing up in, you know, wealthy [area she grew up in]. And so, that's something that's hard. Because I feel like I have a big advantage over other teachers in *that* [having a common point of reference] department because I am so young and so, you know, I still listen to some of the main music, same movies, things like that, but there's so much, that I have to say that is lost on them, and so much that they have to offer that I just cannot connect with. [pause] So, that's an obstacle that I don't know how to overcome sometimes.

Christi: Do you feel that more with your sophomore “regulars”—

Helen: Very much so, very much so.

Christi: --Um, hm. Now of your junior honors, the four periods that you have, do you feel that with your third that that gap is—

Helen: The largest, yeah. The widest. Um, hm.

Christi: And I was just listening to language and the way that they speak in third period, I mean, they speak [pause] *roughly*.

Helen: Yes.

Christi: And you know, it's just, the kinds of things that they refer to is [pause]—
Yeah I mean, I can see how that would be a different world. And I mean this is a complete compliment to you, but, sometimes I think, because—I'm sure you know this and won't mind me saying, you are *very* smart. [Helen laughs] You're

brilliant, you know. But, that doesn't detract from what you're able to teach.
Some people can't, do both.

Helen: There's an intern right now, who's like, he's too smart to teach, because he cannot— [pause] One of my students from last year has him now and she comes over all the time, and she's like, "He forgets that he's teaching *us*. [laughs] He's teaching English; he's not teaching *us*. [pause] And that's something, [pause] like, [pause] we joke about, because I'll use some of their slang in like the "whitest" way possible. Like just yesterday I mentioned that Odysseus was finna try Poseidon's life. [pause]

Christi: [laughing,] Say that it again.

Helen: Odysseus finna try Poseidon's life.

Christi: Finna try Poseidon's life?

Helen: Yes, which means that Odysseus is about to make Poseidon very angry.
And at the beginning of the year, I didn't know what any [of that] would have that meant, if they had said that sentence to me. And they laughed about it, like, "Miss

H., you can't *talk* like that, like you're our English teacher." I said, "Ha! But did you know what's going to happen next?" They're like, "Yeah, he's finna be [going to be] a smart mouth." I was like, "Alright".

Christi: From my perspective, what enables you to navigate both so well is you're interpretive abilities. I mean, that's definitely an [interpretation]—

Helen: I think so too!

Christi: You think so too?

Helen: I agree completely. Honestly, what it makes me think of is when I first moved to South America, and I had to learn Spanish. And I had complete culture shock, because it's not like moving to a different part of the country, it's like a different *continent*. Completely different historical background, there was no 4th of July; instead you're celebrating some dude named Bernardo Higgins, like I don't even know who that is. And so, there was *so* much to learn, and you're just dropped down, and you either learn or die.

Christi: And how old were you?

Helen: I was seven. And then, we lived there for three years and then we moved *back*. And so, during middle school when everyone's finding—or elementary school, like, 4th, 5th grade when you really starting to become [pause] this teenager that you're going to be, I wasn't here. Then I came back in 6th grade and I couldn't name all the American presidents. I don't even know how many presidents there are. I can't locate all 50 states in the map, because I was not here for that part of my educational career to learn that stuff. So, I had almost as big of a culture shock getting integrated back into American life, and so, I had to use those skills all over again. So, I feel like that trial has made me stronger, I also feel like the benefit of having a multicultural family [pause] because if you were to ask me what race I am, off the top of my head, I'd say white, then I go, "Wait, no I'm not white. I'm actually Hispanic and Asian, but I feel white, if that matters. [pause] Like, if such a thing is, even make sense. So, I feel like I'm code switching all the time. And when I go, you know, go home with my mom, I'm a different person; when I go to my dad's house, I'm a different person; when I go to Georgia to visit my husband's "white bread" family, I'm a different person. And so, I feel like that's just something we do naturally.

So I've got, three different environments [pause] to deal with, you know, on a regular basis. And then you come to school and you've to be ghetto, to some extent you know, and I hate [pause] I don't mean to say that in a derogative way but it's just like, you know there's a certain extent where that that has to happen.

Like, I had to learn what “finna” meant. I did not know that that meant “fixing too.” And then I to learn what fixing too meant.

Christi: And I would say, you know, learn *what fixing* to means.

Helen: Yeah, what is *that*? Like “I’m finna to the mall.” “No, you’re *going* to the mall.” “Na miss, I’m finna go to the mall.” That doesn’t make any sense. [laughs]

Christi: I mean, I can see how what you mentioned about the cultural *shock* at 7 and 10 how that would, um, and then you please, watch the time [noticing that Helen has checked the time]...

Helen: Yeah, [laughs] I have to go. Yeah.

Christi: Let’s pack up. [Helen is clearing her lunch wrappers etc. from the table, and I am packing my things into my bag.] And then about college, didn’t you say that you were one of the first in your family?

Helen: “*The*” first.

R: So that was, I mean I'm guessing, another type of cultural shock?

Helen: Yeah. Nobody knew what to do. It was like, okay my dad came and he put my stuff in the car, and he came and dropped me off. [pause] And then he left. He turned around and left. And so I unpacked everything. [pause] You know, I looked around and everyone else's parents, they were first off, their parents were helping them unpack, parents were taking them to the grocery store [Helen says in a dreamy sing-song like voice], taking them to Target, get the curtains. And I'm like, "Okay!" [indicating she made her peace with it; "oh well."] So, I went and helped my friends move in, because I was done and I didn't have any money for groceries so, I don't have anything else to do right now. So, just that kind of complete lack of expectation, like my parents—

Christi: --Weren't able to think to do that?

Helen: --It did not even occur to them to do that. And I knew better than to complain, so, it was like "Alright. So that's it."

Christi: So, it's not only your interpretative abilities, on *many* layers and levels, but it's also, you're observation skills I think are—

Helen: --I think so too, and I feel like it's, like, a [pause] talent of self-sufficiency, if that can be said. Like, "You know what, I'm here and I've got to make this work. And it started when [I was] an intern. And I came to this, this *place*, and I was like, "I'm, I have no idea what's going on. I don't understand what they're saying. I, I don't know. Get me out of here!" And then I got used to it, I learned the language, I learned the culture and like it now, and I want to stick around. So, yeah very much [pause] interpretive, and I think it's a benefit from having moved around so much.

Christi: Absolutely. And when you said, you know, when you first came as an intern, were you talking about their language and ways—or about teaching—
[Helen is vigorously nodding her head] —all of it?

Helen: *All* of it, yeah. There's a lot of interpreting going on there.

Christi: Layers and layers...[We are walking now.]

Helen: Yeah, because I mean not only you're trying to figure out pacing problems and you know, all those things that interns struggle with, just day-to-day, but then also very much to learn the new, the *kids*. 'Cause it is *nothing* like where I went to school. I wish that I could *show* you my high school, and in fact there is a TV show shot at my high school. So, I'll have to see if I can find a video but this is like so different.

Christi: Is it more idealistic? [Helen laughs]

Helen: It's more, I don't know. It was a show called "The Paper", it was on MTV because we had one of the best student newspapers in the country and...it was just kind of like, you know we come from this culture of people who are going to make a difference in the world. And we had like a 99% college-bound rate, I mean that was *life*.

Christi: A world away from here.

Helen: Yeah, a *world* away. It was like "Everybody got [academic merit scholarships]. How did you *not* get [scholarships]? How is that even possible, at

our school?” Where I come from, “Everybody got [scholarships]; it’s automatic, isn’t it?” No, as it turns out.

In the days following this lunch conversation, Helen taught students strategic approaches for writing cover letters and interviewing, even shaking hands, giving them opportunities to practice in class. A few days before interview day, Helen told me that she had intentionally been letting her hair get bushier, allowing her eyebrows to grow wild, and dressing more casually so that on interview day, her sharp suit, heels, manicured eyebrows, and straightened hair would be so different that it would help to create part of the intimidation and discomfort people typically feel in interview situations. Almost two weeks after the professional writing project began, it culminated in the interview day experience.

About two months after “Interview Day,” the culmination of the professional writing project and the “Pursuing (and Crushing) the Dream” unit, I sent Helen an email asking her what stood out from her interview day experiences.

Helen wrote:

[Dawn], a student in my fourth period, is very shy. She usually dresses in dark colors (almost exclusively black, if I think about it) and is well-covered up -- jeans and a t-shirt, usually. She wears heavy black eye-liner, which you can't see anyway because she wears her dyed red hair in a typical "emo" cut -- flat ironed and covering her face, like this:



A few days before the interview, she told me Mom had found out about the project and was forcing her to wear a dress. She had made her peace with it, and was approaching me in a panic because she wasn't sure what to do with her hair. I had told the class, when reviewing professional dress, that hair should be out of the face and that make-up should be relatively classic and subdued.

"So what am I supposed to do?!" she asked, with a trademark twitch of her head to swing her hair away long enough to glance at me with one darkly ringed eye.

"Do you mind if I touch your face real quick?" I asked. After she gave her consent, I carefully reached out and brushed the biggest lock of hair off to one side, pinning it in place above her ear. "Bobby pin," I told her simply.

"I can't do that!"

"Yes, you can."

"But...!"

"Too bad."

Interview day came along, and here was [Dawn] in a simple black dress, black heels, with her hair pinned to one side with a cute barrette and wonderfully natural make-up. Turns out the kid has the most beautiful green eyes I've ever seen in my life -- I'd never noticed them before since they were always covered up! Her interview went well, and she was all smiles.

What makes the story great is that I wasn't the only one to notice her that day.

The next day, the normal clothes were back but her hair was once again pinned to the side.

"Liked the change, eh?" I ribbed. She laughed and replied that her mom was complaining that she had been telling [Dawn] to change her style for years, and here "the teacher" had done it in a day.

A few days later, she was snappily dressed again and I teasingly asked her what the special occasion was. With a blush and a smile, she said it was "by request." I wagged my eyebrows at her and let her go, but a few days later I asked who the requester was.

"Boy or girl? Anyone I know?" I whispered, leaning in close to her desk. She rolled her eyes, but when she saw I wasn't going to leave without an answer, she quietly mumbled it was a boy on the swim team she has had a crush on all year.

"He really liked my look on interview day," she said with an ear-to-ear smile.

I grinned, told her he'd probably noticed the eyes, and walked away with a conspiratorial wink.

Some weeks have passed, and while I don't know whatever came of the swim team boy, I do know that [Dawn] has worn her hair to the side every day since interview day. Her confidence has grown exponentially, and she is slowly blossoming from a scared little girl into a charming young lady.

I think what makes this story so dear to my heart is that it cuts to the core of what teaching is all about, at least for me: changing people's lives for the better. So much of the influence we have is intangible; we're not able to see the results of our hard labor. But with one class project, I literally helped to change a child's life.

This kinda sounds like a MasterCard commercial:

Tavari suit for interview day: \$300

A trip to the hair salon for a professional hairstyle: \$50

Increasing a teenager's self-esteem: Priceless.

Stepping outside of the research story-world and reconsidering what I know.

Toward the end of my drafting this research story, I met with Helen to read over the stories and to ask her, "Is this you?" This time when we met at the Serendipity Tea

Lounge, I was waiting on the couch with a story to tell her. Every little bit, she'd stop to offer new stories that happened after I left her classroom or stories that she had forgotten about until reading the stories here. She validated my interpretations, and generally offered further insight into understanding the stories we already lived and told. When we came to the last part of the research story, the end of our lunchtime conversation when Helen compared her high school to the one in which she teaches. She described for me the striking juxtaposition between her alma mater and Arlington's graduation ceremonies—and the sociocultural messages these ceremonies communicated. A couple of days later, she emailed me her story about the experience. Reading her story, I cried. It was for me, a powerful reminder of the meaning I previously made from making connections between the ideas various scholars (Bruner, 1986; Cooper & Simonds, 2007; Gee, 2008; Geertz, 1973; Goodman, 1984) that society is an ambiguous cultural text its members are ever interpreting and constructing, guided by their frame of expectations (Popper, 1962). But it was more than a reminder; it was a story that helped me to better understand—to put flesh on the bones of thought.

Helen wrote:

I attended my brother's graduation from my high school alma mater on a Sunday evening. I felt lucky to be there – because there were upwards of 800 graduates, each student was given only five tickets for guests. The graduation took place in a beautifully decorated university sports arena that was filled to the brim with happy family members dressed to the nines. As the ceremony began, we were greeted on a jumbotron with personal messages from the governor, the mayor,

senators and representatives, troops abroad, hometown celebrities – all warmly congratulating the Crystal Bay class of 2011 and ending with a “Go Lightning!” I felt happy on behalf of these young men and women who were on a stepping stone to the next phase of what would be, if their careers so far were any indication, amazing lives. A sports personality was on hand to host the ceremony, and his voice was warm with a paternal pride as he gave us a litany of this class’s achievements: 99% graduation rate, 97% college bound, National Merit scholars, [state merit scholarship program] scholars... the list went on and on. These kids were amazing. From what I had seen, they were not only intelligent but also creative and compassionate – my brother and his friends had been staging protests for equal rights since they were sophomores. As I looked out over that sea of blue mortarboards, I couldn’t help but think about the message all of our community’s loving pomp and circumstance was sending down to the arena floor: You are worthwhile. You have been successful, and you will continue to be successful. You can do anything.

On the long drive home, I wondered what it would be like at “Arlington’s” graduation the following morning. This would be my first graduating class – my first babies, my first ducklings. They had worked so hard to reach this milestone. Which dignitaries would greet us on the jumbotron? What celebrity would be our host?

Sadly, the differences between the two ceremonies were staggering. Because of renovations at our local university, Arlington’s graduation was held at

the fairgrounds in a building with an interior that looked like someone had swept dozens of flea market booths out of the way and hastily deposited some bleachers in their stead. As the family members slowly trickled in, I wondered how many of them had had to make the choice between attending this graduation and missing pay for a Monday's worth of work. At my alma mater's graduation, I had seen fathers in suits and sports jackets; here, when fathers were around at all, they wore faded jeans and a clean t-shirt. There were no jumbotrons, no celebrities. Just our administration and a few school board members. As I milled around backstage before the ceremony, students came running up to me with arms outstretched for a hug. "I made it," they'd whisper with pride. Some of them bragged that they were the first in their families to graduate; others hoped their achievement would help them build a better life for the babies they had waiting at home. I was at once happy and heartbroken for them. They were inhabiting a world apart from what I had seen the night before. While the Crystal Bay students had an aura of future promise about them, the Arlington graduates seemed to feel they had crossed a finish line and were headed home for a much-needed rest after walking across the stage. I felt good thinking of the ones I had helped, pushed, coached towards this moment, but I wondered how many other voices cheered them on in their day-to-day lives. In the arena, the air whispered "Go change the world!" but at the fairgrounds, the breeze sighed "Try not to go to jail." Our communal expectations of success are measured on entirely separate scales, and I question where my students' next steps will lead them.

Helen's point helped me to realize, anew, the potential importance and power of story to provide students with a chance to explore diverse horizons of explorations, to have the chance to connect *and* become informed of the many options in life as well as to learn how to help themselves to pursue the possible. And this thought brings me right back to the beginnings of my doctoral education—when I reached for Rosenblatt's (1938) *Literature as Exploration*—the first text that gave words to ideas I had instinctively breathed in and out as a classroom teacher.

How Helen makes meaning: Stepping outside of the research story-world and objectifying it. Helen's meaning-making is best expressed as connections. Helen makes meaning through connections. It is through numerous analogies, metaphors, similes, examples, and stories that Helen both expresses meaning and makes new meanings. Helen has explicitly stated she values connections. Her use of connections to make meaning was also communicated through the stories she told me in interviews and conversations as well as in the stories she lives when teaching her students. Part of her reservoir, Helen's verbal and interpretive skills provide her with the ability to successfully communicate using analogies, metaphorical language, examples and stories. She is aware that she is skilled in her ability to use these techniques. She sees that using these devices to make relevant connections helps others to understand. People in her life—students, colleagues, and friends—have also commented that she is apt to generate insightful analogies. Making connections is how Helen finds ways to relate to students, to relate curricular concepts to students' prior knowledge, and to bridge her life beyond the classroom to her identity as a teacher.

Helen has also stated that that her approach to teaching is conversational. She explained that she plans lessons around the conversations she wants to have. Conversation is an analogy that Helen uses to communicate to me the meaning she makes out of teaching as a second-year teacher. It also seems to be one of two analogies that provide an insightful understanding of Helen's approach to teaching. Helen also describes "teaching as improv," referring to improvisational comedy. What both of these analogies share is the expectation of participation from her students. Conversations require active meaning-making on the part of both parties—the teacher and the student. Conversation is the most basic example of a linguistic transaction (Rosenblatt, 2005). Meaning is made during the back-and-forth process of interpreting the situation, reading facial expressions, considering tone of voice, background knowledge, and being open and responsive to where the conversation might lead. While conversations generally have a topic, the meaning that each party makes is made during the event and in relationship to the other conversant(s) contribute to the conversation. Improv requires the actor, or in this case, the teacher to spontaneously respond to the audience and work to include the audience into the unfolding performance. Like conversations, improv assumes an active participation from both the actor and the audience and depends on being mindful of the situation, making instinctive and spontaneous choices in response to others, and places emphasis on discovery in the present moment. Implied in the improv analogy is the idea of comedy and laughter—enjoying the experience.

As a person, Helen's stance is primarily aesthetic. She takes pleasure in enjoying an experience and in watching others enjoy an experience. She enjoys going to Disney World to just freely enjoy a ride or to watch others enjoy themselves. She finds pleasure

in creating and spends time scrapbooking, cooking, and writing. Related to classroom experiences, Helen told stories of positive critical events—those that reaffirmed her purpose for teaching, bolstered her spirit about teaching, and generated joy—were moments where she, the students, and the lesson were connected in a moments that generated laughter. Helen frequently mentioned laughter as a positive communicative sign that she looked for in her students. She explained that laughter meant that students were with her and were understanding. By implication, Helen and her students were also enjoying the moment. Thus, for Helen, moments where students express laughter served as a way for Helen to assess that her students were both learning and enjoying the act of learning. Laughter was frequently mentioned. Helen also used students' body language and facial expressions to gage the extent to which her students are “with her.”

Considering Helen's two analogies of conversation and improv to communicate how she makes meaning while teaching, Helen's frustration with her students, particularly her final class of the day, and her frustration with the job of teaching speaks to experiences in which Helen was not able to make connections; transactions were ... because she and her students as well as she and her professional environment were approaching learning from such vastly different reservoirs. Their language and cultural frames of reference were so different that it became frustrating to try to find a metaphorical thread around which to weave a connecting rope (to use another of Helen's analogies). As Helen stated, she and some of her students were using completely different dictionaries and different world views or stances from which they made meaning. Using her interpretive abilities honed in numerous prior experiences, Helen studied her students and the culture of her school like a cultural anthropologist, she told me. She learned to

interpret their language and to speak it so that she could communicate with them and help them to make connections through literature and conversations and educative experiences—connections that would, through the transactional space of story, analogy, and conversation help student to adopt a broader framework from which they could view learning, themselves, their relationship with others, and the world beyond the classroom. Stories told and communicated in the classroom also invited students into the meaning-making process, creating a collaborative, co-constructed meaning. This encouraged students' continued active participation, fostered a classroom community, and created a collective experience and language through the storied “lore” that she and students were able to allude to in subsequent events.

Helen drew from her reservoir of language, experience, and knowledge to make meaning. Additionally, her attention to the communicative signs and situations in various classroom experiences was guided by an aesthetic-efferent stance. Helen's stance was primarily aesthetic; however, the experiences she looked for when improvising or when planning a storied experience for students to learn through, or a conversation around which to teach always had an awareness that there was something to take away from the experience as well. To explain this, I refer to Helen's analogy that likened her development as a second-year teacher to her development as a third-year driver. In both teaching and driving, she knew her final destination; however, she no longer relied on a map to get there. She could anticipate, “If I take a left here, I bet I'll get there.” When teaching, there was always an end point in mind—an efferent meaning to take away from the aesthetic experience of enjoying the “ride” and figuring out how to get there with her students. Helen's combination aesthetic-efferent stance guided her attention when

working with students so that she was attending to communicative cues from students that she could draw from and connect to so that she could help students to understand and garner literacy and life skills in a way that was meaningful and relevant to students. Thus, for example, students could reconsider the importance of first impressions in the context of completing a job application through the transactional space of a project scenario, a story about bad first impressions, and the lived experience of interviewing for a job.

Throughout her stories of classroom experiences, it was possible to see how Helen's aesthetic-efferent stance was connected to touchstone events, particularly influential critical events that she often referred to over time and in various contexts, involving her mother's struggle due to a lack of literacy and the triumph of helping her younger brother to learn to enjoy reading by bringing the stories she read aloud to life so that he could experience the event of reading. From these early, touchstone experiences, she made the meaning that "Maybe [she] could go catch a few." This phrase is a play on a slogan from a television show Helen enjoyed that claimed "Gotta catch 'em all!" It is a phrase she repeated often in the context of her stories, "I look around, and I'm only catching one or two" to express her disappointment, or, "I know I caught him," to express her joy in seeing a student succeed.

"Piecing Meaning": Leaving the research story-world with Helen and going beyond it.

Helen,

From your stories

Of frustration from fragmentation,

Of hope, hurting, and enduring optimism

Of calling home and tending hot coals
Of shedding the suit and slipping into your jeans
Of helping a poet find words to express his dream
Of feeding the pregnant
Of learning to drive and find your way,
Of receiving gifts of not-so-golden apples
Of seeing students discover

I see how you weave the strands you have

Caring and knowing
Person and profession
Living and learning

Into ropes

Through relationships

Connecting

Conversations, laughter, tears

Curriculum, kindness, the courage to have integrity

Your past, our present, students' possible futures

Hearing

Students

Seeing

Interpreting

Remembering

Relating

Stretching across the space between

Where you are and where your students “stay”

learning and doing

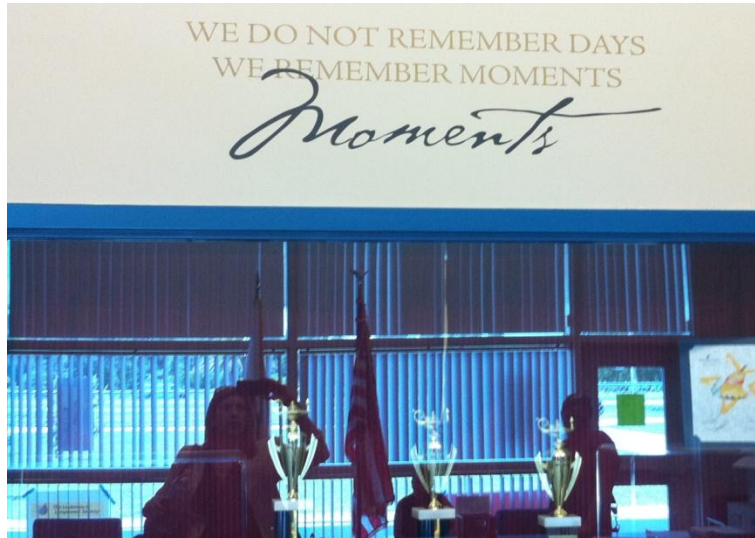
Yesterday and today

The dream and the job
What is and what could be
The sky and earth
You and I,
And before you, the ropes braid,
And in time,
Cross
Weaving into net
Catching a few students
And helping them up and along
Bridging worlds
Through story,
Shared experience,
Scrapbooks,
Even song.
Your tapestry of threads live on.

Making Meaning with “Amy Johnson”

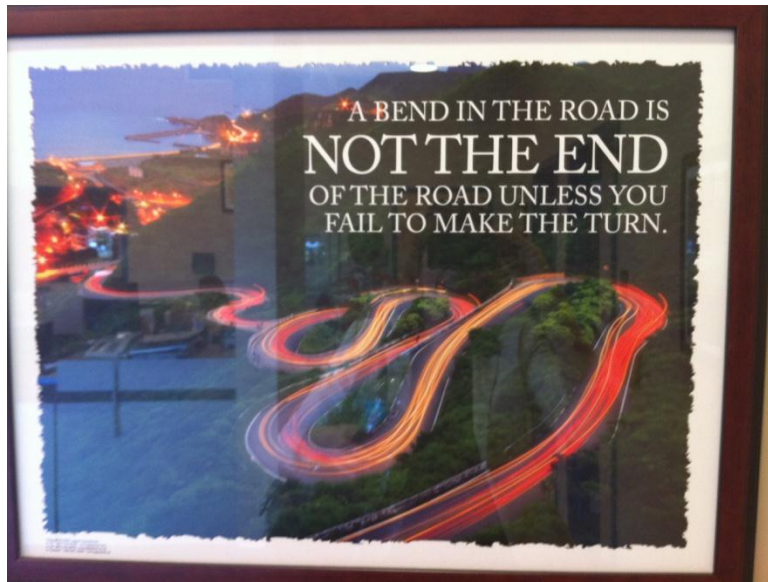
“Beginnings with Amy”: Being inside the research story-world and moving **through it.** Opening the gate in the chain-link fence that surrounds Marshall Middle school, I allow my expectations to connect with the other schools I’ve been in that were surrounded by chain link and security cameras. However, when I open the door to the main office, my expectations are checked. I look around at what is without a doubt the most positive main office I have ever been in. Directly across from me and behind the two office staff member’s desks is a large trophy case that is set into the wall, its glass

comprising part of the wall. Above it is the inscription, “We do not remember days[.] We remember Moments.” In light of my study’s theoretical and methodological frameworks, I smile and ask if I can snap a picture.



Although I did not notice until much later when I am reviewing the many pictures I took at Marshall Middle, my own reflection is a part of this picture.

Looking to my left and to my right, I see five rather large framed pictures. The photographs are compelling and accompanied by motivational paradoxes: “Opportunity may shine brightest at the darkest hour”; “Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but it doesn’t get you anywhere.”; “Tough times don’t last. Tough people do.”; “Courage is not being afraid to ask for help.”; “A bend in the road is not the end of the road unless you fail to make the turn.” While I didn’t know it at the time I took photographs of these pictures, Amy’s lived and told stories of classroom experiences reflect the spirit of these inspirational motivational photographs.



Turning to leave the office, I find the 100 building and begin to walk down the hall toward Amy's classroom. Although I have been here once before for a follow-up interview, I met her after school; bypassing the main office, she took me on a more direct route to her classroom.

This new route gives me the opportunity to observe the numerous AVID²⁵ (Advancement Via Individual Determination) posters Amy's students have posted to invite peers to apply to join the program next year. The posters are inspiring, made with obvious pride and enthusiasm. The posters act like road signs pointing others to Amy's classroom—a room that is also filled with encouraging and empowering posters and art.

Amy teaches two periods of AVID. She also teaches two, ninety-minute block classes comprised of Intensive-Intensive Reading and English for sixth graders. The

²⁵ AVID is an elective class that students may apply to take. According to the AVID website (www.avid.org), the program and philosophy began in 1980 with an English teacher's response to wanting to help inner city under privileged students succeed in an academically rigorous suburban school. Today, the program is a nationally utilized approach for preparing students for college.

students in Amy's reading-English block classes are the school's most struggling readers; according to state reading assessments, they are level-one readers who need to achieve at least a level three out of five to graduate from high school. Like the posters in the main office, Amy's classes are filled with paradoxes brought together by Amy's frame of success.

Stepping outside of the research story-world and reconsidering what I know:

Amy's "When I Think of My Name." Like Helen, Amy and I's narrative plotlines first interested in the spring of 2008 when she was a student in a second section of the Methods of Teaching High School English course that met in the same classroom immediately following the class with Helen in it. On that first day of class, Amy also wrote and shared about her name.

Titled, "When I Think of My Name," Amy wrote:

I think of my name as a compromise. It is a blend of my cultures. My mother is American, born in New Hampshire, with fair skin and blue eyes. My father is Cuban, born in Havana, with olive skin and deep brown eyes.

When I think of my name, I think of the two who created me. I think of them sitting around smiling and laughing, thinking of names for their future daughter. I see my father rubbing my mother's belly with cocoa butter, and speaking to me softly in Spanish. I see my mother looking down at him and thinking about how lucky she is to have him and soon, her only daughter.

The name [Amy] is one common in both the Latin and American cultures. In English, it is pronounced [pronunciation of name]. In Spanish, it is pronounced [pronunciation].

My name is pronounced the way it sounds in Spanish. When it is said with the Latin accent, it feels smooth and sweet like tasting a piece of ripe and juicy mango. It flows flawlessly with my last name, [last name].

When I think of my name, I think of them coming together and deciding on a name that represents them both. I think of the happiness they have created together.

My name is me. It is a blend. I love peanut butter and jelly. I love Cuban bread and Yucca. When I hear salsa, I can't help but feel the rhythm. Country music makes me want to line dance at the Bull. My skin is fair, but my eyes are a deep brown. I am a combination.

My parents looked beyond their differences and found beauty in each other. My name symbolizes this and is a part of me. I am [Amy]. (Archival data, January, 14, 2008)

Amy's writing is organized around the central meaning she wishes to express—the point that she wants her readers to take away from the experience of reading—rather than an overall story. She helps the reader to understand her point by using concrete details and snapshot images as a way to communicate the meaning she has made: her name represents how *she* is the product of two very different people; she is the blend of the two very different cultures her parents and her name represent. As a teacher, Amy is also the blend of two different cultures.

Being outside of the research story -world and objectifying it. Rereading

Amy's composition in light of this narrative inquiry, I now see a clear representation of Amy's focus, her stance toward the texts she lives and tells about her life enacted or brought forward into her classroom. In this composition it is possible to see how Amy begins and ends with the efferent meaning she wishes to communicate: she is the bend of two people and the cultures that they represent. This message—the meaning she has made of her name and her identity—is the point of her writing. I recognize this frame as an efferent stance. Amy is primarily focused on the product, the efferent meaning that she and her readers will take away from what she has created; however, Amy's stance also includes significant attention to the aesthetic. She uses literary techniques to offer readers sensory details and actions that allow her readers to see, hear, touch, taste, and feel. Including the literary techniques provides her readers with a space to visualize, to imagine, to experience what she is communicating. I recognize Amy's use of literary techniques as an aesthetic stance which provides a way for her readers to experience the text she has created. In this piece of writing, then, her stance as a communicator—as a writer and a reader of her own product who anticipates an audience of readers—is both efferent and aesthetic. The efferent meaning—the meaning to take away from the experience—is her goal, the point of her writing, and the aesthetic meaning—the meaning to live through and experience during the reading—is the vehicle; it is how she achieves her efferent goal. This efferent-aesthetic stance is the same stance I see guiding her meaning-making in the stories she lives and tells about her classroom experiences.

Furthermore, in the language used to communicate her meaning in this composition, I see a representation of the types of knowledge and experiences that Amy

uses to guide her meaning-making, both here and in the stories she lives and tells about her classroom experiences. In this text, Amy talks about her life—her name and who she is; to do this, she looks to influential people, what she enjoys, and uses her knowledge of literary techniques to compose a powerful and succinct composition. This is representative of the reservoir Amy draws upon to guide her meaning-making about classroom experiences as well. While I didn't give a second thought to Amy's mention of her parents in 2008, when I first read this text—after all, she is talking about her name; it makes sense that she would refer to those who gave her her name. Nevertheless, after analyzing transcripts and field notes, then coming back to this composition, I see how just as Amy looks to her birth parents and the diverse cultures they represent in order to communicate her identity as a person, she looks to her professional “parents” and the different cultures they represent when communicating who she is as a teacher. Just as she states she is a blend of Latin and American cultures, Amy communicates, through explicit statements and through stories of her classroom experiences events, that she is a blend of academic (university) and practical (classroom) cultures. From both the knowledge, skills, experiences, and way of thinking fostered by her university program and influential faculty there, *and* from the knowledge, skills, experiences, and way of thinking fostered by an influential mentor during her internship, Amy's identity, actions, way of understanding teaching, demonstrated through her stories of classroom experiences, communicates that the stance and reservoir she uses to guide her meaning-making of classroom events is a blend of her prior experiences brought forward and applied to new situations.

The communicative stance captured in this writing about her name is also visible in Amy's writings, lesson and unit plans, and her written reflections from those experiences. For instance, in the fall of 2008 Amy wrote in the introductory paragraph about her reflection on teaching a lesson as a pre-intern:

I thought about all the pre-reading strategies that I have learned about this semester (and in past semesters,) and I came to the conclusion that a classic anticipation guide would be the most effective in introducing the themes and getting the students thinking about their own lives and experiences related to the ideas in the book.

Her attention during the reflection on her planning and teaching is on what she would or did do to help students to learn. Amy ends this reflection by connecting the lesson to the bigger picture of students' understanding and their futures as readers, and then connecting the lesson to her own future as a classroom teacher:

In the end, I recapped everything we did in the lesson and explained how it all related to the book that they were going to read, *Into the Wild*. I explained how as readers, we should try to make connections before, during, and after we read because it makes everything more enjoyable and meaningful. I read them the introduction on the cover of the book, and they seemed pretty excited about getting into the book. A couple of students in my seventh period even asked questions like, "But, what made him want to give it all up? What job did he have before?" It was gratifying to see that the students were excited and the lesson went well. Mrs. [host teacher] had pretty much only good to say about the

organization and delivery of the lesson. She commented on how well I did with circulating and pushing groups that were getting stuck, and she liked how relevant and purposeful everything was to the students' future reading. This was a great lesson and I can't wait to do more like this in my final internship and my own classroom next year (archival data, November 5, 2008).

Looking back on this and similar writings from Amy's university courses and early field experiences in light of interviews and classroom observations, it is clear for me to see how as a student of teaching, Amy's stance oriented her thinking toward focusing first on the learning she wanted students to take away from the lesson, then methods, actions, and decisions that facilitate this purpose. Amy's purpose for teaching a particular lesson also includes attention to connecting present learning to future learning and understandings.

Finally, I can see Amy's habit of drawing from the texts and methods she knows in order to use them in new educational situations. Guided by her stance, Amy uses her reservoir of pedagogical and content knowledge to make learning opportunities for others. These lessons are a statement of the meaning she makes about teaching experiences before, during, and after teaching.

In the spring of 2009, I interviewed Amy. She was about five weeks into her full-time internship. Like Helen, the first question I asked Amy was a request for her to tell me why she wanted to teach.

I guess it started at a young age, I just really loved seeing people learn, it was rewarding even like when I was a little kid, in the classroom I'd finish my work just so I could go help other people. I just liked to see people learn. And then

eventually it kind of morphed into like in reading and English and I just...it was really teaching to begin with, the level of learning but then I loved reading and writing, and I realized how much we need those skills, reading and writing in everything. So I said, well okay I love to see people learn, I like teaching and everybody needs these skills, so, that's when I decided to teach and it's just fun. I mean I had no idea what I was getting into as a young child—I just liked writing on the board and handing things out but it's just so rewarding. So, I wanted to make a difference of course.

Evident in this description is a similar stance toward thinking about teaching as that which I see in her written descriptions composed during her university courses. Also hinted at in Amy's explanation is the in-process or open-ended nature of Amy's stance and purpose for teaching. She knew she enjoyed seeing people learn. This love of learning later connected to her realization that people need literacy skills, and since she also enjoyed reading and writing, she merged the content and skills focus of English language arts to her desire to help others learn. Reading and writing became avenues or mediums for helping others to learn.

Amy's stance, use of her reservoir, and ongoing construction of her purpose for and stance toward teaching is evident to me in the stories Amy lives and tells about her classroom experiences.

Being outside of the research story-world and reconsidering what I know. In interviews, conversations, and classroom observations about Amy's classroom experiences from her second year of teaching (spring of 2011), Amy lived and told

stories that demonstrate her use of her reservoir to make meaning of her experiences. The meaning she makes continues to guide her thinking; the meanings she makes not only inform her stance toward teaching but also influence her planning, instructional decisions, and reflections about teaching.

Amy's turning points in the stories she lives and tells share a similar pattern. In the larger life story of Amy's teaching journey as well as in specific classroom events, Amy's transitions happen in relationship to reading and responding to students.

For example, in the spring of 2009, I asked Amy to tell me what teaching meant to her in the context of her internship; her response speaks to the shift or turning point in her teaching that the many stories she lives and tells also demonstrate. Amy told me:

You know it's so much more, than you can ever explain because it's so much more than content, it's so much more than delivery and all that. It's just [pause] you have all these little people who you just want to make learn and I mean, I don't know, it's hard to define it.... I guess before I felt more like I need to make this perfect lesson, I need to incorporate this and that and it was very almost, it was kind of [pause] technical, but now that I see the kids and *know* them and care about them and their learning, it's a lot *harder* because I'm like, what is [Eddy] going to like or what is [Lisa] going to need or, you know, I'm thinking about them while I'm planning instead of it's all about being the technical, you know. So, I feel like there's a lot of responsibility that goes into it and making sure that, you know, classroom management, making sure you don't call kids out and embarrass them and how am I going to get her confidence up, I mean, they're so

different and so trying to be a good teacher to them all and thinking about them more than myself, I think that's been the biggest change. I didn't know I was going to care about them that much after like a month and a half.

When I asked her if there were any particular events or situations that contributed to her shifting her attention from content and methods to individual students, she explained that seeing their responses helped her to see that she needed to use her content and methods knowledge to help individual students. As Amy explained:

I mean just being around kids. I mean you can't get it from classes, you can learn a lot from classes and I have, and I've applied a lot of what I've learned. For a while like I think that I'm learning the same thing over and over and over and over but now I realize, you know, that was for a reason. I've internalized stuff that I'm doing, which is good, but there's nothing you can get from sitting in a class talking, it doesn't matter. When you're there *with* kids and you're seeing them say, "What? Huh? I don't get it," or you're seeing them raising their hands and interested and they're understanding and they're performing well, seeing that learning or the lack of learning you just develop this feeling for them that you want them to learn, and you care about them and, you know, you can't help but start to see it, it's more about them, than about you. But it's nothing I could have, like, gotten from classes. I got all the technical and all the necessary thought process, the theory and then now it's like, "Okay, how do I use that to *help* them?" You know like even I'm picking poets [for a poetry unit], I'm thinking,

“Okay, who are my kids going to identify with? Who do I need to bring in?”
...You know, it just starts to be more about them.

In the above explanation, Amy shares how in her education classes, she was focused on the components of lesson planning—the discrete “technical” pieces in order to make a “perfect lesson.” However, in the context of her internship, her attention shifted toward figuring out how to use the content, methods, and thought processes she has internalized into her repertoire of knowledge and experiences in order to help students to learn. In my mind, this shift is analogous to a developing writer learning the technical components of “good” writing to form a composition versus the writer using her knowledge of writing (and subject matter) to say something meaningful to a particular audience.

“From ‘Air Ball’²⁶ to ‘Slam Dunk’ and ‘Hook’”: Being outside of and stepping into the research story-world with Amy. Following this explanation of the turning point in her thinking, Amy immediately began sharing a story about a recent critical event in which she selected a poem to teach based on her understanding of students’ needs and her anticipation of her students’ reception to the poem. Her criterion for selecting the poem was based on drawing in the students who had indicated on a survey that they didn’t like poetry. Before planning and teaching a poetry unit, she gave students a survey to determine their perceptions about and reactions to poetry. From that survey, she discovered she had many students who abhorred poetry and/or perceived poets as dead people like Edgar Allan Poe.

²⁶ In basketball, an “air ball” is one of the most embarrassing shots a player can make. It is a shot that completely misses the goal; it misses the goal, the rim, the backboard, and the net, hanging in the air for an awkward moment then falling to the ground or grabbed by another player.

... You know like even I'm picking poets, I'm thinking, "Okay, who are my kids going to identify with? Who do I need to bring in?" Like, I've picked up poem by a guy named Yusef Komunyakaa, it was all about basketball because I knew my boys would flip if they saw a [lesson] plan about basketball. [pause] I knew that would be good for *them*, and then bringing in like, a love poem for my—[pause] you know, it's just it starts to be more about them. I didn't love the basketball, I couldn't relate to it, but I knew that certain kids would, and that's something I used early on [in the unit] so that, I could kind of get those kids who I knew would be like, "It's a [groans] poetry [unit]?" maybe interested in it, it turned out to be a really hard poem actually. That was one day when I thought I was teaching *one thing* and then I kind of had like a teachable moment and totally ditched the plan.

Stepping outside the research story-world and reconsidering what I know.

Based on her background knowledge of students' perceptions and experiences with poetry and her anticipation of their positive responses, Amy selected a poem, "Slam, Dunk, & Hook" (1991) written by a contemporary poet known for drawing subject matter from his life experiences to speak to diverse people's shared humanity, for using striking images, and jazz-like rhythm. I can understand why Amy would consider this poem to be of interest. However, as Amy mentioned, something happened, and in the midst of her lesson, she had to abandon her plan. The turning point in this lesson happened in response to students' communication (and her reading and interpreting that communication) that they did not understand. As Amy explained, she had to adjust her

expectations about what her students knew and needed, and make a decision—while teaching—about what to do.

Stepping into the research story-world and moving through it

Amy continued to explain:

But it ended up— [pause, thinking] What was it? [pause] It was that basketball poem, it ended up being really complex, I mean that's one thing that's hard. You don't know what to expect from fourteen year-olds when you go in there [to the classroom]. You can look at the [curriculum] *standards*, but I don't know what [long pause]. I know you're—after a few years, I'll know, but it's hard to judge, you know, when you studied English for how long? You try to judge, [pause] “What can I expect from them?” You know? So, it ended up being, we had this poem on the board and it ended up being like a group think aloud, where all they did was think through it, piece by piece and give their thoughts, and we marked it up and all that. And it was supposed to be metaphors and similes but instead it was like, it turned into a lesson on how to think through a poem, and how to— they'd be like, “Well, I don't know that word,” and I'm like, “Good,” circle it. [write a] Question mark. “Somebody look it up.” You know. And then we read it like three times. So, then it turned into a lesson about how you *never* understand a poem the first time you read it, and, then by the end, they didn't get it completely, but they understood it better, and they all felt like, “Wow!” you know, “I can do this. I can get that!” Because when we first read it they looked at me like, “*What?*” [gasping indicating fear] So, it was a total like [pause] just a teachable

moment because the end they were like, “Oh my God! I get that now,” you know. But they knew they still had to read it more to get it [more].

Curious, I asked Amy, “At what point did you realize that you needed to change the direction? How did you come to that decision? Amy retells the experience, this time focusing on how she made her decision rather than what happened in the situation.

Because they were [pause] we read the poem once and I could see in their faces they didn’t get it. And they’ll tell you, maybe not in high school, I don’t know, but the middle school age, they weren’t that afraid to tell me, “What?!” You know. And if they don’t tell you they give a look like [Amy makes a face that suggests confusion], you know. So, I knew, “Okay, this is definitely confusing them.” So then, I was going to take them through it quickly and just give them a general overview, and be *done* with it and say, “This is what it is.” But then a couple of kids were pointing out things, saying, “Well, what does that mean?” So I circled it. And then in my head I’m going, “They need to know, they need to feel that confidence they can get through this hard poem [pause] before they can even care about poetry at all.” Then need to see like, [long pause] they need to know[pause] that you read a poem a few times before you get it; don’t expect to get it on the first time ever, because they felt stupid for not getting it and I didn’t want them to feel, [pause] leave with less confidence of thinking then they came in with, you know. But if they don’t think they can do it, how am I to get through three weeks [of poetry]? So, once I realized that they felt kind of dumb for not getting it [pause] and that once they started pointing things out, I said [to myself],

“Okay I just need to lead them through this they need to just—“ [pause] And I tried to quiet myself as much as I could. Because I wanted them to see that *they* we’re going to do it, and they did, like between all of them they found all these different things, answered their own questions, like one would answer another one, and I just stood up there marking. I would maybe say, “Well, what about this?” And then three kids would give their opinion, and they started to see like there’s no right answer. It’s just you’re *thinking* through it which was another, I didn’t want to just tell—because then they’re going to, “*She* knows, because *she* knows poetry.” So, as they were coming up with things, I’m like, I have to just let them do this[pause] otherwise they’re going to either, [pause] like leave, feeling like they can’t ever get through a poem, or they’re going to feel like, “Thank God Ms. [Johnson] is there because *she* knew it, we didn’t.” So, I knew that was a more important lesson than anything that day and that was first period, so, the rest of the day that’s all I did. Then the next day we did metaphors and similes.

“How did you know to do that?” I probed. “How did you know in that moment was important to think through the poem rather than just tell them what it means and move on?”

Because when I was about to just tell them what it meant and move on, I knew I couldn’t do that, when I was about to say, “Okay, let’s just get through it,” I said, [to myself] “No, I can’t just get through it,” you know. I mean, [pause] as I’m going to do things I think in my head, “Okay, is this good for them? What is it going to make them think?” So, at the moment when they’re starting to mention,

“What is that blah, blah, blah?” in my head I had to make a decision. I was like “Okay, I have 32 minutes left. I can either [pause] say ‘Okay, I know you have questions it’s a hard poem just remember it’s about basketball, and we’ll deal with it later.’” And then get them the metaphors and similes but then in my head I said, “What is that going to tell them? What is that going to make them think?” And I knew that that would make them think, “Okay, I didn’t get it.” Which is what they expected because on their surveys a whole bunch of them wrote, “I like poetry but it’s confusing” or “I like it but I could never write it.” So, I knew they had confidence issues from the beginning. [pause] So knowing they have confidence issues and then in my head I had the decision. Get through it quickly and give them metaphors and similes or stop and really get through it, get through it *with* them show them they can do it? What’s more important? And that’s what I chose; it’s more important.

I felt, I mean to use the term that, I really did feel like I was just facilitating, I was their guide, I was leading them to what I knew they already...I knew they could get through it, you know, I knew they could do it, but I had to help them a little bit. I had to get them there. I had to ask the right questions, point out things, you know? I really just felt kind of like their guide... But I just knew they had to get to a place where things are like, “Oh”, and many even said that. “Oh!” You can read them, their facial expressions, their looks, you know, and their engagement [when] they feel like, “Huh?” I mean I had kids going “Huh?” you know, 14 years old. I *had* to do it. So, really [I] just felt like their guide more than anything; I didn’t want to be feeding them the right answers because what

message is that sending? Which is something [name of university] has given me.

It was all just words before now I can see it in action, they felt *smart*. It was either them—they were going to feel smart and feel like they knew something—or it was going to be me telling them and them feeling like, “She’s smart, and that was a cool poem for her.”

Stepping outside the research story-world and reconsidering what I know.

Reading Amy’s story and her memory of her thoughts during this event, I consider that later on in this interview and then again in the first interview during her second year of teaching, she shared with me that she returns to her resources again and again, drawing from them. She tells me she considers herself organized, and she keeps a binder filled with materials, texts, strategies, handouts, things that she has collected over time from her classes. She also tells me that she returns to ideas from particular courses—her human development and learning course, classroom management, teaching English methods courses, and the teaching reading course. Amy identifies specific professors and specific teacher scholars who also have influenced her thinking, and she tells me that she pulls ideas from their books. I consider this now, in the context of Amy’s basketball story because confidence is a key concept in one of the texts and courses Amy identifies in what I recognize as her repertoire.

Being outside of and objectifying the research story-world. Amy tells me that again and again, she goes back to her Beers (2003) book. In this text, Beers makes the point that readers need cognitive confidence, text confidence, and social and emotional confidence; as one of these three areas of confidence improve, so do the others. Beers

also describes characteristics of dependent and independent readers, and then she demonstrates how teachers can help their students to become independent, build their confidence, and understanding by helping readers to make meaning before, during, and after reading using reading strategies. I recognize Beers-like thinking here in Amy's basketball story, and later throughout the stories she tells and lives in her second year of teaching. She also asserts and that anyone can be a struggling reader given the "right" text; and it is the teacher's job to help them struggle *through* that challenging task so that they learn how to understand. Amy's story seems to demonstrate how she is applying knowledge gained from her university coursework as she helps her students to struggle through a challenging poem—even as *she* struggles through the challenging classroom text, making meaning of her students' communicative signs, the lesson plan and the poem in this particular context.

Also while reading Amy's story, I pause to consider the reason my attention was drawn to it while composing this research story. First, I find the seemingly spontaneous way that her story came about to be interesting. In the interview, just after I had asked her about why she wanted to teach, I had asked if she had yet had any opportunities to see students learning in her internship. This led to her talking about planning her first unit—a three-week poetry unit, focusing on students, selecting authors her students might enjoy, and then this story just seems to emerge—out of memory, marshaled forth from her reservoir of experience in order to provide an example, to communicate with me and to help me understand.

Through story, Amy connects several meanings that she had already expressed in this interview prior to the story. For example, as I interpret them: teaching is more complex than she imagined as a child; teaching is more than just knowing content or putting a perfect lesson together; teaching is a complex coming-together of content, skills, method, moment, purpose, and individuals who each have histories and futures, knowledge, experience, relationships, confidence, and communications systems; her attention is shifting toward her students; her students communicate their understanding or lack thereof with verbal and non-verbal signs. In this story, she is also making new meaning. Her talk is open, exploratory, filled with pauses, “you know’s,” statements that cut each other off; these seem to be signs that her thinking is moving back and forth between memory and moment, “rereading” or reinterpreting and composing story simultaneously, and finding connections between the questions she has been asked and the details she has to draw from. From this process it seems that she communicates additional meanings in light of coming back to her experience through story: students need to understand that reading is a process; students feel stupid when they don’t understand; she can communicate that the teacher has all the answers to give or that students can discover and make meaning by thinking through a text; she can help them to be dependent on the teacher and tell them what it means or help them to become independent and to learn from the experience; she can give up and end the lesson or work through it and turn a corner; both teaching and the poem are texts that students make meaning from.

This basketball teaching event and the story about it are moments of meaning making. Amy’s story is an event in this research story that illuminates the layers of

meaning making happening in the classroom and in the research context. In the classroom context, as revealed by her story, students are reading and making meaning from the poem and the lesson. Amy is reading the poem and her student's reactions to it, interpreting the extent of their understanding, and making a decision that is informed by the present situation, her professional background knowledge, and an awareness of the future. In the research context, Amy is "reading" the story of her experience, even as she composes it to tell it to me and then to tell it again in response to my questions. Listening to Amy's unfolding story, I "read" it and respond with questions as I seek to understand. Later, reading her story, I reconsider the research event in light of this narrative inquiry and the many field texts I gathered and analyzed. Finally, I assume that the reader of this research text is also actively reading, using her or his background knowledge, experience, and linguistic reservoir to make meaning through this story.

Additionally, Amy's story demonstrates how her purpose and stance—someone who wants to help others learn through reading and writing—is at work in this event. Her decisions are consistent with her stated purpose for teaching; yet within this event, it is possible to also see how Amy makes meanings that further develop her understanding of her purpose and stance.

Hinted at in her stories and explicitly stated in her comments during interviews, Amy's meaning-making reveals a patterns connecting her personal and professional touchstones. Similar to how Amy envisioned her personal identity as existing in the space between her diverse parents and their cultures; so it seems that she envisions her

professional identity as growing from the distinct cultures of her college of education experiences and her internship experiences where she was mentored by an ideal mentor.

During Amy's college of education courses she gathered professional knowledge, resources, and experiences that helped her to "think like a teacher."

Being outside the research story-world and reconsidering what I know.

During her internship, I asked Amy if there were any particular experiences that she felt prepared her well for teaching.

First, she mentioned,

Holding onto your resources and getting people's ideas....Having that to look back on and just remembering what you went through has probably been the most valuable thing to me, because I've gone back to so much of—I've, like, used, especially Kyleen Beers's book, You know, I went back to hers a lot, and then just resources that we've talked about...strategies from different books...

Amy has an organized binder of materials she frequently goes back to and draws from in order to use those materials in new situations. Later, during her second year of teaching, she notes how she builds on her resources, revising them based on her reflections from using them or in the context of a different class or teaching situation.

Nevertheless, the knowledge and resources Amy's gathered during her college of education coursework also created initial doubt when she felt like, "Oh my God, all I've learned is book stuff." Prior to teaching, Amy had been, as she explained to me, a successful and confident student her whole life. Faced with beginning her internship Amy

feared that she didn't know anything but "book stuff" and she wondered if she was "going to do something crazy and switch majors." Although she said this jumping ship comment with a smile, she did mention many times the lack of confidence she felt during her initial teaching experiences in her internship.

Amy identified two related experiences that facilitated her development and ability to learn to use what she had learned in the context of teaching. First, she explained that she learned how to learn through her experiences. She explained that during her internship she became aware that she knew more than she thought she did, and that she learned to accept that there are some things, like classroom management, that she could not have learned in her coursework. She also realizes that her teaching "will not be perfect, ever."

But you can try reflect and I really value, when things get changed instead of looking at it as, "God, that didn't go how I wanted," I think, "Okay, you know what? This is a learning process. Some people might just teach it, and it didn't go all well, but instead I'm trying to change it up for third period and fourth period, trying to evaluate instead of, like, looking at it like, "Oh my god, it didn't go well," you know? Which I think, you guys teach us too with the feedback and the constructive criticism, I think you [teacher educators] teach us that. Because otherwise you'd be freaked out if you messed up, you know, that's what you learn all your life, it's like, "Oh it's not right. X," but the value may be, "Oh, look I learned from it for next time."

Here, Amy seems to be articulating the difference between looking at teaching from a frame that expects perfection, getting things correct like answers on a test, and a frame that sees learning as a process that generates knowledge and actions for the future. This realization resembles the one she captured in her story about the teachable moment with the basketball poem. This frame is also readily visible in Amy's classroom as she helps her students to critically reflect on their experiences in order to identify what they did well and what they can do better next time, in order to learn through their experiences. Throughout her lived and told stories of classroom experiences from her second year of teaching, it is clear that Amy sees lessons as means to lifelong learning. The lessons are not the point, they are the portal. Through lessons, she helps her students to gain confidence, skills, awareness, critical thinking, the ability to question, to communicate, to evaluate, appreciate, to reflect, and to connect. From her college of education course experiences, Amy learns to see teaching as experiences to learn from and through rather than assignments to complete and perfect. From this touchstone, Amy continues to make meaning from and learn through her classroom experiences even as she helps her students learn how to learn through her lessons. The National Council Teachers of English [NCTE] "Early Career Teacher of Color Award of Distinction" discretely sitting on her desk, the Employee of the Month certificate hanging on her wall, the numerous hand-drawn "We love you Ms. Johnson" signs hanging all around her desk, and the engaged happy faces of her students are testament of her successful development as a second-year teacher.

The second touchstone event that both guides Amy's meaning-making of classroom experiences and helps continue to construct her stance and purpose for

teaching was and is her internship, specifically, her cooperating teacher. Amy described her CT as a “model mentor” and “true professional.” During her internship, Amy noted how her cooperating teacher (CT) helped her to recognize what she was doing well by giving her very detailed and specific feedback. She explained,

[My CT did] a lot of informal observations, where he'd write down all the good and then the things that I need to work [on] and that helps me because I don't even realize what I was doing well, I don't even know. He's like, Oh yeah, you're doing,” and I'm like, “Oh really?” so I keep doing that...and if it's something I need to work on...then that's helpful.

“What Would Jerry Do?”: Being inside the research story-world and moving through it. Later during her second year of teaching, Amy mentioned her CT numerous times. When Amy and I met for her second interview, I mentioned that in her last interview it seemed to me that her cooperating teacher was a critical event in her development as a teacher, and I ask her if this is an accurate interpretation. In response to my inquiry, she identified him as the most important component in her professional development. Amy told me:

I definitely think about what he taught me all the time, all the time. When I, especially when I'm feeling doubt, I try to think “Okay. What would, what would he have done in that situation?” Because I just very much respect him. You know...So then it's kinda like I wonder about people who didn't have a good internship [pause] experience. Because I feel like I learned a [pause] everything I learned at [name of university], but then he showed me how to put it in action. So

I don't know how I would've felt if I had learned all that but didn't like see somebody put it in action first. Even like literally resources of his [Laughing]. Like I, he dumped all of the...gave me all of his files and all of his resources and got me involved. I mean he's just like the model mentor. You know, got me involved professionally. Nominated me for that NCTE thing so I could go and gave me all of his resources and it's just I don't know what I would've done without that intermediate, that step between [pause] school and real teaching. You know, I probably would have fumbled a lot more. So, but yeah, I definitely still draw from that...I still use him in my head, like, "What would [Jerry] do?"

Amy provides several examples situations when she asks herself, "What would [Jerry] do?" to support her statement. For instance, when a student bullied another student by calling her fat, Amy thought, "[Jerry] always said to think about the situation as if it were my kid. If it were my kid, what would I want the teacher to do?" And so she called home and reported the bullying incidence to the office at her school.

Stepping outside the research story-world and objectifying it. "Jerry's" mentoring facilitated Amy's professional development by helping Amy to connect her experiences as a student to her experiences as a beginning teacher. In the space of her internship, Jerry created a situation through which Amy could learn to use the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind that she had previously acquired during her education courses.

The relationship of these two touchstone experiences to Amy's meaning making and continued construction of her stance toward and purpose for teaching is evident in a

situation during her second year of teaching, an instance when she felt external pressure and internal pressure. This pressure resulted from her using her professional knowledge to guide her thinking about a testing situation; while her prior knowledge and framework for teaching told her one thing, a school official told her another. Their stances differed and, as a result, generated conflicting interpretations. Amy's story about the situation illuminates how her awareness of her background knowledge led her to question what an authority figure told her to do. Then, drawing on her professional and practical knowledge of teaching struggling readers, Amy openly questions the directive she is given. Told to "Just do it anyway," Amy was forced to make a decision, and in that moment, she made meaning that was guided by her stance and by the touchstone events within her reservoir of knowledge and experiences.

"Fun Friday": Reframing failure, frustration, and [the state reading test] preparation: Being outside of and stepping into the research story-world.

After telling me about the testing event, Amy sent me this written reflection about preparing her struggling readers for the approaching standardized state reading test. I include the written story before the told story as a context for the event.

Amy wrote:

It feels good when things go as planned.

With [STATE EXAM] approaching quickly, I know that I have to get my students prepared with test-taking strategies and prepared to handle the passages and articles [STATE EXAM] will throw their way. This year, the average passage has increased from 500 to 700 words for 6th graders. SCARY! That's a

lot for my students who read significantly below-level. To them, reading is hard, arduous, and even painful. They lack confidence, lose focus, then they give up on themselves.

To prepare them, I teach them a strategy where they do several things before reading a passage and answering questions. They have to read the titles first, look at the pictures, read the captions, read the first and last paragraphs, read the questions, and underline important parts of the questions. Then, they read the passage and make as many margin magnets (comments in the margins) as they can to keep their “brains awake.” When answering questions, I ask that they go back to the passage and show me where they found hints to help them answer each question. (This way they will actually go back instead of relying on memory like they normally do.) As you can see, this is a long, challenging process.

Students aren’t exactly excited when I tell them we’re going to practice for [STATE EXAM].

Well, this year and last year, I have begun to make it more of a fun competition for students. I give them an [STATE EXAM] released passage and questions to complete on their own. Then, I average the scores of each “team” (which is made up higher and lower-achieving students to make sure it’s fair.) The winning team gets a little prize, and anyone who gets over a certain number of questions right gets entered into a drawing for the GRAND prize. I started with a fourth-grade passage to boost students’ confidence, and I’m SO thankful I did. Seeing their faces and attitudes change when they realized that they got almost all

of the questions right was priceless. My students constantly experience failure; success is new to them. They NEEDED to feel that success to even attempt harder passages.

Today, we moved up to a much harder 5th grade passage. (Each time, I tell them the passages are 6th grade.) Not ONE student gave up. All tried their hardest. And many of them got 4, 5, and 6 questions out of 6 correct. I did not anticipate so many of them getting these challenging questions correct! Their expressions and joy at experiencing more success made me feel great. I want them to know they can do it, and I know they need to feel this confidence to even attempt a test that they've failed at before.

They are used to being “low.”

They are used to being in “intensive” classes.

They know they are “level ones.”

I see how it's my job to show them that they're more than that. They have to believe in themselves before they can accomplish anything. Today was a good day—students are begging for more [STATE EXAM] Fun Fridays! (March 25, 2011)

Stepping outside the research story-world and reconsidering what I know.

Using my own background knowledge, I see in Amy's written story about preparing her students for the upcoming exam references to her understanding of how successful learning situations promote confidence that continues to propel students through

increasingly challenging situations. Amy also is aware of the difference between independent, instructional, and frustrational levels of reading. This, I think, is assumed in her “Fun Friday” story, and more clearly referenced in the story she told me during nine days before she sent me the “Fun Friday” story. I’ve titled this story “Reading Test.”

“Reading Test”: Being in and moving through the research story-world with Amy. During her second interview, Amy told me:

And because our school is kinda under the lens right now, because we haven’t met our yearly progress the past four years. Yeah, uh they’re kind of, you know, they’re coming on Thursday to talk to teachers. You know it’s, it’s all this weird pressure that I never knew existed. Like people, state people coming and talking to you about interventions and it’s just— But anyway, so there’s these skills that all of sixth grade as a whole [in the state], there’s five hundred kids are weak in. So they’ve chosen the ones they’re weak in and we’re supposed to um, within our teaching kind of hit on those. Like two per nine weeks or something. And we do a pre-test and a post-test for each of those skills. And we’re supposed to have this wonderful curriculum that had a great pre and post-test but it’s not that great. It’s really hard. And the in between stuff that you’re supposed to teach is sort of unclear. It’s not very good. So, you know, so anyway. [school administrator] wants us to have a common pre and post-test, which is okay but not really, because I feel like my students can’t always read the pre and post [test texts], so they can’t show me that they understand the author’s purpose, when they’re struggling with every third word. I want them to be able to show me they understand author’s purpose, you know, at their level. So I don’t know it’s just

hard for me to keep handing them these hard tests. And I've come to the point where I read it with them because I feel like, well, at least I'm giving them an opportunity to understand it, to decode. So if I can get them all the deco [pause] But then she says "That's wrong." You know? So I just brought up in a meeting...But um, she said "Well, we need common this, da-da-da-da." And I had brought up, I just said, "Well how are my students gonna read the same thing as hers? Like how is?" I understand having a common TYPE of assessment...Like we're gonna all have a multiple choice and we're gonna pull it from here and...But I said "How are we all gonna have a common?" She said "Well um, it needs to be and you're gonna look for different gains." But I said that my reading, I know that they can't show me the same thing if they can't read it. You know, with reading they need to be able to read it. "Well, [state reading test] is rigorous, so they need to be exposed to it," [rebutted her administrator]. But I know to teach kids how to read they have to work up to it, and like I explain to them all the time if I just jumped in, if I threw them with this it's like throwing them on a treadmill going twelve miles an hour. They're gonna fall off. Yeah. But if I ease them, it's better.

But she's, she says "Well, rigor is rigor. They're gonna make different gains. We need to have a common thing so we can look at data."

So um, you know, I still read it to them.

Because I'm not gonna do that. Or I'll at least [read the] questions with them or I walk around... and] assist with words when they don't know them. And

I just help. But then [the school's pre-test or post-test] is totally invalid. So, well I don't know. What do you do, you know?

But I'm not just gonna say, "Here, do this." And have them...they'll get frustrated and shut down. And then they have no confidence and then how are they gonna take that [state] test, you know? So, but that's what she told me to do.

Yeah and that's because the state is telling her and they're down, breathing down her neck about it. But that's always a battle. Like do I do what I want, or do I do what they tell me? And sometimes I just... I...there has been one time when I was like I'm not giving a pre-test...

But at the end of the day I always say, "What is best for the kids?" What...I really try to just say...not feel bad about it, and just say, "What is best for them?" If this is gonna help them, I'll do it. If not, there are some times when I just don't. Especially now when we're three weeks 'til [the state reading exam]. I don't have time to be giving like quizzes they can't read. You know, when they really could be reading and learning some...You know?

So, but I do feel bad about making up data [for the school's practice test]. That [Amy gasps.]...But I *do* that...I mean it's just like...This is just for the *school's*, test [not the state exam], *our* chart that we write on the chart. And [officials] are not gonna see it, but I was like, "What do I feel worse about? Making up data for the [school's pre-test or post-test] or wasting twenty minutes where maybe that student could have learned a new word or that student could have, you know gained some background knowledge?" I would feel worse about the kids. So I just said "Whatever."

And that's....that's another thing that's always like, "Gosh, all the legislation and all the...it just seems so, I mean so standardized and scary. It's just scary, you know? I like wanna go teach in New Hampshire with Linda Reif. At Oyster River Middle School. I know her school. I'm like looking it up [on the Internet] sometimes. [Sigh.] [Laugh.] But she's got some of that same stuff she said, I think.

A few weeks after Amy told me this story, she sent me the following reflection:

"Hi Ms. [Johnson]!!"

I couldn't imagine having job where I didn't hear this daily. Every day when I walk into school, tired and a bit grumpy thinking about a million things that I have to do, hearing a student say hello with a smile seems to make everything worth it. Even though I'm not perfect and I may have forgotten to do a few things I know I should have, I know that kids respond to me, and that keeps me going.

I have a job where I get to make people happy, and I get to see change in students. I don't have to deal with many adults since I'm surrounded by middle schoolers most of the day, and I prefer it that way. There's something about kids that is so different. It's their innocence, their hope, their wonder, their curiosity about the world around them. It's their humor, their silliness that keeps me smiling.

As a teacher, you have to appreciate kids and all the quirks that come with them. If you fight it, they fight you, and they shut down. Somehow, I feel like most kids seem to open up to me, and that feels good.

Yesterday, a 12-year-old colored a picture for me. A 13-year-old wrote an acrostic poem for me, and the "A" in my last name stood for "Always Positive."

Always positive.

I like that. I know I don't always feel that way inside, but I make myself appear that way to kids. Because, I have to be positive for them. If not, they don't care as much about learning. They don't feel as encouraged. And, they don't think they can do as well as I know they can.

This week, my students worked HARD on their [STATE EXAM] Reading. I was told by teachers around the school that my students were using all of the strategies I taught them to help tackle the challenging texts they faced. These kids were faced with texts 3 or more grade levels above their independent reading levels. Yet, they persevered. They read and re-read. They circled, underlined, made comments in the margins to help themselves stay engaged. My ESE [Exceptional Student Education] students used the extra time they were allotted. Some worked for up to two hours longer than they had to. They tried their very best. Can I ask for more than that?

“Remembering My Reading History”: Being outside the research story-world and reconsidering what I know. Reading Helen’s and Amy’s stories of classroom experiences leads me to think about my own journey as a reader. I remember the moment I first realized I had a history as a reader.

Although the contextual details are a bit fuzzy, I remember the moment of realization quite well. It was an afternoon about ten years ago. I was, I think, a third-year teacher at the time. I had spent a few hours reading and marking up a text I intended to teach in my classroom. At that point, I had come to love marking up texts, identifying patterns, exploring the meaning of images, structure, language, circling this, boxing that, highlighting something else, and writing all down the margins and in the empty space between lines of printed text. The analytical reading I did was not to prepare me to lecture to my students—lecturing was never my style—but I understood, perhaps only on an intuitive level, that I needed or at least wanted to understand these texts well in order to better aid others’ exploration of them. I enjoyed this process of figuring out a text, of coming to understand it. On that afternoon and for some reason I do not remember, I wandered into the guest bedroom and took from the shelf a book I read in one of my college literature classes. As I thumbed through the pages of J.M. Coetzee’s novel *Foe*, I noticed a few marginal notes here and there, notes that appeared to be my thoughts while reading. In my own writing I read, “The use of parenthesis here allows the narrator to speak directly to the reader and bring the reader into the story” and other notes that showed me I was paying attention to both what was being communicated and how it was being communicated, attending to the narrative and the metanarrative, listening to what was said and what had been silenced. I recognized that it was during this literature course

that I really began making marginal notes, and that, for the first time (because it was assigned) I kept a reading journal in which I wrote my thoughts while I read and after I finished my reading. Perhaps noticing the difference between the analytical markings I had just finished making and those I revisited in the margins of *Foe* is what led me to take the other book from the shelf. *Philosophy* was a book I had read in my eleventh grade literature class. I loved this book—loved it for its wealth of ideas and for the way it inspired me to think, but it was significant in this moment for another reason. When reading this book, I had broken (at least what I perceived) was an unspoken rule by underlining as I read. I marked in a text that was not mine. These markings were made in an attempt to understand the logic, organization, and argument of the text. I wanted to understand, and so I set about doing that, understanding and marking in the printed text.

At different points in my ongoing journey as a reader, I have come back to that moment when I realized that I had a history as a reader and that I had learned through my experiences working through those texts. Over time, I became a better reader. A few years later when I began teaching Advanced Placement literature, my textual analysis and marking grew (ridiculously) more detailed, precise, and even color-coded as I taught myself how to look at a text from multiple critical perspectives: feminist, Marxist, biographical, historical, structural, whatever... Then, the texts I read and taught were silent. Clean. No markings. No notes. No consulting literary criticism. I remember noticing this period of silence in my story as a reader and wondering if I had perhaps grown more fluent in my analytical thinking or if I had just come to know those texts well. Now that even more time has gone by, I think the textual silence came about because I had shifted my attention away from the literature and toward the students I

taught. During that same time frame, in the fall of 2005 when I was a first-semester graduate (Master's) student, I vividly remember defending my thinking about teaching to two particularly argumentative graduate teaching assistants. Like these two stubborn young men, I was teaching an introductory composition course in the university's College of Arts and Sciences and consequently taking a required teaching seminar in which we were asked to share rough drafts of our teaching philosophy in small groups. Unlike the others in my group, I was (and had been for seven years) a full-time high school English and reading teacher. With disdain at my apparent lack of erudition, one of the graduate students in my group remarked,

“That’s *not a philosophy*” after I claimed (for the first time),

“I teach kids not curriculum.”

I remember.

“Reading Helen and Amy”: **Being outside of the research story-world and objectifying it.** And now I return to reconsider my history as a reader in light of recent research events. In response to reading and writing about Helen and Amy’s stories of classroom experiences, I realize *anew* that I have been reading their classrooms—both now and when they were pre-service teachers during their university practicum field experiences. For several years now, as a beginning teacher educator, field supervisor to pre-interns and interns, and as a beginning researcher interviewing beginning teachers in many the qualitative studies (conducted from multiple lenses) I conducted while taking doctoral classes, I have been reading beginning teachers’ reading their classrooms as texts.

Helen's and Amy's stories have allowed my thinking to come full circle—to the point where I experience a moment of awareness, a bud of rhizome, and realize with more awareness, that I was reading my own classroom as a high school teacher, and then I read pre-service and beginning teachers as they read and make meanings from their teaching experiences.

During the transition from writing about making meaning with Helen to making meaning with Amy, I wrote about this realization:

My approach to answering my research questions has been to treat them individually, in the context of my relationship with the participants and in context of the meaning I have made from them. And now, as I approach the portion of the research story that focuses on Amy, I experience a moment of awareness.

I realize that my attention has been focused on Helen in great detail because I think that she has been showing me much of *how* she has been learning and doing—both when she was a pre-service teacher in my university classes, when she was an intern and a participant in a study with me, and now as a beginning teacher. She has produced rich, evocative stories filled with many more stories and compelling analogies that appeal to me as a reader—they appeal to my desire to learn through my transactions with readers and texts.

My attention has been drawn to Amy, it seems, for a different reason. She is someone whose lived and told stories tell me less about the *how* and so much about the *what* of becoming a teacher. When I observe Amy teach and read Amy's stories, I see what is possible. She is someone who has again and again

wonderfully pushed my understanding of what pre-service and beginning teachers *can* do. Since I have first known Amy, she has amazed me with what she does in any given situation. As a beginning teacher-educator, her learning was a product to which my thoughts returned; Helen's was a process. As a reader of the classroom as text, Amy appealed to my efferent meaning-making and Helen to my aesthetic. As a narrative inquiry researcher, Helen's stories show me how her meaning-making is a process of collecting stories and language in her reservoir and then using those stories to make new meanings in new contexts. Amy tells me what ideas and texts she organizes in her reservoir so that she can later use them to help her reach her goals. Both participants attend to the *how* and the *what* as well as the aesthetic and efferent, but to different extents. The stories Helen lives and tells allow me to focus more on the *how*, and the stories Amy lives and tells help me to focus more on the *what*. Together, they remind me of the continuum of aesthetic and efferent meaning-making from which I have observed various students approach the transition of becoming a teacher. They teach me how both stances work together to guide meaning making. As Bruner (1986) says of narrative and paradigmatic modes of thinking and ordering experience, the two are irreducible to one another, yet completely complementary.

“Fireworks”: **Being inside and moving through the research story-world with Amy.** On this day, my attention shifts, and as I observe Amy's classroom, I allow the actual classroom and lesson to float to the periphery of my attention as I write and think about what I've been seeing in Amy's classroom. Then, suddenly, my full attention is back on Amy's class as I experience an event that gave me chills in the wake of

amazement. In my classroom observation notes I wrote about this moment as it happened; in other words, I wrote in response to the classroom as text as I read it:

This morning on my way into Marshall Middle School, I was thinking again about Amy's reference to time as her primary conflict. I was also thinking about her amazing use of time. Yesterday, with her 5-6 period block that she says always needs more time and is a challenge because of that. Yesterday she decided to proceed with the story tracker strategy that this period didn't have time to do the day before. Even as yesterday's activities took even longer and there was little time to get to the story tracker, I was amazed to realize that even with 4 minutes remaining, she proceeded. She looked at the clock (as she tends to frequently do), and said, "Okay, we have four minutes. Let's do this..." Many teachers would interpret this four minutes as not enough to get anywhere and might just give students "free time." She didn't, and it was the most efficient use of 4 minutes I have seen.

In her classes, Amy attends to time constantly and in a myriad of ways. "Eyes on me in 3, 2, 1." When transitioning from instructions about a task to actually doing a task, "And, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Write. [or whatever]" "Ready, Set, Go!" to tell them it is time to begin working on what she has just told them to do. She also varies the amount of time she counts down—sometimes 5 seconds, sometimes 3; it seems this is in relation to what students are expected to be doing, in relation to the situation, not just a standard set number to count down. She also frequently uses time cues to manage and move students along. Okay, you have 2 minutes. ... There is something in her tone that suggests a finality—the way many

teachers might wrap up a whole class lesson or the end of the period, but she is only wrapping up the specific segment that they are working on. For example, the time cue might be to wrap up writing an assignment or reflection, then prepare to share, then again a time cue to wind up sharing: “We have 30 seconds to share; last person.”

There is a constant monitoring of time as well as an impressive efficiency of her use of time—it seems always just enough to get students to do or to learn what is needed, then moving on. Like continuous explosions of productivity that reminds me of fireworks. Each so beautiful, an explosion of beauty and power, only to be followed by more and more, and then when it seems you can’t be any more amazed, there is a grand finale that is even more spectacular as the bursts of energy and light come closer together to make a splendid seemingly unison display that lights up the night sky.

Students respond well to her time management. Although there have been a few times that students were disappointed that they didn’t get to share, they typically accept that the class is moving on and they seem to know that they will have other chances. This too is impressive. Students *want* to share. They have something *to* share. Yet, things go on. It’s okay. Now that I’m thinking about the co-constructive nature of how Amy and her students create the classroom text, as well as the language she uses to motivate students and to empower them, it seems to me that students must (on some level) appreciate her stated perspective—that students are working to better themselves, each other, and the world that they live in. Everything supports this in the classroom context.

For instance, even now as I type, students are writing a reflection on yesterday's Socratic seminar. The questions are up on projector:

Awesome points made:

- 1.
- 2.

Things I did well:

- 1.
- 2.

Things I could work on:

- 1.
- 2.

Things the CLASS did well:

- 1.
- 2.

Things the CLASS could work on:

- 1.
- 2.

Question/idea I still have in relation to the topic:

- 1.

Amy also uses her language to shape the collaborative nature of the class.

Her words say: "We're in this together. Let's work together."

In response to the first prompt (when the students are sharing out loud) Amy says, “Oh, I like that. You used the name of the person with the idea to give them credit.” Or, “I never thought about that. Hmm. That’s a great idea.” Students respond to being invited into the classroom through her use of language and positioning. This period, for example, a student tells Amy when they are going over the agenda, homework, and upcoming events, he tells her that she didn’t do student of the week this week. (There is a hall of fame on the wall outside her door.) She agrees that she didn’t, and then she explains why (Last week was the state’s standardized testing all week), and that she will next week. She acknowledges that he is correct though.

“I’m holding you accountable for the accuracy of this...If you assess your partner inaccurately, you will be held accountable” (to students who are using a rubric to assess their partner’s AVID binder).

“Okay, you have 5 minutes.” (to switch binders and assess their peer’s work), then “You have 4 minutes and 30 seconds.”

She builds students up with her language and attitude: “Wow, I’m jealous. You guys are going to really interesting places for spring break.” She empowers them to take an active role in the classroom.

Just a quick note about the demographics. AVID (period 3) has 25 students, and the class is very diverse. 7 boys, the ethnic makeup is challenging to put labels on. Her IIR and LA block is smaller (10 fewer I remember her saying to

me) and also quite diverse. The academic proclivities of the AVID students are quite different from the IIR/LA block group of students.

Wait. What?

So beautifully ironic. Poetic. Wow. I have chills. The song that the AVID students are now listening to hits exactly on the metaphor I just used to describe this classroom—fireworks, lighting up the sky like the fourth of July. I can't believe how I was just thinking of this, and now the “ignite the night and let it shine, just own the night, like the fourth of July, ‘cause baby you're a firework....come on let your colors burst...” words/lyrics I hear are saying the same...

Will anyone believe this beautiful “coincidence?” And this morning in the shower I was just searching for a metaphor that captured the story I see here in Amy's classroom. Nothing really came to mind. Then four or so hours later, I'm sitting here, and out of seemingly nowhere as I was writing about the energy in the classroom, the image of fireworks came to mind. Then perhaps 15 minutes later this song...

As class winds up (she began the activity with 6 minutes left in class, and told them that they'd reflect when they came back; I came in just a few minutes early last period, and I heard the period before sharing their reflections, but I had no idea what they were talking about or even that fireworks were being referenced. I was also busy setting up my computer, etc. Or, did I “absorb” the context clues of this enough to form an unconscious general impression that put

together the pieces into the image/symbol of fireworks? Very interesting. This song is new to me—I've never heard it or the artist before...

Anyway, also interesting was Amy's and the class's response. Amy said "I think this should be our AVID theme song." To which the class cheered! Then, Amy said, as if in passing, "Thank you, [Alice]," who recommended the song to Amy.

Stepping outside of the research story-world and reconsidering what I know. In response to my earlier question, wondering if I was subconsciously reading textual signs without even realizing it, which led me to consider this classroom like a fireworks display, I now turn around and I see on Amy's computer screen (behind me and to my right) that the song title and author are right there. When I came in, I was vaguely aware that her computer screen looked different (usually her attendance is open on the screen). I remember in half thought, thinking that it looked like she had some personal internet surfing page open, and I even wondered if she had another earlier planning period (I didn't think so, since I know 7th period is her planning.). I let the thought float by, not really even looking at the text on the screen, just noticing that there was a picture of a woman. I even snapped some photos of the student-made notes to Ms. "Johnson" that are on her wall behind her desk. So basically, the song title, which I now realize is "Firework" and the picture of the artist, Katy Perry were right there on the screen. I didn't even see them.

This is an interesting phenomenon that I want to further consider. I'm thinking too about [Dwayne's] comment to me yesterday at the beginning of class

about why he requested to come sit in Amy's class (even though he would have her for the next two periods after that)... He told me that he likes to be here. He couldn't really put his finger on why, I thought, although he did offer some compelling reasons: the room, it has nice things on the walls, he said first, then he said that Amy asks about him when he has had a bad day. I think his examples are physical examples or representations/signs of the deeper messages that these signs help to convey: I care about you; this classroom is a place to motivate and to educate you... All this comes to mind because I think it relates to my experience with the firework metaphor and the song.

In reading and interpreting the field texts from participants' stories, I feel simultaneously elated and fearful. My first response is—again and again as these events unfold—excitement, joy, surprise, and delight. This propels, validates, motivates...

Then later, after I step back and examine the larger landscape and ask what all these stories and events mean, I see so many connections to the theoretical framework with which I began this study. This *too* is amazing. Then I freeze. Perhaps it fits too well. Am I blinding myself? How else might the data be read?

Reassured from the data that what I'm seeing is supported by the field texts, I wonder how can I best let the data speak and show my process of making sense of the field texts and arriving at the meanings I made? (Whew, I'm glad I built this question into my study!)

“Reading the Invisible?” Being outside of the research story-world and objectifying it. Just now while I was contemplating this—contemplating in response to thinking about and writing my analysis of the field texts, I was reminded of the fireworks story from being in Amy’s classroom. How after the initial surprise of writing what was essentially played through song a few minutes later—the joy and surprise and incredulity of this phenomenon.—then how I began to take a step back and notice the “unheard” and “unnoticed” elements in my peripheral vision—things I could have been picking up on without even realizing it, details in the classroom I was making meaning from against the backdrop of my ongoing understanding of Amy—the student sharing his response when I walked in to the classroom early, the image on the computer. I also thought and again now think about the boy in class who chose to come to Amy’s class for another period, even though he was already assigned to be with her for two English and reading classes later. When I asked him what he liked about her class, he mentioned things he could see, but I believe he was referring to what these things stood for rather than the things themselves—for instance, he said the classroom walls. Sure, they look nice, but why would that make someone want to come in here? He could stare at the walls later on during his assigned two hours with Amy. He also mentioned that when he is having a bad day, she asks about it. This statement helped me to consider his first statement and to think that perhaps I was on to something. Her asking about his bad day communicates something beyond the actual words that are spoken. In asking, “What’s wrong?”; “How are you doing?”; or “How has your day been?” Amy is communicating, or at least it

seems that the student is reading and interpreting that Amy is saying, “I see you. I care about you. You matter.” The walls of the classroom are texts too—texts that communicate through the items on them that the classroom is a place he can feel welcome. Valued. Perhaps successful.

Thinking about all this leads me back to the research “story” as I wonder now if the classroom literacy framework is like the fireworks phenomenon and the “stay a little longer” story. Perhaps I am—and this would actually make sense in the context of my framework too—reading and interpreting what isn’t readily visible. I am and have been reading the signs in the classrooms (when I was a teacher and then from a different perspective as I learned to teach potential teachers and to work with practicing teachers) and interpreting what they mean. Looking back early into my career (before working on my Master’s degree) when people asked me about or when I reflected on what made a good teacher, I would have to say that good teachers have to be able to “get” people, meaning I thought teachers needed to understand kids. Beyond this, I couldn’t have explained what I meant at that time. It was just something I did. Something I sensed other “good” teachers were doing too. Good teachers “get” kids. Through phrases that came up in literature later on when I was studying education during my masters, phrases like “kid watching” or “with-it-ness,” I think I began appropriating this language, trying it on, sort-of-speak, to try to articulate and connect pieces into a slowly-building understanding of what later came to be called “Reading the classroom text” then “Classroom Literacy” and then included the idea of reading the classroom *as* text under the umbrella of classroom literacy where teachers are

viewed as readers, writers, communicators, meaning-makers. Of course there are more stories that relate and come to mind in relation to this, but I think about (and this critical event has come to mind *many* times since it has happened) the “writing about air” story. When talking about the early ideas of classroom literacy with [my classmate] Kate in the spring of 2008, I told her, out of frustration, that I felt like I was trying to write about air. It is all around me, every day, and yet invisible. I said this out of frustration, but Kate quickly encouraged me by saying, “Christi, people have been writing about *God* for years.” I kind of chuckled then. I understood her point and her encouragement that yes, people write about things that are unseen—things they know exist but cannot touch or see directly. I also made the meaning that I was in no way writing about something so challenging as writing about God, and this helped me put things back into perspective. On the way to my car after class, I walked across campus from the business building heading to the parking garage just past the education building. During this walk I noticed the hearty smell of fresh-baked bread coming from the Subway restaurant on campus and then the sweet smell of the blossoms in the (crape myrtle?) trees. The smells reminded me that even though I could not see air, it was very much there, part of the world around me, part of what I breathed in and out...(Researcher’s journal, May 17, 2011).

“(Re)Seeing in Light of Fireworks”: Being outside of the research story-world and going beyond it. Amy’s teaching is itself a statement of her meaning-making from her college and life preparations toward becoming a teacher. It is an ever-evolving text that is simultaneously being written and read, a draft ever in progress that

synthesizes, communicates, and enacts the meaning she has made and is making of what it means to be an effective teacher, what it means for student to learn. Her fireworks light up the sky, showing me the beauty and power of the meaning she has made by threading the study of teaching to the world of teaching in the context of working with specific students. Her fireworks are art and science, beauty and function, I follow their trajectory, watch them burst into beautiful displays of light and color, and once again, I am reminded of how fireworks can make a nation of diverse people feel connected on the Fourth of July. I also see how they illuminate the otherwise invisible space, the very air of our environment that we breathe in and out every day. We are a part of it, and it is a part of us. And for one moment, the flashes of light from your fireworks remind me, show me what has been right in front of me all along.

Helen and Amy,

You are the story,

The pattern,

The poem.

Working together,

Your stories

Show me

Tell me

Help me

To remember

To connect

To imagine

To experience

To create.

Upon the canvas

Of my mind

On my computer

In my classrooms

Through my field notes.

You help me

To see the pattern

Connect

To stitch the texts

Together

You help me to make

A quilt and a poem

A text and meaning.

Remembering Acosta's poem, "My Mother Pierced Quilts," I stand in the contemplative space between the narrative inquiry and life as lived, and I consider how quilts, have the ability to remind us that learning, teaching, researching, living, writing, reading, conversing, and thinking are all products and processes, art and craft, materials and tools, form and function, memory and imagination. Just as a quilts can be displayed as art for others to admire, contemplate patterns and the many "cloth faces" from which they are formed, they are also covers beneath which we can warm ourselves, and they are heirlooms we can pass on to the next generation so that they too may be connected to the

many texts we have pieced together in order to make a quilt, a text, a poem from our professional, intellectual, spiritual, and personal lives—patterns the next generation can consider even as they make their own quilts of meaning from the textiles they have saved. I also consider how poems are the impressions—powerful images that become a part of the ever-turning kaleidoscope of thought, forming the colors and patterns through which we view our world. They are the separate meanings we make from specific experiences—meanings that, over time, connect and form patterns as we piece them together to create the larger “quilt” of meaning.

From Helen and Amy, Rosenblatt and Dewey, *Reading and Writing, the Quilt and the Poem*, I see these texts and my own anew; through the dynamic frame formed by the quilted space that connects these texts and in the image of the poem that their pattern produces I have explored and come to understand.

Chapter Five:

(Re)Viewing, (Re)Considering, and (Re)Envisioning *Classroom Literacy*

Approaching the conclusion of a dissertation is a strange event. I am aware, as Polanyi (1966, 2009) has said of human knowledge, that “we can know more than we can tell” (2009, p. 4). The stuff of thought and of lived experience is not the two-dimensional black type on white paper that the form of our thinking and living eventually takes to signify the meaning we make; rather it is multifaceted, layered, existing beyond words in multiple modalities, radiating outward like a web to connect and intersect in multiple directions simultaneously, and spans time as it considers in the present the past and the future. Inquiry is continuous (Dewey, 1938), and understanding, a text, always a work in progress. However, I am reminded by Thoreau (1856) that lived experiences must be backed into a corner and examined to learn from them, to live deliberately and purposefully, and to determine if they are experiences worth living at all. I am also reminded by Bradbury (1953) that ideas are like pockets that must be turned upside down and shaken out to see what is inside. In remembering these texts and the meanings I have made from them before and now, drawing from them as I write, I am encouraged by remembering that lived experiences like stories, images, and poetic language have a “poetic dimensionality” because they are each “saturated with possibilities of meaning,” to borrow Brochner’s (2005, p. 299) words. I am encouraged by considering this narrative inquiry and realizing how story and how images generated by poetic language create a space through which we can simultaneously read and compose, understand and

explore; and to borrow Langer's (2011a, 2011b) two directions for knowledge building, they are a point to which we can refer as we deepen understanding *and* a frame from which we can explore as we consider new possibilities. Finally, I am encouraged by considering this narrative inquiry and realizing anew how experiences are the stories we live; the mediums through which we can consider what we have learned and reconsider what we still need to know; the stories we live and tell are how we "educate the self and others" (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000, p. xxvi).

Overview of the Chapter

Standing upon touchstones from my own reservoir of experience, knowledge, and language, I have contemplated a space between the two distinct disciplines of 1) reading in English language arts and 2) education by gathering, identifying, examining, interpreting, connecting, recomposing, discussing, and reflecting on the stories that two beginning teachers lived and told about their classroom experiences and the stories I lived and told about my research experiences. From these stories, I have come to understand how these two teachers, "Helen" and "Amy," made meaning from classroom events and how I made meaning from research events. I have also come to both broaden and deepen my understanding of the theoretical framework, *Classroom Literacy*.

While fully explicating all that I have come to understand through this study will no doubt be the focus of future endeavors, in this chapter, I take a step back from this research experience to consider glimmers of what I have come to understand by 1) reviewing the study and the overall meanings I made, and 2) reconsidering a central tenet in the *Classroom Literacy* theoretical framework in light of this study and the broader

knowledge base in which it is situated Restated in light of Langer’s (2011a, 2011b) envisionment building framework, in this chapter I 1) step out of the “text-world” (2011b, p. 19) of this study to rethink what I know. This rethinking includes reviewing the study and considering how my ever-developing understanding of how two beginning English teachers and I made meaning from events contributes to the repertoire of knowledge and experiences with which I came to this study. Next, I 2) step out of the “text world” of this study to objectify the experience. As I reconsider and contemplate what I have learned, especially about my notion of Classroom Literacy, I objectify or, *textualize*²⁷ the research experience, my own understanding, and this written research text, and I analyze them in light of other scholarship. Finally, in the closing of this chapter and this study, I anticipate some future “envisionments” that I and my inquiry community might build. This looking forward in light of present understandings corresponds to Langer’s fifth stance in which a reader “goes beyond.” As Langer describes it:

This stance occurs less often than the others. It represents the times when we have built sufficiently rich and well-developed envisionments—when we have knowledge or insight available to use in new and sometimes unrelated situations. It is generative in that we apply critical aspects of one richly developed envisionment toward the creation of a new envisionment-building experience. (2011b, p. 21)

²⁷ *Textualize* as in “to textualize an experience” is my own term not Langer’s. I use it deliberately to imply that a reader takes a step back from lived experience and examines it in a way similar to how a reader might objectify a text’s construction, her own reading experience, or her process of understanding a text.

(Re)Viewing the Study

Setting a purpose. Social science research stems from either a search for certainty or for meaningful understanding of human experiences (Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988; Rorty, 1979, 1989). In this narrative inquiry I sought to understand how two beginning English teachers, “Helen” and “Amy,” made meaning from their classroom experiences. Since living, telling, composing, and talking about stories are meaning-making endeavors (Brochner, 2005; Bruner, 1990; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Gee, 1985; Mishler, 1986; Reissman, 1993, 2008; Richardson, 1990, 2005), I inquired into layers of living, telling, listening to, talking about, reading, and interpreting stories for purposes of awakening to a more meaningful understanding of learning, teaching, and researching. More specifically, the purpose of this narrative inquiry was to examine the stories two English teachers lived and told in order to understand how they made meaning from classroom events.

Attending to problems. From my review of the literature on teacher education emerged the widely-documented tenet that what teachers know and can do is one of the most important influences on student learning (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Dewey, 1902; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald, & Zeichner, 2005; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996). Nevertheless, in order to successfully influence student learning, teachers must learn how to use their knowledge and communicative skills for helping *others* to learn (Christenbury, 2006; Darling-Hammond & LePage, 2005). Prospective teachers who

graduate from a college of education have spent four or more years studying how to teach others to learn; however, once in the complex context of the classroom (Jackson, 1968, 1990), teachers—especially novice teachers—are faced with the challenge of enacting what they know (Kennedy, 1999; Simon, 1980). As Shulman (1987b) notes, this challenge is exacerbated by the assumptions teachers make about teaching and learning resulting from the sixteen or more years that they have already spent thinking about teaching and learning from the perspective of a *student*—in what Lortie (1975) refers to as an “apprenticeship of observation.” There is a need for teacher educators to understand *how* teachers know and do in the complex environment of the classroom during the transition from student to teacher in order to help prospective and practicing teachers to use what they know for purposes of helping their students to learn.

In addition, my review of research and scholarship on reading in the discipline of English language arts revealed that reading involves a transactional process of meaning making—a process through which readers draw from their storehouse of language and experiences a range of possible meanings to construct internal texts as they negotiate and revise their understanding as they read (e.g., Beers, 2003; Langer 1995, Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005; Smagorinsky, 2008; Tovani, 2000). Studies of both proficient and struggling readers have contributed to understanding how readers make meaning from texts as well as how readers struggle *through* challenging texts in order to make meaning. From these studies, teacher leaders and teacher educators have developed strategies to aid struggling and proficient readers’ meaning-making from various texts and to facilitate readers’ metacognition and confidence. Nevertheless, teachers’ ability to aid their students’ meaning-making is predicated upon the assumption that teachers are able to “read” and

make meaning of their students' literacy needs and to compose educative experiences for their students. There is a need to understand how teachers read and make meaning of teaching and learning experiences in classroom contexts.

Finally, Scholars from the disciplines of communication and philosophy assert society is an ambiguous cultural text—one its members are continuously reading, interpreting, and creating (Bruner, 1986; Cooper & Simonds, 2007; Gee, 2008; Geertz, 1973; Goodman, 1984), guided by their frame of expectations (Popper, 1962). Nevertheless, we know little about the ways that these two—making meaning through reading printed texts and making meaning through reading society as a cultural text—come together in classrooms from the perspective of the teachers—from the perspective of the teachers as readers of their social classrooms as particular cultural texts. There is a need to study how teachers struggle *through* the process of making meaning from challenging classroom “texts” so that teacher leaders and teacher educators can better understand how teachers know and do aid their students' meaning-making.

Determining the phenomenon of investigation. Narratives are “a primary way individuals make sense of experience,” especially during “difficult life transitions” (Riessman, 1993, p. 4). For beginning teachers, transitioning from a lifetime of school experienced from a student's biographical stance or frame of expectations to a professional's pedagogical stance can be a difficult transition—a shift in thinking that Christenbury (2006) likens to a “loss of innocence” (p. 37). Since “[l]ife's narratives are the context for making meaning of school situations” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 3), inquiring into beginning teachers' stories offers teacher educators a window into better

understanding how teachers make meaning of teaching experiences during the transitional stage of beginning teaching. Stories lived and told were the phenomenon of investigation in this narrative inquiry.

Posing inquiry questions. My inquiry in this study was guided by the following, central question (Creswell, 2007):

1. How do two beginning English language arts teachers make meaning from classroom events?

In order to address this central question, I asked the following sub-questions: (a) What stories do two beginning English teachers live and tell about their classroom experiences?; (b) What are the contexts of these two beginning English teachers' stories?; and (c) What critical events or turning points do they identify in their stories?; and (d) What knowledge, language, or experiences do they use to make meaning from classroom experiences?

To bracket myself *into* the study and providing an account of who I am in relationship to the study and study participants (Campesino, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Connolly, 2007; Connolly & Reilly, 2007), I also asked a second question:

2. How do I, as a beginning teacher educator and educational researcher, make meaning from research events?

To mirror the sub-questions designed to understand the meaning-making of the participants, I also asked: (a) What research stories do I live and tell?; (b) What are the

contexts of these research stories?; (c) What critical events or turning points do I identify in these research stories?; and (d) What knowledge, language, or experiences do I use to make meaning from research experiences?

Constructing a theoretical framework. Chapter One of this study opened with an inciting incident in a “plot” line of inquiry. I described a critical event during which I first began to wonder how it is possible to accept that any student can be a struggling reader given the “right” text and that the role of the teacher is to help students to struggle *through* challenging texts by providing them with strategies for making meaning before, during, and after they read (Beers, 2003, 2006), yet we seem to fail to see how *teachers’* ability to aid their students is contingent upon their ability to “read” and make meaning from their students’ literacy needs before, during, and after teaching events. From this point of inquiry, I explored literature and began to construct an understanding of how teaching, like reading, is a meaning-making process. This understanding was shaped into a theoretical framework through which I viewed beginning teachers as “readers” who make meaning from the complex, dynamic “text” of their classrooms. Broadly defined, *text* here referred to the everyday, verbal and nonverbal communicative signs relating to classroom life.

In Chapter Two I reviewed two tenets of this theoretical framework—meaning and experience—through a discussion of the literature, attending to 1) sociocognitive and sociocultural conceptions of literacy joined in a transactional paradigm, 2) Rosenblatt’s transactional theory, the transactional paradigm and pragmatist epistemology in which Rosenblatt’s theory was situated, the tenets of Rosenblatt’s theory, and 3) Dewey’s

(1938) philosophy of educative experience as it's transactional and narrative underpinnings connected to Rosenblatt's theory of reading and writing and to the Classroom Literacy theoretical framework I enacted to guide my inquiry.

Designing methods for inquiry. In reviewing and discussing constructs of meaning and experienced in Chapter Two, I sought to provide readers of this study with philosophical, historical, and disciplinary contexts for the sociology of knowledge (Noddings, 2005) from which I had drawn ideas for rethinking *reader, text, context, making meaning, and literacy*. I also sought to more fully convey the philosophical and theoretical frameworks guiding my thinking. As Creswell (2007) has observed, research methods proceed from a researcher's philosophical and theoretical stances. My philosophical and theoretical stances were and are united in Rosenblatt's (1978, 1994, 2005) transactional theory of reading : "Every reading act is an event, or a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular pattern of signs, a text, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context" (2005, p. 5).). In designing this study, I viewed the participants as readers of their classrooms as text; I viewed myself as a reader of the field texts I collected, analyzed, and composed; and I viewed the academic community as readers of this narrative inquiry text. Each of us was/is actively constructing meaning, using our own background knowledge and the texts before us as guides. The meaning we each construct is a transactional event, influenced by time and place and context.

In Chapter Three I reviewed the historical, philosophical, and disciplinary contexts of narrative inquiry as a methodology for social science research in education. Within this review, I sought to communicate how the constructs of meaning and

experience reviewed in Chapter Two also connected to the methodological design I outlined in Chapter Three. Dewey's (1938) philosophy of educative experience provides the epistemological connection between Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading (1978, 1994, 2005) and Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) methodology for narrative inquiry in educational research in which story is both phenomenon and method. Existing narrative inquiry scholarship (e.g., Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly 200, Elbaz, 1991) asserts that teachers' knowledge is ordered by story and best understood through story. This tenet linked to the general and specific purpose of my study—to understand how two beginning teachers know and do.

To facilitate the complexity of understanding human knowledge and action through story, I selected Webster and Mertova's (2007) critical events approach to narrative inquiry research on teaching and learning. Webster and Mertova's work with critical events in narrative stemmed from Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) work in narrative inquiry and was congruous with Rosenblatt's and Dewey's assertions that meaning and reading are events.

Making Meaning from Field Texts. To address the two inquiry questions I posed, I collected and analyzed the stories two beginning English teachers and I lived and told between January 2008 and May 2011. These field texts included interviews, documented researcher-participant conversations, artifacts, writings, recorded and written reflections, and classroom observations. *Bricolage*—a back-and-forth constructive process for analyzing data using diverse tools in response to the data—describes the stance I adopted for selecting and using analytical tools (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). My

analysis of field texts included a structural analysis, linguistic analysis, narrative analysis, critical events analysis, *bricolage*, meaning interpretation, and writing as data analysis. Working through six phases of data analysis, I 1) identified stories in the field texts, 2) analyzed how participants made meaning of classroom events, 3) analyzed how I made meaning of research events, 4) analyzed connections in our meaning making, 5) recomposed stories that illustrated how participants and I made meaning from events, and 6) then each participant and I read, discussed, and analyzed the stories I composed during stage five.

In Chapter Four of this study, I addressed my research questions by presenting four meanings I made during the fourth phase of data analysis. First, participants and I made meaning through story. Story connected a narrative mode of reasoning (Bruner, 1986) and a transactional paradigm (Dewey & Bentley, 1949; Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005) to create a space for making meaning from experiences. Second, participants and I made meaning by making connections. Making connections reflected and aided an understanding of self, others, and professional milieus; 3) stories demonstrated how our meaning-making was guided by individual's reservoir of prior experiences, knowledge, and language; 4) stories also revealed how each meaning-maker referred to "touchstone" events from her prior experiences to guide her decision-making, ongoing meaning-making of experiences, and sense of self; and 5) stories demonstrated that each meaning-maker read, interpreted, and composed experiences *as* texts from her dominant stance or orientation toward those experiences.

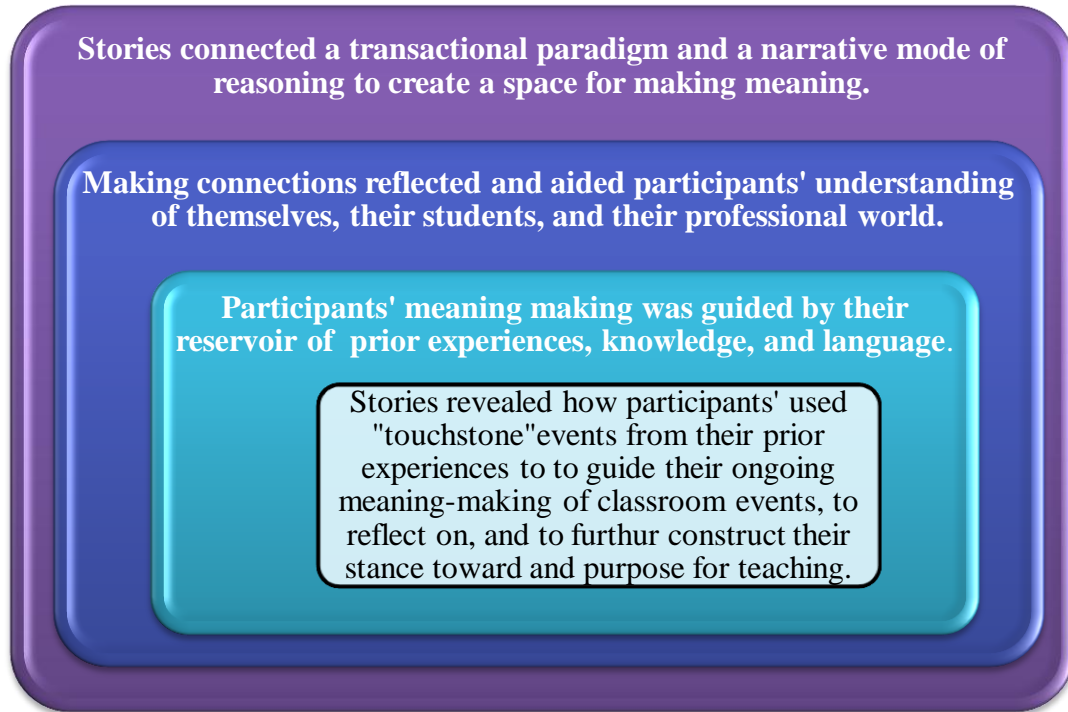


Figure 11: Meanings Made from Research Events

Following the description of these four meanings, I presented stories that demonstrated how I and each of the participants made meaning from events and that illustrated the meanings I made from research events. Each story was drawn from the field texts collected for this inquiry, interpreted in light of participants' individual narrative histories, and the tensions and turning points each communicated through their stories. Interpretations and stories were verified by participants during numerous phases of the research process.

Transacting, I have come to better understand the meanings I constructed and communicated in the theoretical framework called *Classroom Literacy*. I now reconsider Classroom Literacy in light of my understanding of how two beginning English teachers made meaning from classroom events and how I made meaning from research events.

(Re)Considering *Classroom Literacy*

Classroom Literacy is a theory of what I think *happens* in classrooms. Built into this theoretical construct are the following assertions: 1) teaching involves reading and composing the classroom situation as text; 2) teachers are readers, writers, and communicators who make meaning from their classrooms as texts; 3) as readers, writers, and communicators, teachers engage in literate thinking within the complex environment of a classroom in order to create educative experiences for students, to assess their teaching and their students' understanding, to understand teaching and learning, and to compose an identity as a teacher.

Surely, the above statement is quite “packed”; it is a statement of meaning, woven together by connections between countless transactions I have made as I read classrooms, teachers, students, conversations, research, scholarship, students' writings, my own thinking and writing, schools, educational communities, literature, pictures, images, lessons, questions, responses, ideas, assessments, and my own and others' processes of understanding *as* texts and composed understandings of those texts over time. It is to unpacking or unraveling this web of meaning and then reassembling it in light of this narrative inquiry that I now turn my attention. More specifically, investigating two beginning teachers' meaning making from classroom events through the stories they lived and told has led to additional understanding about the core tenet that teachers are readers and writers of the classroom as text that I now turn my attention in order to begin to explicate how this narrative inquiry has confirmed, challenged, and furthered my

thinking about teachers' classroom literacy. I first reconsider the idea of teachers as readers and then teachers as writers of the classroom as text.

Teachers as readers of the classroom as text. When conceptualizing *the Classroom Literacy* framework, I borrowed Durkin's (1993) notion of external and internal texts to describe what I hypothesized might be at work when teachers read their classrooms as texts. Durkin (as cited in Beers, 2003) describes the printed or fixed words on a page as an *external text* and the ongoing interpretation of that printed text to be an *internal text*. As a reader proceeds through a printed text such as a poem or a scientific study, she or he uses background knowledge to make sense of the words printed. This sense-making continues as a reader progresses through the text, adjusting her or his understanding as s/he reads, adapting initial understanding in light of additional textual detail and the continued transactional process (Beers, 2003; Langer, 1995; Langer & Close, 2001; Rosenblatt, 1978, 2005). From this premise, I asserted that in the context of the classroom, a teacher reads various texts or communicative signs—for example: a student's posture or gestures (Rosenblatt, 2005; Roth, 2001), the subtext of a student's question (Christenbury, 2006), a meaningful pause, a facial expression (Rosenblatt, 2005), the extent of understanding in a student's response, a collective sense of excitement or confusion, the direction of a class-wide discussion, the curricular texts in use, allusions, metaphors, and images laden in a student's writing or speech (Cooper & Simonds, 2007; Newbury & Hoskins, 2010; Sperling, 1994, 1996)—and like readers, uses her or his background knowledge and prior experiences to construct an internal text as she or he makes meaning from these communicative signs or texts during the classroom experience (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005; Smagorinsky, 2001, 2008). As

Smagorinsky (2001) has written about meaning-making while reading, “[t]he reader’s construction of these new texts is the source of meaning in reading” (p. 134). Applying Smagorinsky’s assertion about student readers of printed texts, I hypothesized that the internal text a teacher composes while reading the communicative signs in a classroom environment is what Langer calls “meaning-in-motion” (2011a , p.17) or an ongoing envisionment (Langer 1995, 2011a, 2011b). This internal text is the meaning the teacher is in the act of composing. I also imagined from these premises and the countless observations of teaching situations preceding these statements that the meaning a teacher makes from transacting with the classroom as text during particular situations potentially informs the teacher’s pedagogical and management decisions, assessment of student learning, future instruction, and even her or his identity as a teacher.

Attending to two beginning teachers’ meaning-making through the stories they lived and told illuminated how these two beginning teachers read their classrooms as texts. Their stories and meaning-making process illustrated in general and specific ways how these participants read external communicative signs and constructed ongoing internal texts; their internal texts reflected the meanings they made from reading communicative signs in particular contexts.

More specifically, the stories that these two beginning English teachers told and lived indicate that each participant’s attention was drawn to reading and composing an understanding of their *students*, their *lessons*, and their individual ongoing *professional development* as texts within their classroom contexts.

Meaning I made from their stories also extended the original conception of classroom literacy to recognize various elements in the *professional environment* as texts that participants read, interpreted, and responded to in particular professional contexts. For instance, participants' stories demonstrated how they composed meaning from reading *conversations with colleagues* as texts, *parent-teacher conferences and conversations* as texts, *faculty meetings* as texts, *directives and mandates* as texts, the *physical makeup* and general *school environment* as text, *assessments and evaluations* of their own and their colleagues' teaching as texts, schools' *routines and ceremonies* as texts. In the case of this latter category of professional contexts, the meaning teachers made was not necessarily related to teaching and learning, but to the broader meaning of the teaching culture, what it means to be a teacher, and their relative position to their understanding of the teaching culture and the extent they imagined themselves continuing to exist and grow in this culture. Given that Geertz (1973), an anthropologist, likened culture to a text that people interpret, these teachers' reading and interpreting their professional environment as a cultural text in which the aforementioned are signs, appears to be a logical extension of what I initially proposed through the Classroom Literacy framework.

Participants' stories also depicted conflicts and challenges related to events in which the participants read the classroom as text and made meanings that differed from the meanings others—such as their students, colleagues, or supervisors—made. These conflicting “readings” were typically associated with stories of negative critical events in participants' stories. However, when others' meanings conveyed readings congruous with

their own, Helen and Amy characterized these as positive and encouraging through stories of positive critical events.

Reading students as texts. The stories participants lived and told about their classroom experiences were saturated with examples of specific student-generated communicative signs that these two teacher participants read and made meaning from. In stories related to teaching and learning events, these signs seemed to be interpreted primarily for purposes of 1) gauging students' attention and understanding while participants taught and or 2) for managing a classroom environment conducive to teaching and learning before, during, and after teaching situations.

Reading students to gauge students' attention and understanding. In the stories participants told about teaching events, Helen and Amy frequently spoke of student-generated communicative signs that these teachers interpreted to assess students' individual and or collective attention and understanding during teaching events. The types of student-generated communicative signs included, for instance: 1) students' body language such as turning away from the teacher, slumping down in a seat, sauntering into the classroom, leaning forward, and hunching over; 2) facial expressions, particularly those that denoted frustration or confusion such as furrowed brows; 3) attention and expression in students' eyes that communicated that students were engaged or understanding, and looks that communicated exasperation such as eye-rolling or confusion through "stink eye" expressions; 4) the tone in students' voices or body language; 4) students' overall attitude; 5) students' expressions such as laughter,

exclamations, and sighs; 6) sensed tension, confusion, lack of understanding or joy; 7) students' questions, comments, and verbal responses and reactions.

Teachers as Writers of the Classroom as Text

As a “writer,” a teacher constructs her or his understanding of teaching, of student learning, of self as teacher, and composes educative experiences for students in a transactional relationship with the texts she or he reads (Dewey, 1938; Grossman & Shulman, 1994; Rosenblatt, 1978; Roth, 1998). Like writers facing a blank page, a teacher draws from her or his background knowledge, resources at hand, and knowledge of the intended audience (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994, 2005) in order to compose situations, assignments, or other learning experiences for students. And similar to the way that writers look to new drafts of their composition when they cut, reorganize, and add to their work (Murray, 1982), teachers compose next texts (Smagorinsky, 2001) as they “reflect in action” and “reflect on action” (Grossman & Shulman, 1994, p. 10), revising lessons as well as their understanding of curriculum, conception of teaching, of assessment of self as teacher, assessment of student learning, and of students as learners.

The two teachers in this study each described a point in a lesson where they were aware of their students' communicative signs—what students were saying, students' facial expressions, body language, and attitudes such as frustration or curiosity—and they were also aware of the direction that they had anticipated their lesson going in. However, in, for example, both Amy's basketball poem lesson and in Helen's “push button” reflection on her lesson about first impressions, they each recognized communicative cues or signs from the classroom, and then adjusted their teaching in response to the signs

they observed and interpreted. They recognized the external text—students’ communicative signs—and they adjusted their internal understanding about the total classroom situation, and recognize a choice that they could make. They each described how they could keep going or turn, shift directions in response to what they are reading and making meaning from.

These examples of participants’ reading their lesson as a Helen’s thinking in the “Push Button” story²⁸ she told during one of our recorded conversations about her teaching appears to be oriented inward; she is listening to her own point, thinking about the learning situation, the direction she wishes to take the lesson in, and she recognizes a point around which she can help students to understand by telling a story. Amy’s orientation in her basketball poem story is oriented outward toward students’ responses; from the meaning she makes of them, she creates a storied space for dialogue and an openness to discovering meaning characteristic of conversation. Both teachers, to varying extents, are aware of students’ verbal and non-verbal cues, their lesson as they had envisioned it in the beginning, and the moment that they are in. They both explain how they mentally pause to consider their choices. They imagine the possible directions that they could go in. This happens quickly and mentally as they continue to attend to students and the lesson in the moment of instruction. The lesson does not pause as the teachers stop to think; rather, there are two layers of “happening” taking place—the physical space of the classroom and the cognitive space of the mind.

²⁸ This conversation was included in Chapter Four.

My thought here it isn't that these teachers as readers are making a "mental picture" or even a mental snapshot of the classroom in that moment—although they might be—it is that there is a mental space in which they compose an internal text. This is the space that happens when an engaged reader's eyes are moving over words and the mind shifts away from the actual words to, while reading, create a vision in the space of the mind. In other words, active readers are thinking and reading at the same time. They are gathering and interpreting words on a page while the mind visualizes, remembers, connects, wonders, imagines, postulates, criticizes, etc. Participants in this study described moments when they were actively engaged in the process of reading the classroom as text and composing it.

(Re)Envisioning *Classroom Literacy*

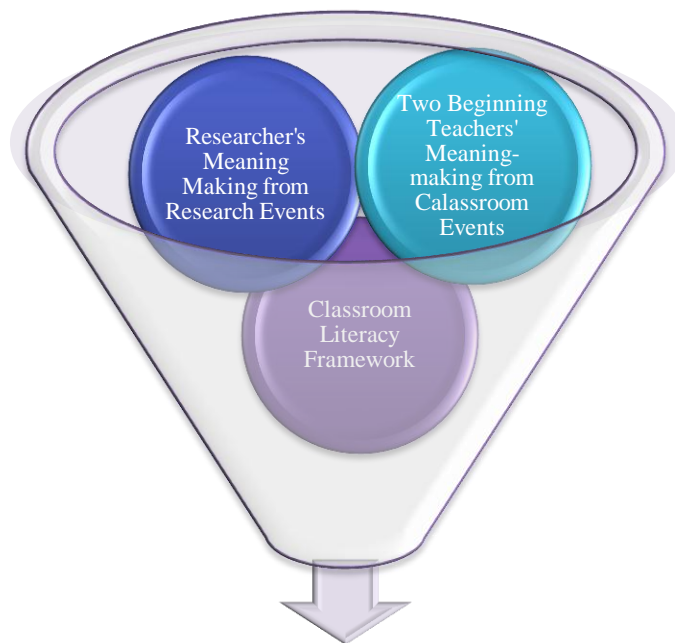
Reconsidering the Classroom Literacy framework in light of participants' linguistic transactions illuminates how these two beginning English teachers' stories of making meaning while teaching develops the Classroom Literacy framework by demonstrating: 1) how these two teachers made meaning before, during, and after classroom events; 2) how when teaching, they seemed to be reading *and* composing an understanding of the classroom teaching and learning situation *as* text; 3) that like reading a printed text, teaching was "seeing," or envisioning and 4) how their meaning-making suggested they built envisionments to both gather information and to explore a horizon of possibilities (Langer 1991, 2011a, 2011b).

Classroom Literacy is an extension of Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading and writing (Rosenblatt, 1969, 1978, 1982, 1985, 1986, 1993, 1994, 1998, 2005).

It adopts Rosenblatt's conception of *making meaning, event, transaction, reader, and text*, and extends these terms by focusing on teachers as readers and writers or producers of classrooms *as texts*. *Text* is not just printed words on a page as more familiar associations of the word might convey, but as the diverse verbal and non-verbal communicative signs in the context of a classroom.

In the Classroom Literacy framework, teachers are readers, writers, and communicators who acquire and use literate thinking and skills for educative purposes. Teaching is a meaning-making event. Classroom Literacy includes the following tenets: (a) teachers, like readers, draw from their linguistic-experiential reservoir (Rosenblatt, 2005) to guide their process of interpreting and understanding classroom events; (b) teachers, like readers, are guided by the stances they adopt; (c) teachers, like readers, compose understanding in social contexts; (d) teaching, like reading, is a transactional experience; (e) and teacher education, like English education, can benefit from studying the meaning-making processes of "readers" Thinking about teaching through the Classroom Literacy framework includes attending to teachers' cognitive and social processes for arriving at a meaningful understanding. As a transactional experience, teaching can shape a teacher's professional identity, knowledge, and view of others, similar to how the exploration of literature through reading transactionally influences one's sense of self, the text, and the world beyond . Finally, just as a transactional view of reading positions readers as composers of a new text as they read (Rosenblatt, 1978, 2005; Smagorinsky, 2008), the Classroom literacy framework views teachers as composers of understanding of their teaching experiences.

I mentioned in Chapter One, existing literature from teachers and teacher educators who write about teaching assumes that teachers do read their classrooms like text, and the implication is that they are reading students communicative signs; however, this is expressed as an assumption (e.g. Allen, 2000; Burke, 2008; Christenbury, 2006; Perl, 1994, Tobin 1994, 2001), or, as a statement of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966, 2009). Reconsidering these assumptions or tacit understandings in light of the Classroom Literacy theory provides a way to begin to understand how teachers make meaning from such communicative signs. Figure 13 represents a synthesis of how readers—the two beginning English teachers and I, the researcher—made meaning from reading the classroom as text.



"Readers" made meaning through the continuous construction of a conceptual text, simultaneously read and composed in social and situational contexts, guided by an individual's stance and reservoir of knowledge, experience, and language. Meanings made reflected ongoing understanding. Made meanings were used for framing both a point of reference from which additional understanding is sought and/or a point of departure through which exploration and discovery is initiated.

Figure 12: Making Meaning from the Classroom as Text

Part of what makes learning to teach so challenging is that the classroom is a complex environment in which teachers make minute-by-minute decisions and must balance the needs of individuals, the group, the curricular and professional demands, and so much more (Jackson, 1968, 1990). Continuing to research how teachers read and make meaning from the classroom as text—particularly students’ verbal and non-verbal communicative signs could provide teacher educators with opportunities to develop strategies for attending to particular cues. Additional research could also help teacher educators as well as practicing and prospective teachers to develop a language to describe these types of texts and the mental moves teachers could or do employ to make meaning of them. Considering that thinking-aloud is often cited as an effective strategy for making the invisible process of reading more visible to readers of printed texts, it seems likely that developing think aloud models for reading classroom texts could aid teachers’ understanding of the collective and individual needs of their students, could help promote metacognition and confidence, and could aid teachers’ ability to share strategic approaches to making meaning. Presently, the field of education is broadening its view of texts and the ways that educators can help students to develop literacy in discipline-specific ways (e.g., Draper et al., 2010; Langer, 2011a). Nevertheless, no documented acknowledgement or strategies exist for helping *teachers* to develop discipline-specific literacy practices. There is a need for teacher educators to attend to teachers’ needs, strategies, and development as readers of their classrooms as texts.

Stepping back from the study, I reconsider the process and product of this narrative inquiry within the broader knowledge base of reading and literacy in English language arts. In so doing, I see connections between distinct yet related ideas in the

literature. Reconsidering the meanings I made from research events in this study (in Chapter Four) and the *Classroom Literacy* theoretical framework which they speak to, in light of the connections I see to research and scholarship from Wilhelm (1997, 2004), Langer (1991, 2011a), and Harste (2000) provides a new space to consider additional horizons of possibilities (Langer, 1991, 2011a, 2011b) or frames of expectations (Popper, 1962) for teacher education .

Research and inquiry are continuous, the voices of Dewey, Rosenblatt, and Clandinin and Connelly's remind me; I am driven by internal curiosity to more fully understand what I have begun to know and do through this narrative inquiry; I am compelled by the discussion of ideas happening in the community of researchers and scholars surrounding the work that I do; I am nudged to take action by the daily reminder that what teachers know and do matters. Continuing to understand how teachers know and do will help make the largely invisible work more visible are the crux upon which our nations' schools and the learners they help to shape can be lifted up to consider horizons of possibilities that will continue to aid human understanding

Rosenblatt's transactional theory was facilitated by the framework that Dewey's concept of transaction provided. Rosenblatt discovered in Dewey and Bentley's term *transaction* the idea that a knower, knowing, and the known are aspects of one process, that human exists in an ecological relationship with her or his environment. In this epistemological frame and in this term, Rosenblatt found a way to express what she had previously known inchoately based on her observations of readers working through texts. From that point, she sought to more fully understand how readers make the meanings

called “poems.” Rosenblatt built upon the philosophical principles of Dewey to illuminate how readers make meaning of printed texts. Through continued observation of readers and printed texts, Rosenblatt discovered a theoretical model for all modes of reading.

In Rosenblatt’s works, especially *Literature as Exploration* (1938, 1995) and *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (1978), I found that her vision of literature to explore and understand gave words to my inchoate and tacit understanding of what I understood about reading and teaching. From her transactional framework, and observations of beginning teachers writing and talking about their early teaching experiences, I made connections that led me to wonder how teachers and students make the meanings we call “learning.” This narrative inquiry sought to understand how two beginning teachers made meaning of classroom events. Understanding garnered from this study helps me to develop and revise my own ongoing thinking about how people read and make meaning from texts. It is my hope that any future research and scholarship will build upon, revise, and develop the meaning I have been making so that prospective and practicing teacher might find in a framework words and ways of thinking that facilitate their understanding of teaching, that help them to both make connections to their rich reservoirs of life experiences and to broaden their horizon of expectations to critically consider learning from diverse perspectives in order to better facilitate their students’ exploration and understanding of life’s many “texts.”

Like Rosenblatt sought to bring into the spotlight the active role reader plays when making meaning while reading, I have sought to illuminate the active role the

teacher plays when making meaning in relation to teaching. In so doing, I have discovered something more. I have rediscovered a model for thinking about reading. Becoming aware of the active meaning-making process teachers may engage in as well as the transactional nature of teaching (and learning), is a step toward the kind of wakefulness and purposeful transactions that can lead to research, teaching, and practice that engages our nation's teachers and students in the kind of literate thinking (Langer 1987, 2011a) that fosters the ability to consider what has been, to recognize the possibilities and choices in the present, and to imagine a horizon of possibilities for the future.

References

- Acosta, T. P. (1976). My mother pieced quilts. Retrieved from <http://answers.com/topic/my-mother-pieced-quilts-poem-1>.
- Acosta, T. P. (1983). My mother pieced quilts. In J. Bankier & D. Lashgari (Eds.), *Women poets of the world* (393-395). New York: Macmillan.
- Allen, J. (1995). *It's never too late: Leading adolescents to lifelong literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Barnes, D. R. (1992). *From communication to curriculum* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Beattie, M. (1995). New prospects for teacher education: Narrative ways of knowing teaching and teacher learning. *Educational Research*, 37(1), 53-70.
- Beattie, M. (2000). Narratives of professional learning: Becoming a teacher and learning to teach. *Journal of Educational Enquiry*, 1(2), 1-23.
- Beers, K. (2003). *When kids can't read, what teachers can do: A guide for teachers 6-12*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Beers, K. (Ed.). (2005). *Voices from the middle: Remembering Louise Rosenblatt*, 12(3), 1-69.

- Beers, K. (2006). Reaching struggling readers—Adolescent literacy: What works and why. Professional development workshop conducted at the annual Florida Council Teachers of English conference. Orlando, FL.
- Beers, K., & Probst, R. E. (2008). Adolescent Literacy: Five strategies and tech tools you want to know. Florida Council Teachers of English Institute for Professional Development. Orlando, FL.
- Beers, K., Probst, R. E., & Rief, L. (Eds.). (2006). *Adolescent literacy: Turning promise into practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Bentley, A. F. (1954). The fiction of retinal image. In S. Ratner (Ed.), Boston: Beacon Press.
- Berliner, D. C. (1986). In pursuit of the expert pedagogue. *Educational Researcher* 15(7), 5-13.
- Biancarosa, C., & Snow, C. E. (2006). Reading next—A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Bloome, D., & Egan-Robertson, A. (1993). The social construction of intertextuality in classroom reading and writing. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 28, 305-333.
- Bohl, N. (1995). Professionally administered critical incident debriefings for police officers. In M. Kurke (Ed.), *Police psychology into the 21st century* (pp.). Washington, DC: APA Publishers.

- Bradbury, R. (1953). *Fahrenheit 451*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Bransford, J., Darling-Hammond, L., & LePage, P. (2005). Introduction. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 1-39). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bransford, J., Derry, S., Berliner, D., Hammerness, K., & Beckett, K. L. (2005). Theories of learning and their roles in teaching. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 40-87). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Britton, J. (1970). *Language and Learning*. London: Penguin.
- Brochner, A. P. (2005). Nine perspectives of research: Interpretive and Narrative. In J. L. Paul (Ed.), *Introduction to the philosophies of research and criticism in education and the social sciences*. (pp. 65-67). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Bruner, J. (1985). Narrative and paradigmatic ways of thought. In E. Eisner (Ed.), *Learning and teaching the ways of knowing* (84th year-book of the National Society for the Study of Education, pp 97-115). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1987). Life as Narrative. *Social Research*, 54(1) 11-32.

- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Burke, J. (2008). *The English teacher's companion: A complete guide to classroom, curriculum, and the profession* (3rd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Burke, J., & Krajicek, J. (2006). *Letters to a new teacher: A month-by-month guide to the year ahead*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Calderhead, J. (1991). The nature and growth of knowledge in student teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 7(5/6), 531-535.
- Campesino, M. (2007). Homicide bereavement: Reflections on the therapeutic relationship in trauma research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(4), 541-553. doi: 10.1177/1077800406297677
- Carr, D. (1986). *Time, History and Narrative*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Carter, K. (1993). The place of story in the study of teaching and teacher education. *Educational Researcher*, 22(1), 5-12, 18.
- Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and Constructivist methods. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 509-535). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 651-679). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Christenbury, L. (2006). *Making the journey: Being and becoming a teacher of English language arts* (3rd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Clandinin, D. J. (1985). Personal practical knowledge: A study of teachers' classroom images. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 15(4) 361-385.
- Clandinin, D. J. (1986). *Classroom practices: Teacher images in action*. London: Falmer Press.
- Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative Inquiry: A methodology for studying lived experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 27, 44-54.
- Clandinin, D. J. (2007). Preface. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. ix-xvii). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1995). Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes. In J. F. Soltis (Ed.), *Advances in contemporary educational thought* (Vol. 14). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Clandinin, D. J., Pushor, D., & Orr, A. M. (2007). Navigating sites for narrative inquiry. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 58(1), 21-35.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Rosiek, J. (2007). Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry: Borderland spaces and tensions. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 35-75). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Cochran-Smith, M., Feiman-Nemser, S., & McIntyre, D. J. (Eds.). (2008). *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1999). Chapter 8: Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher Learning in Communities. *Review of Research in Education*, 24(1), 249-305.
- Connell, J. M. (2008). The emergence of pragmatic philosophy's influence on literary theory: Making meaning with texts from a transactional perspective. *Educational Theory*, 58(1), 102-122.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1985) Personal practical knowledge and the modes of knowing: Relevance for teaching and learning. In E. W. Eisner (Ed.), *Learning and teaching the ways of knowing* (pp. 174-198). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1988). *Teachers as curriculum planners: Narratives of experience*. New York: Teachers' College Press.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2000). Teacher education—A question of teacher knowledge. In A. Scott & J. Freeman-Moir (Eds.), *Tomorrow's teachers: International and critical perspectives on teacher education* (pp. 89-105). Christchurch, NZ: Canterbury University Press.

- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In J. L. Green, G. Camilli, P. B. Elmore, A. Skukauskaite, & E. Grace (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (477-487). Washington, D. C.: American Educational Research Association.
- Connolly, K. (2007). Introduction to Part 2: Exploring narrative inquiry practices. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(4), 450-453. doi: 10.1177/1077800407300767
- Connolly, K., & Reilly, R. C. (2007). Emergent issues when researching trauma: A confessional tale. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(4), 522-540. doi: 10.1177/1077800406297678
- Coles, R. (1989). *The call of stories: Teaching and the moral imagination*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Cooper, P. J., & Simonds, C. J. (2007). *Communication for the classroom teacher* (8th ed.). Boston: Pearson, Allyn and Bacon.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: CA, Sage.
- Crowe, A., & Whitlock, T. (1999). The education of teacher educators: A self-study of the professional development of two doctoral students in teacher education. A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). How teacher education matters. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(3), 166-173.

- Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dewey, J. (1902). *The child and the curriculum*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York: Perigee.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Dewey, J. (1958). *Experience and nature*. New York: Dover.
- Dewey, J. (1981). *The later works, 1925-1953: Vol. 10. Art as experience* (J.A. Boydston, Ed.). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, J., & Bentley, A. F. (1949). *Knowing and the known*. Boston: Beacon.
- Draper, R. J., Broomhead, P., Jensen, A. P., Nokes, J. D., Siebert, D. (Eds.).
(Re)Imagining content-area literacy instruction. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Durkin, D. (1993). *Teaching them to read* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Dyson, A. H., & Genshi, C. (1994). *The need for story: Cultural diversity in the classroom and community*. Urbana, IL: National Council Teachers of English.

- Edge, C. (2004). Toward a twenty-first century transactional theory. Unpublished manuscript, University of South Florida, Tampa.
- Edge, C. (2008a). Classroom literacy: moving beyond the boundaries of “Reading Next”
Toward a grounded theory for understanding expert and novice teachers’
meaning-making of the “classroom as text” in high school language arts
classrooms. Unpublished manuscript, University of South Florida, Tampa.
- Edge, C. (2008b). On text, contexts, and teachers: An interpretation of *Schoolteacher*.
Unpublished manuscript, University of South Florida, Tampa.
- Edge, C. (2008c). Reading student teaching: Stance as a source of meaning-making in
three high school language arts interns’ perception of role in the classroom.
Unpublished manuscript, University of South Florida, Tampa.
- Edge, C. (2009a). Connections as a transactional common ground for literacies: Bridging
readers and “texts” in the story of internship. Unpublished manuscript, University
of South Florida, Tampa.
- Edge, C. (2009b). “(Mis)reading the classroom text: A two-act play on the tensions of
learning to teach.” A poster presentation for the American Educational Research
Association. April 16, 2009. San Diego, CA.
- Eisner, E. (1985). Aesthetic modes of knowing. In E.. Eisner (Ed.), *Learning and
teaching the ways of knowing* (pp. 23-36). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Elbaz, F. (1991). Research on teachers’ knowledge: The evolution of a discourse.
Journal of Curriculum Studies, 23, 1-9.

- Elbaz-Luwisch, F. (2007). Studying teachers' lives and experience. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 357-382). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Elliott, H. (1997). The use of diaries in sociological research on health experience. *Sociological Research Online*, 2(2). Retrieved December 29, 2009 from <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/2/2/7.html>.
- Ellis, V. (2002). *Liam's stories: A narrative inquiry into some forms of narration in the preverbal child*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada.
- Fay, J. (2000). A narrative approach to critical and sub-critical incident debriefings. Published dissertation, American School of Professional Psychology. Retrieved November 22, 2009 from <http://www.narrativeapproaches.com/narrative%20papers%20folder/narrativepolicing.htm>.
- Fenstermacher, G. D. (1994). The knower and the known: The nature of knowledge in research on teaching in teacher knowledge research. In L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), *Review of research in education: Part 1* (pp. 3-56). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Florio-Ruane, S. (2008). More light: An argument for complexity in studies of teaching and teacher education. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D. J. McIntyre,

- & K. E. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (3rd ed.) (1152-1163). New York: Routledge.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury.
- Gage, N. L. (Ed.). (1963). *Handbook of research on teaching: A project of the American Educational Research Association*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. *Educational research: An introduction* (8th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligence*. New York: Basic.
- Gee, J. P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (2nd ed.). London, Falmer.
- Gee, J. P. (1985). The narrativization of experience in the oral style. *Journal of Education*, 167(1), 9-35.
- Gee, J. P. (2008). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gibbs, G. (2007). *Analyzing qualitative data*. London: Sage.
- Giorgi, A. (1975). An application of phenomenological method in psychology. In A. Giorgi, C. Fischer, & E. Murray (Eds.), *Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 82-103). Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.

- Goodman, N. (1984). *Of mind and other matters*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Greene, M. (1978). *Landscapes of learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Grossman, P. L., & Shulman, L. S. (1994). Knowing, believing, and the teaching of English. In T. Shanahan (Ed.), *Teachers Thinking, Teachers Knowing: Reflections on Literacy and Language Education* (pp. 3-22). Urbana, IL: National Council Teachers of English.
- Hargreaves, D. H. (1991). Coherence and manageability: Reflections on the National Curriculum and cross-curricular provision. *The Curriculum Journal*, 2, 33-41.
- Harste, J. C. (2000). "Six points of departure." In B. Berghoff, K. A. Egawa, J. C. Harste, & B. T. Hoonan (Eds.), *Beyond reading and writing: Inquiry, curriculum, and multiple ways of knowing* (pp. 1-16). Urbana, IL: National Council Teachers of English.
- Hatan, G., & Inagaki (1986). courses of expertise. In H. Stevenson, H. Azuma, & K. Hakuta (Eds.). *Child Development and Education in Japan*, (pp. 262-272). New York: W. H. Freeman.
- Hammerness, K., Darling-Hammond, L., Bransford, J., Berliner, D., Cochran-Smith, M., McDonald, M., & Zeichner, K. (2005). How teachers learn and develop. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 358-389). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Hillocks, G. Jr. (1999). *Ways of thinking, ways of teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hogan, T., Rabinowitz, M., & Craven, J. A. (2003). Representation in teaching: Inferences from research of expert and novice teachers. *Educational Psychologist*, 38(4), 235-247.
- Hookway, N. (2008). 'Entering the blogosphere': some strategies for using blogs in social research.: *Qualitative Research*, 8(1), 91-113.
- Houston, W. R., Haberman, M., & Sikula, J. (Eds.) (1990). *Handbook of research on teacher education*. New York: Macmillan.
- Howe, K. R. (2009). Isolating science from the humanities: The third dogma of educational research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(4), 766-784.
- Howey, K. (1996). Designing coherent and effective teacher education programs. In J. Silula, T. J. Buttery, & E. Guyton (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp.143-170). New York: MacMillan.
- Howey, K. R., & Zimpher, N. L. (1989). *Profiles of preservice teacher education: Inquiry into the nature of programs*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Huber, M. (2008). *Narrative curriculum making as identity making: Intersecting family, cultural and school landscapes*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta (Canada). Retrieved October 12, 2009, from Dissertations & Theses: A&I. (AAT NR46337).

- Huber, J., & Clandinin, D. J. (2002). Ethical dilemmas in relational narrative inquiry with children. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(6), 785-803.
- Hurt, H. T., Scott, M. D., & McCroskey, J. C. (1978). *Communication in the classroom*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Jackson, P. W. (1968). *Life in classrooms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Wilson.
- Jackson, P. W. (1990). *Life in Classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- James, W. (1890). *The principles of psychology*. New York: Holt.
- Johnson, M. (1987). *The body in the mind: the bodily basis of meaning, imagination, and reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Karolides, N. (1999). Theory and practice: An interview with Louise M. Rosenblatt. *Language Arts* 77(2), 158-170.
- Keene, E. O., & Zimmermann, S. (1997). *Mosaic of thought: Teaching comprehension in a reader's workshop*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Keene, E. O., & Zimmermann, S. (2007). *Mosaic of thought: The power of comprehension strategy instruction*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Kelchtermans, G. (1993). Teachers and their career story: A biographical perspective on professional development. In C. Day, J. Calderhead, & P. Denicolo (Eds.), *Research on teacher thinking: Understanding professional development*. (pp. 198-220). London: Falmer Press.

- Kennedy, M. (1999). The role of preservice teacher education. In L. Darling-Hammond and G. Sykes (Eds.), *Teaching as the learning profession: Handbook of policy and practice* (pp. 54-85). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Kilbourn, B. (2006). The qualitative doctoral dissertation proposal. *Teachers College Record, 108*(4), 529-576.
- Knowles, J. G., & Cole, A. L. (1994). *Through preservice teachers' eyes: Exploring field experiences through narrative and inquiry*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Koehler, V. (1985). Research on preservice teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education 36*, 23-30.
- Kowalchuk, E. (1994). Novice and expert differences in art teaching: The effects of knowledge and experience. *Arts Education Policy Review 94*(5), 16-20.
- Kramp, M. K. (2004). Exploring life and experience through narrative inquiry. In K. de Marrais & S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for research: Methods o inquiry in education and the social sciences* (pp. 103-122). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

- Labaree, D. F. (2000). On the nature of teaching and teacher education: Difficult practices that look easy. *Journal of Teacher Education* 51(3), 228-233.
- Labaree, D. F., (2003). The peculiar problems of preparing educational researchers. *Educational Researcher*, 32(4) 13-22.
- Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the inner city*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Labov, W. (2001). Uncovering the event structure of a narrative. Paper presented at the Georgetown University Round Table, Washington DC. Retrieved May 25, 2011, from <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/uesn.pdf>.
- Labov, W., & Waletzky, J. (1967). Narrative Analysis. In J. Helm (Ed.), *Essays on verbal and visual arts* (pp. 12-44). Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Langer, J. A. (1987). A sociocognitive perspective on literacy. In J. A. Langer (Ed.), *Language, literacy, and culture: Issues of society and schooling* (1-20). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- Langer, J. A. (1995). *Envisioning literature: Literary understanding and literature instruction*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Langer, J. A. (1998). Thinking and doing literature: An eight-year study. *English Journal* 87(2) 16-23.
- Langer, J. A. (2011a). *Envisioning knowledge: Building literacy in the academic disciplines*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

- Langer, J. A. (2011b). *Envisioning literature: Literary understanding and literature instruction* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Langer, J. A., & Close, E. (2001). *Improving literacy understanding through classroom conversation*. Albany, NY: Center on English Learning and Achievement.
- Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2007). Sampling “the new” in new literacies. In M. Knobel, & C. Lankshear (Eds.), *A new literacies sampler* (pp. 1-24). New York: Peter Lang.
- Lather, P. (1995). The validity of angels: Interpretive and textual strategies in researching the lives of women with HIV/AIDS. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1, 41-68.
- Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative research: Reading, analysis and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Nine perspectives of research: Constructivism as a theoretical and interpretive stance. In J. L. Paul (Ed.). *Introduction to the philosophies of research and criticism in education and the social sciences*. (pp. 60-65). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. (2007). *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Lotman, Y. M. (1988). Text within a text. *Soviet Psychology*, 26(3), 32-51.
- McDonald, J. P. (1992). *Teaching: Making sense of an uncertain craft*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- MacIntyre, A. (1981). *After virtue: A study in moral theory*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Maclellan, E. (2008). Pedagogical literacy: What it means and what it allows. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24, 1986-1992.
- Marinaccio, P. (Interviewer) & Rosenblatt, R. (Interviewee). (1999). Louise Rosenblatt Interview: Distinguished Visiting Scholar. University of Miami. 14 March, 1999. Retrieved from <http://www.education.miami.edu/ep/rosenblatt/>.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McKenna, M. C., & Robinson, R. D. (2009) *Teaching through text: Reading and writing in the content areas*. Boston: Pearson.
- Measor, L. (1985). Critical incidents in the classroom: Identities, choices and careers. In S. J. Ball and I. Goodson (Eds.), *Teachers' Lives and Careers* (pp. 1-26). London: Falmer Press.

- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Murray, D. M. (1982). *Learning by teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Murray Orr, A. (2005). *Stories to live by: Book conversations as spaces for attending to children's lives in school*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, Canada.
Retrieved November 16, 2009, from Dissertations & Theses: A&I. (Publication No. AAT NR08704).
- National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (1996). *What matters most: Teaching for America's future*. NY: Author.
- National Center for Research on Teacher Education (1988). Teacher education and learning to teach: A research agenda. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(6), 27-32.
- National Council Teachers of English. (2005). Position statement on multimodal literacies. Urbana, IL: National Council Teachers of English. Retrieved April 27, 2009 from <http://ncte.org/positions/statements/multimodalliteracies>.
- National Council Teachers of English. (2008). The NCTE definition of 21st century literacies. NCTE Position Statement. Urbana, IL: National Council Teachers of English. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/21stcentdefinition>.

- National Research Council (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school* (Expanded ed.). Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- National Research Council (2004). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school* (Expanded ed.). Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- Nelson, M. H. (1993). Teachers' stories: An analysis of the themes. In C. Day, J. Calderhead, & P. Denicolo (Eds.), *Research on teacher thinking: Understanding professional development*. (pp. 151-166). London: Falmer Press.
- Newbury, J., & Hoskins, M. L. (2010). Making meaning in context: the puzzling relationship between image and metaphor. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 23(3), 167-194.
- Nicol, J. J. (2008). Creating vocative texts. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(3), 316-333.
- Noddings, N. (2005). Nine Perspectives of Research: Pragmatism." In J. L. Paul (Ed.). *Introduction to the philosophies of research and criticism in education and the social sciences*. (pp. 57-60). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Collins, K. M. T. (2007). A typology of mixed methods sampling designs in social science research. *The Qualitative Report*, 12(2), 281-316.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leech, N. J. (2007). Sampling designs in qualitative research: Making the sampling process more public. *The Qualitative Report*, 12(2), 238-254. Retrieved March 20, 2008 from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR12-2/onwuegbuzie1.pdf>.

- Paul, J. L. (Ed.). (2005). *Introduction to the philosophies of research and criticism in education and the social sciences*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Paul, J. L., Graffam, B., & Fowler, K. (2005). Perspectivism and critique of research. In J. L. Paul (Ed.), *Introduction to the philosophies of research and criticism in education and the social sciences*. (pp. 43-48). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Peirce, C. S. (1933, 1935). *Collected papers* (Vol. 3, Vol. 6). P. Weiss & C. Hartshorne, (Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Perl, S. (1994). Composing texts, composing lives. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64(4), 427-449.
- Peshkin, A. (2000). The nature of interpretation in qualitative research. *Educational Researcher*, 29(5), 5-9. doi: 10.3102/0013189X029009005
- Pinnegar, S., & Daynes, J. G. (2007). Locating narrative inquiry historically: Thematics in the turn to narrative. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 3-34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Polanyi, M. (1958). *Personal knowledge: Towards a post-critical philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Polanyi, M. (1966). *The tacit dimension*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Polanyi, M. (2009). *The tacit dimension*. New York: Random House.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(1), 5-23.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (2007). Validity issues in narrative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(4), 471-486. doi: 10.1177/1077800406297670
- Popper, K. (1962). *Conjectures and refutations*. New York: Basic Books.
- Popper, K. (1968). *The logic of scientific discovery*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Pushor, D. (2001). *A storied photo album of parents' positioning on the landscape of schools*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, Canada. Retrieved November 16, 2009, from Dissertations & Theses: A&I. (Publication No. AAT NQ60337).
- Reynolds, M. C. (Ed.). (1989). *Knowledge base for the beginning teacher*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Richards, I. A. (1929). *Practical criticism: A study of literary judgment*. London: Kegan Paul.
- Richards, J. C. (2011). "Every word is true": Stories of our experiences in a qualitative research course. *The Qualitative Report*, 16(3), 782-819. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR16-3/richards.pdf>.
- Richardson, L. (1990). *Writing strategies: Reaching diverse audiences*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp.512-529). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Richardson, L. & St. Pierre, E. A. (2005). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Lincoln & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.) (pp. 959-978). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rief, L. (1992). *Seeking diversity: Language arts with adolescents*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis: Qualitative research methods series 30*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Riessman, C. K., & Speedy, J. (2007). Narrative inquiry in the psychotherapy professions: A critical review. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 426-456). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rorty, R. (1979). *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rorty, R. (1989). *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

- Rosenblatt, L. (1995). *Literature as exploration*. New York: MLA. (Original work published 1938).
- Rosenblatt, L. (1964). The poem as event. *College English*, 26(2), 123-128.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1969). Toward a transactional theory of reading. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 1(1), 31-47.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1978/1994). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1980). What facts does this poem teach you? *Language Arts*, 57(4), 386-394.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1982). The literary transaction: Evocation and Response. *Theory into Practice*, 21(4), 268-277.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1986). The aesthetic transaction. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 20(4), 122-128.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1990). Retrospect. In E. J. Farrell and J. R. Squire (Eds.), *Transactions with Literature: A fifty-year perspective* (pp. 97-107). Urbana, IL: National Council Teachers of English.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1991). Literature—S.O.S.!. *Language Arts*, 68, 12-16.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1993). The transactional theory: Against Dualisms. *College English*, 55(4), 377-386.

- Rosenblatt, L. (1994). The transactional theory of reading and writing. In R. R. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading* (4th ed.) (pp. 1057-1092). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1998). Readers, Texts, Authors. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 34(4), 885-921.
- Rosenblatt, L. (2005). *Making meaning with texts: Selected essays*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Roth, E. H. (1998). The emerging paradigm of reader-text transaction: Contributions of John Dewey and Louise M. Rosenblatt, with implications for educators. Ph.D. dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic and State University. Retrieved from <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-011999-190421/unrestricted/EHROTH.PDF>.
- Roth, W-M. (2001). Gestures: Their role in teaching and learning. *Review of Educational Research*, (71)3, 365-392.
- Ruskamp, J. (2009). Creating a culture of inquiry: Student teachers' stories from the world of the glass box. Retrieved from Dissertations & Theses: A&I. (AAT 3352249).
- Scholes, R. (1981). Language, narrative, and anti-narrative. In W. J. T. Mitchell (ED.), *On Narrative* (pp. 200-208). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.

- Schunk, D. H. (2008). *Learning theories: An educational perspective* (5th ed.). New Jersey, Pearson.
- Schwab, J. (1971). The practical: Arts of eclectic. *School Reviews*, 79(4), 493-542.
- Schwab, J. (1983). The practical 4: Something for curriculum professors to do. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 13(3), 239-265.
- Schwab, J. J. (1962). The teaching of science as enquiry. In J. J. Schwab & P. F. Brandwein (Eds.), *The teaching of science* (pp-3-103). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Scott-Hoy, K. (2003). Form carries experience: A story of the art and form of knowledge. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(2), 268-280.
- Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2), 4-14.
- Shulman, L. S. (1987a). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1-22.
- Shulman, L. S. (1987b). Learning to teach. *AHHE Bulletin*, 40(3), 5-9.
- Sikula, J., Buttery, T. J., & Guyton, E. (Eds.). (1996). *Handbook of research on teacher education: A project of the Association of Teacher Educators* (2nd ed.). New York: Macmillan.

- Simon, H. A. (1980). Problem solving and education. In D. T. Tauma and R. Reif (Eds.), *Problem solving and education: Issues in teaching and research* (pp. 81-96). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Smagorinsky, P. (2001). If meaning is constructed, what is it made from? Toward a cultural theory of reading. *Review of Educational Research*, 71(1), 133-169.
- Smagorinsky, P. (2008). *Teaching English by design: How to create and carry out instructional units*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Smagorinsky, P., & O'Donnell-Allen, C. (1998). Reading as mediated and mediating action: Composing meaning for literature through multimedia interpretive texts. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 33(2), 198-226.
- Smith, F. (1988). *Joining the literacy club: Further essays into education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Smith, M. W., & Wilhelm, J. D. (2002). "Reading don't fix no Chevys": Literacy in the lives of young men. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Sperling, M. (1994). Constructing the perspective of teacher-as-reader: A framework for studying response to student writing. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 28, 175-203.
- Sperling, M. (1996). Revealing the teacher-as-reader in response to students' writing. *English Journal*, 85(1), 22-26.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Tobin, L. (1991). Reading students, reading ourselves: Revising the teacher's role in the writing class. *College English*, 53(3), 333-347.
- Tobin, L. (2004). *Reading student writing: Confessions, meditations, and rants*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Tovani, C. (2000). *I read it, but I don't get it: Comprehension strategies for adolescent readers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Tovani, C. (2004). *Do I really have to teach reading? Content comprehension, grades 6-12*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Travers, R. M. W. (Ed.). (1973). *Second handbook of research on teaching: A project of the American Educational Research Association* (2nd ed.). Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. New York: Routledge.

- Wilhelm, J. D. (1997). *“You gotta BE the book”*: Teaching engaged and reflective reading with adolescents. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wilhelm, J. D. (2008). *“You gotta BE the book”*: Teaching engaged and reflective reading with adolescents (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wilhelm, J. D. (2001). *Improving comprehension with think-aloud strategies*. New York: Scholastic.
- Wilhelm, J. D. (2002). *Action strategies for deepening comprehension*. New York: Scholastic.
- Wilhelm, J. D. (2004). *Reading IS Seeing*. New York, Scholastic.
- Wilhelm, J. D. (2007). *Engaging readers & writers with inquiry: Promoting deep understanding in language arts and the content areas with guiding questions*. New York: Scholastic.
- Wilhelm, J. D., Baker, T. N., & Hackett, J. D. (2001). *Strategic reading: Guiding students to lifelong literacy, 6-12*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Williams, J. B. (2004). Exploring the use of blogs as learning spaces in the higher education sector. *Australian Journal of Educational Technology*, 20(2), 232-247.
- Witte, S. P. (1992). Context, text, intertext: Toward a constructivist semiotic of writing. *Written Communication*, 9(2), 237-308.
- Wittrock, M. C. (Ed.). (1986). *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed.). New York: Macmillan.

- Wittrock, M. C. (2003). Contemporary methodological issues and future directions in research on the teaching of English. In J. Flood, D. Lapp, J. R. Squire, & J. M. Jensen (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (2nd ed.) (pp. 273-281). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Woods, P. (1993a). *Critical events in teaching and learning*. Basingstoke, UK: Falmer Press.
- Woods, P. (1993b). Critical events in education. *British Journals of Sociology of Education*, 14, 355-371.
- Wortham, S. E. F. (2001). *Narratives in action: A strategy for research and analysis*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Xu, S., & Connelly, F. M. (2009). Narrative inquiry for teacher education and development: Focus on English as a foreign language in China. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 219-227.
- Zeichner, K., & Conklin, H. G. (2008). Teacher education programs as sites for teacher preparation. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D. J. McIntyre, & K. E. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (3rd ed.) (pp. 269-289). New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Appendix A: Email to Recruit Participants

[Helen] and [Amy]

First, hello! I hope you have both been well in the few months since we've last spoken. I can imagine you are both ready for the holiday break. :) I'm trying to wind up the semester at USF (lots of grading to get done in the next few days!), and I'm looking forward to getting away and enjoying the snow in Colorado for a few days between semesters.

I also wanted to follow-up with you both about the research you participated in last spring. As you probably remember, the research I was doing was connected to a course I was taking, but it was also done in order to learn from you both so that I can better aid those who will come behind you. I want to thank you both so much for participating in the interviews. Your ability to talk about your internship experiences was fantastic; I learned so much, and I thank you both. I'm quite certain that the positive experiences the practicum students had this semester were in part due to the insight I gained from working with you.

The two interviews last spring generated so much wonderful information that I only got to put a very small part of it into the paper that I submitted for the research class I was taking. However, I would like to do some more with your interview responses. I think the classroom stories you shared offer much potential for helping teacher educators and prospective teachers to learn more about the process of leaning to teach. In our reading class, we talked about the importance of making the invisible process of reading more visible for struggling readers; in my mind, the process of teaching is also quite "invisible" to many. I want to do research that will help make this process more visible. If we could do for the education profession what Kylene Beers is able to do through her reading strategies, teachers and students would benefit so much. I would like to invite you both to be a part of this with me.

This spring, I will be doing my dissertation research, and I would like to invite the two of you to participate. Because I have known each of you throughout your university courses, practicum, and internship experiences, your voices offer a unique window into the

process of learning to teach. Basically, this research would entail an interview and a follow-up interview (like last spring) in mid or late January about your first semester teaching experiences. After that, we would work out some days/class periods that I could come and observe your class--not to evaluate your teaching or your students of course, but to get a better sense of the classroom context and students you speak of in your interviews. The third part of the research would include a weekly blog post. The blog would be a private blog site--just for us. Its intention would be to capture your reflection on some of the events that happened that week in your classroom as well as to provide a way for us to communicate. The last part of the research would include another interview and follow-up interview toward the end of the semester (probably late April) about your second semester teaching experiences.

If you choose to participate in this research, I--as a small token of appreciation--would be making a donation to you or your classroom. This thank you gift would be either a Netbook computer or its monetary equivalent in a gift certificate to a bookstore/bookseller for purposes of building your classroom library--whichever better meets your teaching/classroom needs at this time.

Together, I think we can make a unique contribution to the education profession. However, I know you are both very busy, and your time is quite valuable. Please think about this invitation, and let me know what you think.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this invitation.

Christi Edge