

FORMATIVE IMPACTS OF HIGH-STAKES PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT ON
PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF BELIEF, ATTITUDE, AND IDENTITY

By

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Abstract

Policymakers are promoting high-stakes performance assessments under the assumption that such assessments are valid measures of the work of teachers and of the skills or knowledge necessary to provide effective instruction, and that, therefore, requiring teacher candidates to pass such exams prior to licensure will help to increase the quality of America's teaching force, and, with it, increase the achievement of American students. A large number of teachers and teacher educators are concurring in hopes that these examinations will help to professionalize the field of teaching. This qualitative case study (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 2005) examines the interactions of a cohort of pre-service English teachers at a major research university in the Midwest with a state mandated, state created high-stakes portfolio assessment—which, in order to protect anonymity, will be referred to generically as the Pre-Service Teacher Portfolio Assessment (PTPA). Methodologically centered in the interpretive paradigm of Lincoln & Guba (1985), this study utilizes in-depth interviewing (Seidman, 2006) and content analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) to gather data, which is interpreted using constant comparison and open-coding techniques (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The study found that participants viewed the PTPA as wholly irrelevant or only tangentially related to becoming good English teachers. While the high-stakes nature of the assessment required them to devote significant time and effort to completing it, in general they viewed the PTPA as separate from the actual work of learning to teach. The inquiry also revealed that the PTPA was having some impact upon participant conceptions of good teaching, helping them to broaden their understanding of the work of teachers to include not just dispositional and relational aspects of teaching, but elements of technical teaching practice as well. Additionally, participant dislike for the PTPA and its concurrent impact upon their perceptions of good teaching produced a series of

identity tensions. The works of Rennert-Ariev (2008) on *bureaucratic ventriloquism* and Wenger (1998) on *participation* and *reification* were used as a lens to understand and interpret the implications of these findings. The study concluded by postulating a theoretical framework of pre-service teacher identity development in an era of professionalization, drawing upon the findings in this study and influenced by Bhabha's (1994) construct of *third space* and Alsup's (2006) description of *borderland discourse*.

For my wife, Elizabeth, and my mother, Pamela,
without whose support this work would never have been written

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Chapter One:

Introduction

Teacher education in the United States is under significant pressure to address issues of teacher quality and teacher attrition. As Hollins (2015) noted, “The quality of teaching practices determines the quality of learning experiences provided for students. Thus, classroom teachers have a powerful influence on student learning outcomes” (p. ix). The federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* sought to place a “high-quality” teacher who could assure “excellence” in education in every classroom in the United States (NCLB, 2003), and teacher education programs have been tasked with making that mandate a reality. Unfortunately, according to Cooper & Alvarado (2006), only 40 percent of those who graduate with teaching credentials actually become teachers, and 30% of the remainder leave the profession within the first five years (Hanna & Pennington, 2015). The constant need to recruit and train new teachers, brought on by such attrition, costs schools nearly \$2.2 billion annually (Haynes, 2014). The need to address these twin concerns of increasing teacher quality and decreasing teacher attrition has given rise to a nationwide movement to reform teacher education.

Three primary agendas are currently jockeying for control over teacher preparation in the United States. Cochran-Smith (2001) identified them as deregulation, overregulation, and professionalization. Deregulation refers to the push to remove teacher education from university teacher preparation programs and to allow a wide variety of alternate paths to teacher certification (Lewis & Young, 2013). On the opposite side of the debate, the overregulation agenda, as labeled and described by Cochran-Smith (2001), seeks to leave teacher education within universities, but control it via massive governmental oversight including externally prescribed curricula and programs. Lastly, the professionalization agenda focuses on

establishing “a common national system of teacher preparation and development based on professional consensus and high standards for teacher preparation, initial teacher licensing, and board certification of experienced teachers” (p. 263). This study explores one of the major facets of the professionalization agenda, which is the establishment of high-stakes portfolio assessments to serve as gatekeeping exams into the teaching profession, in the same way that bar exams function in the fields of law and medicine. The most prevalent of these assessments is the edTPA, which originated at Stanford University and has spread across the country, but a number of other such exams have been developed by individual states like Missouri, where, at the time of writing, the Missouri Pre-service Teacher Assessment (MoPTA) was in the pilot phase, and California, where the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) has formed a central part of teacher licensure for several years.

Darling-Hammond (2006), one of the leading voices advocating for increased professionalization of teachers, and a member of the edTPA Technical Advisory Committee, wrote that “Teaching is currently where medicine was in 1910” (p. 312); that is, little coherence or standardization exists in the way teachers are trained, with some teachers entering schools after years of graduate education on one end of the spectrum and others simply applying for emergency certification after a few weeks of training. Darling-Hammond and other like-minded scholars and policymakers argue that professions like law, medicine, engineering, and architecture have significantly benefitted from establishing a “consensus about what professionals [in that specific field] need to know and be able to do...[and] such a consensus must become a reality for the teaching profession as well” (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p.9). Many scholars believe that high-stakes performance assessments such as the edTPA or PTPA are the best vehicle to codify such a shared understanding of professional knowledge

and skill and to ensure that all who enter the profession have mastered this shared understanding of practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Lewis & Young, 2013).

Stakeholders ranging from teachers unions like the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) to bodies of state educational leadership like the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) have called for the development and implementation of “a rigorous, performance-based exam — a ‘bar-like exam,’ ...that serves as the gateway into the [teaching] profession” (Mehta & Doctor, 2013, p. 8). Supporters of an educational bar exam believe that

If such an exam was [*sic*] sufficiently rigorous, it could change who is drawn into teaching, develop a more consistent, higher level of skill among all teachers, improve student outcomes, and greatly increase public regard for teachers and teaching. These changes could create a self-reinforcing upward spiral, as increased respect for teachers and improved results would lead to increased public confidence, potentially higher pay, and, in the long run, greater desire for talented people to join the profession. (Mehta & Doctor, 2013, p. 8)

Advocates look to the implementation of such exams in the fields of medicine—currently the United States Medical Licensing Examination--and law—currently state-specific bar examinations--at the beginning of the 20th Century as central to the professionalization of those fields and the increased quality of practice that came with that professionalization (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Haertel, 1991; Sawchuk, 2012).

However, this is not an uncontested assumption. The field of education has spent almost a century trying to establish the qualities, skills, knowledge, and dispositions that characterize good teaching, with little consensus (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Charters & Waples, 1929; Getzels &

Jackson, 1963; Sato, 2014). Questions of what schools and teachers *ought* to be doing boil down to understandings of the purposes of education. Any educational discourse is grounded in some vision of the purpose of education, but, often-times that vision is not made explicit, despite the fact that different stakeholders hold widely different visions. Labaree (1997) argued that

Goal setting is a political, not a technical problem. It is resolved through a process of making choices and not through a process of scientific investigation. The answer lies in values (what kind of schools we want) and interests (who supports which educational values) rather than apolitical logic. (p. 40)

More succinctly, Hume's law states that "an 'ought' cannot be deduced from an 'is'" (Grice & Edgley, 1970, p. 89). In other words, the United States will have to decide what education ought to do before it can develop solutions for doing those things more efficiently or more equitably or for measuring pre-service teachers' abilities to do them. From choosing textbooks to establishing management policies to forming relationships with students, teachers make daily instructional, management, and curricular decisions that are guided by their own value judgments of what is right and what is important (Johnston, 2003). Schubert (1986) believed that "even if we refuse to think about the assumptions that underlie our practical work as educators, some set of assumptions always rules" (p. 117). The set of assumptions about education that undergird the edTPA and the PTPA are not universally agreed upon (NAME Political Action Committee, 2014; Sato, 2014). The National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), in particular, has criticized the edTPA for promoting as the "essence of good teaching" (p. 2) a construction that ignores critical multiculturalism and distills teaching to "what can (ostensibly) be assessed on these rubrics through what is essentially a writing test and brief video clips" (p. 2).

Purpose and Guiding Questions

Despite the misgivings of detractors, high-stakes portfolio assessments, linked to teacher licensure are becoming increasingly popular nation-wide (Lewis & Young, 2013). Given the national trend toward the adoption of such assessments, the most common of which is the edTPA, research into the effects of such assessments upon the attitudes and beliefs of pre-service teachers is necessary (Au, 2013; Sato, 2014). In order to protect anonymity, the high stakes performance assessment that the required of teacher candidates in the state where this study took place will be referred to generically as the Pre-Service Teacher Portfolio Assessment (PTPA). Despite the fact that licensing decisions depend upon the outcomes of this exam, the PTPA is effectively absent from scholarly literature on teacher preparation. This study seeks to help begin a scholarly conversation about the PTPA situated within the national conversation regarding teacher professionalization, and guided by the following questions:

- How do pre-service English teachers view the PTPA's role in becoming good English teachers?
- Does the PTPA modify conceptions pre-service teachers have about what it means to be a good English teacher?

Since the PTPA is designed to be implemented throughout the course of a teacher preparation program and to be a culminating assessment of that preparation (Nelson, 2011), understanding the impact it might have upon pre-service teachers' constructions of good teaching, and how that impact can be either furthered or mitigated by teacher preparation programs is essential. If pre-service teachers' understanding of the work of teaching plays an important role in their constructions of professional identity, and professional identity is directly tied to whether or not

teachers are successful and satisfied in their profession, then an important duty of researchers in teacher education is to understand how teacher education programs can influence teachers' understandings of teaching and play an active role in guiding teacher candidates through the process of identity construction. The research questions in this study focus specifically upon accurately capturing and communicating the beliefs of the participants in this study; the study does not intend and was not designed to judge the validity of those beliefs. As the Thomas Theorem states, "If [people] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Markley & Harman, 1982, p. 4). That is, regardless of the congruence of beliefs with objective reality—and the interpretive paradigm that informs this study rejects the premise that an objective reality can be known (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)—if people believe that their perceptions are reality, then those beliefs will carry significant consequences. In the case of this study, the beliefs of my 13 participants about the PTPA and the process of completing it, while likely quite different from the beliefs of other stakeholders at Midwest University, constituted their perception of reality, and so those beliefs, right or wrong or somewhere in between, shed important light upon the impact of the PTPA upon these individuals.

Overview of Theory and Method

This mixed-methods qualitative case study (Merriam, 1998, 2001; Stake, 1995, 2005) was rooted in the interpretive paradigm as conceptualized by Lincoln & Guba (1985). The study tracked the experiences and attitudes of a cohort of 13 pre-service English teachers at a major research university in the American Midwest, hereafter referred to as Midwest University, during the final year of their teacher preparation as they were introduced to, constructed, and completed their PTPAs. At the inception of the study, participants were enrolled in both a clinical practicum and an advanced methods course, and the study followed them into the next semester

of student teaching in area middle and secondary English/Language arts classrooms. It is important to note that this study was concerned solely with the beliefs and attitudes of these 13 participants as they worked through their PTPAs and with the concurrent impact of that work upon their senses of professional identity. The results reported here are represented in the words of their participants and, as much as possible, are unfiltered. This study presents the views of a particular set of stakeholders, a cohort of pre-service English teachers. This is their truth, but it is no way the only truth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Pre-service teachers from other disciplines at Midwest University, teacher education faculty, cooperating teachers, and state policymakers could, and very likely would interpret these events quite differently from the participants in this study. Their truths are just as valid, and I would strongly recommend that future studies be undertaken to make their voices heard.

Case study research allows for delving deeply into the unique attributes of an individual case and communicating those attributes through thick description and well-crafted story (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995, 2005). As Shulman (1986) noted, “most individuals find specific cases more powerful influencers on their decisions than impersonally presented empirical findings....Although principles are powerful, cases are memorable, and lodge in the memory as the basis for later judgements” (p. 32). This case study was intended to help the reader to develop “vicarious experience” (Stake, 1995) and to further understanding of the complex interactions between pre-service teachers, field experiences, teacher education coursework, and high-stakes portfolio assessments. Data for this case study was gathered throughout the 2014-2015 academic year, using a mixture of qualitative methods including in-depth interviewing (Seidman, 2006) and content analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Data was then coded via open-coding and constant comparison (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Once

themes and categories were established in the initial inductive analysis, those themes were then analyzed deductively through the lenses of scholarship on definitions of good teaching and pre-service teacher identity (Patton, 2002).

Definitions and Usage of Key Terminology

The following terms are central to the understanding of my inquiry. Though they will be further clarified and contextualized in later chapters, particularly within chapter 2, the review of literature, some brief definitions now will help to frame the study moving forward.

Field experience. Throughout this study, I use the term *field experience* to refer to the components of a teacher education program that take place outside of traditional university classrooms. Field experiences are designed and utilized in a variety of ways both within and across teacher education programs, and “It is broadly assumed that field experiences are the key components of preparation where prospective teachers learn to bridge theory and practice, work with colleagues and families, and develop pedagogical and curricular strategies for meeting the learning needs of a diverse population” (Hollins & Guzman, 2005, p. 493).

Participation. Along with the term *reification*, discussed below, this term is drawn from the work of Wenger (1998) on making meaning within communities of practice. Wenger (1998) defined *participation* as the “process of being active participants in the *practices* of social communities and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities...Such participation shapes not only what we do, but also who we are and how we interpret what we do” (p. 4). In this study, I conceptualize the work of pre-service teachers within their field experiences as *participation* in the social community of professional teaching and as an important component in the construction of their identities as professional teachers.

Portfolio assessments. *Portfolio assessments* are a specific type of performance assessment that involve collection of and reflection upon “materials and artifacts from teachers’ work” (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005, p. 424). This study is particularly concerned with *high-stakes portfolio assessments*, which are deliberately designed and standardized portfolio assessments that have been adopted by institutions, states, or national bodies to serve as gateway exams for teacher licensure (Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008; Wilson, Hallam, Pecheone, & Moss, 2014). Most of these *high-stakes portfolio assessments* draw their inspiration from the portfolio requirement of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Certification (Goe et al., 2008). The most common of these assessments is the edTPA, initially called the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA), developed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE), and now required for licensure in several states across the U.S. (Wilson et al., 2014). This study is primarily concerned with an assessment which, in order to protect anonymity, will be referred to generically as the Pre-Service Teacher Portfolio Assessment (PTPA), and which is the mandated *high-stakes portfolio assessment* for teacher licensure in the state in which the study took place.

Professionalization. *Professionalization* is one of the three major agendas, along with *deregulation* and *overregulation*, identified by Cochran-Smith (2001) as competing for dominance in the reform of teacher education in the United States. The *professionalization* agenda seeks to model teacher education along the lines of higher prestige professional programs, such as law and medicine, including standardization of curricula, increased clinical experience, and high-stakes gatekeeping exams. Standardized portfolio assessments like the edTPA and the PTPA have become central components of this agenda in teacher education (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Reification. Along with *participation* above, *reification* forms one half of the process of negotiating meaning described by Wenger (1998). Wenger (1998) defined *reification* as the process by which “aspects of human experience and practice are congealed into fixed forms and given the status of object” (p. 59). Throughout this study, I conceptualize the PTPA as an attempted *reification* of the teaching practice of pre-service teachers, analyzing its congruencies and incongruities with their perceptions of that practice and their conceptualizations of their own emerging professional identities.

Organization of the Dissertation

Following this introduction, chapter two provides a review of literature which situates my study within three conceptual strands of scholarship: 1) research on the development and impact of portfolio assessments in education, 2) constructions of good teaching and their implications for professional practice, and 3) scholarship on teacher identity construction and its connection to practice. Chapter two concludes with a discussion of the connection between these strands, based upon the framework of meaning-making articulated by Wenger (1998), specifically conceptions of *participation* and *reification* by which individuals negotiate meaning and form their identities within communities of practice. Viewing participant experiences through this Wengerian lens helps to establish the importance for understanding how high-stakes portfolio assessments impact pre-service teachers’ understandings of the work of teaching and of their roles as teachers.

Chapter three provides an overview of methodology including a discussion of the research paradigm that guided my inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and the case study methodology that structured it (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 2005). Data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Seidman, 2006) and analysis techniques, both inductive (Corbin & Strauss,

2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and deductive (Patton, 2002), are also discussed. Additionally, I provide an introduction to my 13 participants and a description of the research context—the teacher education program at Midwest University. Chapter 3 also discusses my role as the researcher in the study. Lastly, I detail the ways in which I met the trustworthiness criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to ensure that my qualitative research was rigorous and ethical.

Chapter four moves from methodology to the first section of my findings, an analysis of changes and continuities in my participants' conceptions of good teaching from the beginning of the study through the end. Participants began the study emphasizing fun, relevance, and care as the essential components of good teaching. While they did maintain their conviction in the prominence of these personal and relational elements, as the study progressed, they indicated an increasing awareness of the importance of technical skills like planning and assessing. The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards (2013) are introduced as a framework for organizing the various elements comprising participants' understanding of the work of teachers.

Chapter five centers upon participants' feelings about the PTPA and its role in helping them to become good teachers—in general, participants felt that the PTPA was either unrelated or actually detrimental to their becoming good teachers. Themes of disconnection, artificiality, and depersonalization emerged from participant reactions to the PTPA, and are discussed in detail in this chapter. Rennert-Ariev's (2008) conception of *bureaucratic ventriloquism* is introduced to describe both participant and teacher education faculty responses to the PTPA, and Lefstein's (2005) discussion of the conflicting constructions of *technical* and *personal* teaching is used to interpret tensions emerging in participant definitions of good teaching.

Chapter six moves into a discussion of the impact of the PTPA upon participants' emerging sense of professional identity using Wenger's (1998) conceptions of *participation* and *reification* to bring clarity to participant identity tensions. Participant constructions of good teaching are linked to changes and struggles in identity positioning, particularly the simultaneous occupation of student, student-teacher, and teacher identities (Coward, Matteson, & Hamman, 2012). Participant dissatisfaction with the professional identities they felt forced to portray within the PTPA leads to a discussion of the ways in which they would prefer to be able to reify their identities, most notably in the form of personal narrative. Drawing upon the work of Alsup (2006) and Britzman (1991), the chapter concludes with an exploration of the ways in which binary understandings of teaching and teacher identity contributed to participant struggles with the PTPA.

Chapter seven attempts to weave the understandings developed in chapters four through six together into a theoretical framework of pre-service teacher identity development in an era of professionalization, which was influenced by Bhabha's (1994) construct of *third space* and Alsup's (2006) description of *borderland discourse*. Limitations of the study are discussed. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the implications of my study for teacher education programs and policymakers and posit directions for future research.

Chapter Two:

Portfolio Assessments, Good Teaching, and Teacher Identity

High-stakes portfolio assessments are becoming an increasingly influential feature in the landscape of teacher education (Au, 2013; Pecheone, Shear, Whittaker, & Darling-Hammond, 2013; Sato, 2014), and with that rise in influence comes the need to understand how such assessments are affecting pre-service teachers themselves. As detailed in the previous chapter, current reform movements in teacher education have been driven by a need to increase the quality of teaching in American schools and to address the issue of massive early attrition from the teaching profession. In order to accomplish the former, significant inquiry into what quality teaching actually entails will be necessary (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006; Wang, Lin, Spalding, Klecka, & Odell, 2011). Teachers leave the profession for a wide variety of reasons “closely associated with the teacher’s own sense of self and identity as a teacher, which have been constructed, challenged, and modified throughout pre-service teacher education and in-service teaching experience” (Hong, 2010, p. 1531), and so, in order to address the latter—the problem of early attrition in the teaching force—it will be necessary to develop understandings of the impact of teacher education reform efforts upon pre-service teacher identity.

Given these needs, my inquiry into pre-service English teacher interactions with the PTPA is framed by three conceptual strands of literature: 1) research on the development and impact of portfolio assessments in education, 2) constructions of good teaching and their implications for professional practice, and 3) scholarship on teacher identity construction and its connection to practice.

Portfolio Assessment

One of the center pieces of current regulation of teaching and teacher education involves evaluation and assessment of teachers and teacher candidates, which leads to the first strand of literature shaping this study—scholarship on portfolio evaluation of teachers. Calls for some kind of teacher testing are not new. For the last 40 years, states all throughout the union have implemented a variety of standardized multiple choice assessments of basic literacy, pedagogical knowledge, and/or content knowledge for entry into or exit or out of teacher preparation programs (Haertel, 1991). However, these types of standardized, multiple-choice exams have been criticized as portraying the work of teachers as overly simplistic and bureaucratic rather than as requiring critical thinking and professional judgment (Lyons, 1998b; Shulman, 1988).

In lieu of standardized multiple choice assessments, many stakeholders in teacher preparation are advocating for portfolio assessments (Lyons, 1998b; Shulman, 1998; Zeichner & Wray, 2001). Portfolios are a “purposeful collection of work for analysis and reflection” (Tucker, Stronge, & Gareis, 2002, p. 2). According to Grossman (2005), portfolios became a popular assessment tool in teacher education in the 1990s as a natural outgrowth of the use of portfolios to assess student work in K-12 schools. The first large-scale, standardized portfolio assessment for teachers in the United States was developed in 1994 by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in order to assess veteran teachers for National Board Certification (Margolis & Doring, 2013; Sato, 2014). Since then a wide range of institutions and organizations have adopted portfolio assessments for both pre-service and in-service teachers (Lyons, 1998c; Sato, 2014).

Advantages of portfolio assessment. Proponents of portfolios believe that their major advantage over more traditional assessment devices is that portfolios “require active decision

making through their construction...offer[ing] better opportunities to access an individual's understanding of the concepts, ideas, or content under review” (Loughran & Corrigan, 1995, p. 565). That is, they presume that teachers are empowered professionals rather than scripted technicians (Tucker et al., 2002). According to Haertel (1991), “Because professionals are expected to exercise judgment and discernment in their work, there are many areas of professional practice where it is impossible in principle to specify a single correct answer or a single acceptable instructional procedure” (p. 7). Assessing such judgment and discernment requires complex open-ended tasks and questions rather than simple multiple-choice tests. Because they are constructed with real-world exemplars and have been shown to promote reflective practice, portfolios are seen as an excellent way to assess such professional practice (Borko, Michalec, Timmons, & Siddle, 1997; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Loughran & Corrigan, 1995; Tucker et al., 2002; Zeichner & Wray, 2001). Additionally, portfolios can provide prospective employers with a picture of pre-service teachers’ knowledge and skills (Borko et al., 1997; Loughran & Corrigan, 1995)

Challenges in portfolio assessment. However, portfolios are not without their challenges. Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005) noted that teacher education programs tend to use portfolios in three ways: 1) as vehicles for student reflection, 2) as assessments of student knowledge and skill, and 3) as showcases for exemplary work to aid in student job searches. These purposes are sometimes in conflict with one-another, producing significant tension when a single portfolio is called upon to perform multiple tasks for multiple audiences (Hallman, 2007; Hammerness et al., 2005; Lyons, 1998c; Snyder, Lippincot, & Bower, 1998; Zeichner & Wray, 2001). The wide variety of ways in which portfolios have been incorporated into teacher

education has also made it difficult to build a systematic knowledge base about such portfolios (Zeichner & Wray, 2001).

Some advocates believe that students can only be actively engaged with their portfolios if they have full control over what items are included and excluded, that is, when students have full ownership over the portfolio (Loughran & Corrigan, 1995; Zeichner & Wray, 2001). If students are not given sufficient agency in the formatting and construction of their portfolios, then the entire process can devolve into “trivialization...[and] mindless standardization” (Lyons, 1998, p. 5). Allowing such leeway can create tension, however, particularly when portfolios are used for evaluative purposes, as the creators of the portfolios and the evaluators of the portfolios may value different aspects of practice, leaving students with the difficult choice of trying to either accurately represent their own views or please their evaluators (Borko et al., 1997; Zeichner & Wray, 2001). As Hammerness et. al (2005) noted, “different purposes can create tensions for student teachers, as they imply different audiences and different criteria for selecting material” (p. 426). Other researchers postulate that the way in which students are introduced to a particular portfolio and are explained its intended audience and purpose will determine the degree to which students effectively engage with it; that is, a portfolio assessment is only as good as the training students receive in completing that assessment (Wade & Yarbrough, 1996).

From a purely logistical standpoint, portfolios are resource-intensive (Wilson et al., 2014). As Shulman (1998) noted, “Portfolios done seriously take a long time” (p. 35). They require significant thought in selection of artifacts, and then even more significant writing in reflection upon those artifacts. Once they are assembled, they require trained evaluators to review and comment upon them. Ideally, for them to have their fullest effect, they also require dialogue between the creator of the portfolio and the evaluators of the portfolio, either orally or

in writing (Shulman, 1998). All of this takes far more time and energy than simply feeding a bubble sheet into an electronic grading machine.

Another consistent problem with portfolios is that, if they are not implemented correctly, they can become simply “an exercise in amassing paper” (Olson, 1988). Shulman (1998) called this the “trivialization” (p. 35) of portfolios, and noted:

Once you’ve got a mode of assessment, you start asking the kinds of questions that best fit that mode. Then follows a shift to lines of least resistance and to the increased trivialization of what gets documented. If this happens with portfolios, people will start documenting stuff that isn’t even worth reflecting on. (p. 35)

This danger can be exacerbated in the context of student teaching because, by necessity, student teaching portfolios are constructed toward the end of the student teaching experience, which is also the portion of that experience that is most demanding upon students teachers’ time and energy (Borko et al., 1997). This leads many students to put off portfolio construction until the last minute, radically decreasing the accuracy of the portfolio in demonstrating their true knowledge and ability (Zeichner & Wray, 2001). At its best, however, the process of constructing the portfolio is as important as the final product of the portfolio itself (Loughran & Corrigan, 1995; Lyons, 1998c). Howey & Zimpher (1996) argued that an essential component of teacher education programs ought to be pre-service teacher portfolios that would allow both students and teacher educators to analyze the development of student ability over time, and that would serve as a resource for faculty to judge the overall efficacy of their teacher preparation programs. In order to accomplish this mission, such a portfolio would need to be embedded throughout a student’s pre-service teaching experience.

Theoretical nature of portfolios. The PTPA is a teaching assessment portfolio, and completing a teaching assessment portfolio is an act of theory that fundamentally involves construction of an answer to the question: what makes a good teacher? (Lyons, 1998b; Shulman, 1998). As Shulman (1998) explained it, “What is declared worth documenting, worth reflecting on, what is deemed to be portfolio-worthy is a theoretical act” (p. 24). He went on to argue that “The portfolio is a broad metaphor that comes alive as you begin to formulate the theoretical orientation to teaching that is most valuable to you” (p. 24). This means that the construction, make-up, and requirements of portfolio assessments are manifestations of particular theories or definitions of teaching (Sato, 2014; Shulman, 1998).

However, standardized portfolio assessments, like the PTPA, as a function of their mandated structure, and standardized scoring may constrain student responses to align with a single construction of good teaching (Au, 2013; Lyons, 1998b; Sato, 2014). Sato (2014) noted that “The conception of teaching within a performance assessment sets an ideological stance about teaching and how it is performed” (p. 1). These constraints can have a serious consequence; if students are not given sufficient agency in the formatting and construction of their portfolios, then the entire process of portfolio construction can devolve into “trivialization...[and] mindless standardization” (Lyons, 1998, p. 5). Certainly, that is not what teacher educators or policy-makers want from a professional licensing exam. Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005) noted that “A major goal for any professional program is to help students begin to see themselves as developing professionals rather than simply as students whose primary goal is to get good grades” (p. 76). Ideally, then, a portfolio assessment in such a program, would provide an opportunity for candidates to both construct and articulate a theory of good teaching that will lead to successful professional practice.

Portfolios as both formative and summative assessment. The reason that a portfolio might be able to accomplish such a lofty goal is that, while the final products of portfolio assessments are summative, the process of constructing them is formative (Loughran & Corrigan, 1995; Lyons, 1998b, 1998c; Shulman, 1998). That is, assembling a portfolio is both a measure of learning and an act of learning itself; portfolios are both a process and a product (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Loughran & Corrigan, 1995). Lyons (1998c) argued that portfolios are “a credential, . . . a set of assumptions about teaching and learning, and . . . a powerful, personal reflective learning experience” (p. 4). In describing his own work developing teacher assessment portfolios at Stanford University, Shulman (1998) found that “whatever its effectiveness as an assessment form, the portfolio approach provided dynamite educational experiences” (p. 31). These dynamic learning experiences would eventually form the portfolio requirements for certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching (Shulman, 1998), which in turn would inspire future teacher performance assessments like the edTPA (Margolis & Doring, 2013) and the PTPA.

PTPA. In the state of in which this study took place, pre-service teachers are required to complete a high-stakes portfolio assessment which, in order to protect anonymity, will be referred to generically as the Pre-Service Teacher Portfolio Assessment (PTPA). Teacher candidates complete the PTPA while student teaching during their final year of teacher preparation. The PTPA requires students to assemble a portfolio composed of entries addressing four specific tasks: 1) Contextual Information and Learning Environment Factors, 2) Designing Instruction, 3) Teaching and Learning, and 4) Reflection and Professionalism. These four tasks are intended to allow teacher candidates to “demonstrate content and pedagogical competency” by

Design[ing] a unit of study, including lesson plans and assessments, and deliver[ing] that unit of study to a group of students, implementing appropriate adaptations to meet their diverse cognitive and social needs....[and] us[ing] assessment (informal, formal, formative, summative) to guide adaptations and demonstrate reflective practice. (Nelson, 2014, p. 2)

Candidates construct their PTPAs throughout the course of student teaching, and then submit them for scoring at the end of their student teaching semester. Scorers trained by the state department of education and unaffiliated with the teacher education program in which the pre-service teachers were prepared then score the portfolios. In order to receive licensure to teach in that state, teacher candidates must receive a passing score of 20 out of a possible 30 points on the PTPA.

Despite its high stakes for teacher candidates, the PTPA is massively under-represented in scholarly literature. In fact, at the time of writing, the PTPA seemed to be completely absent from scholarly literature. Searches on *ERIC*, *Omnifile*, *Education-Abstracts (H.W. Wilson)*, *ProQuest*, and Google Scholar for the key words and phrases relating to the high-stakes performance assessment in this study produced only 11 articles with even a mention of the PTPA, none of which did more than reference the assessment in passing.

PTPA precursors. Because the PTPA is not represented within scholarly literature, I drew upon the literature base of assessments that had inspired the PTPA, most notably the edTPA and the PACT. Designed by teachers and teacher educators at Stanford University and administered by Pearson Education, edTPA is the most commonly used pre-service teacher portfolio assessment in the nation (Stanford Center on Assessment Learning and Equity, 2013).

As of June 2013, it has been implemented at over 160 institutions in 22 different states (Stanford Center on Assessment Learning and Equity, 2013).

An earlier state performance assessment, the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) served as the model for the edTPA (V. Kane & Ballock, 2014). The PACT was created in a partnership between Stanford University, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and the Chief State Schools Officers (CSSO) (Falk, 2013). A portfolio assessment that required pre-service teachers to analyze and reflect upon their lesson plans, classroom assessments, and videos of their instruction, the PACT was embedded in the field experiences of California university teacher preparation programs; it was hoped that the PACT would serve as a link between field experience and teacher preparation coursework (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010).

The Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium (TPAC), which met in 2009 under the leadership of the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE), and the AACTE developed the edTPA using the PACT as a prototype (Stanford Center on Assessment Learning and Equity, 2013). According to the edTPA press release, the assessment measures teacher abilities including:

Planning around student learning standards; Designing instruction for students based on their specific needs; Teaching a series of lessons and adapting them to respond to student learning; Assessing student work; Developing academic language; Evaluating student learning; and Analyzing teaching through reflecting on how to improve student outcomes. (p. 51)

To complete the assessment, pre-service teachers assemble proof of their ability to do these tasks in the form of video clips, student work samples, or classroom documents such as lesson plans

(Darling-Hammond, 2012). For each piece of evidence that they include in the portfolio, they also respond to written prompts that “are designed to provoke candidates’ thinking about the components of the edTPA task in which they are engaged and to document a thorough analysis of their practice” (Hyler, Yee, Carey, & Barnes, 2014, p. 6). The overarching goal that led to the creation of the edTPA was “to support the professionalization of the teaching field by creating a nationally available common assessment that sets a standard for what teacher candidates should know and be able to do prior to beginning their first year of teaching” (Valli, Bote, DeMink-Carthew, Edwards, & Hyler, 2014, pp. 3-4).

Proponents of the edTPA. Proponents of the edTPA note that it is the only major teacher performance assessment that was created primarily by teachers with teachers in mind (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Darling-Hammond (2012) argued that the edTPA “may be the first time that the teacher education community has come together to hold itself accountable for the quality of teachers who are being prepared and to develop tools its members believe are truly valid measures of teaching knowledge and skill” (p.12). The edTPA is aligned with both the Common Core Standards and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards for the professional development of teachers (Lewis & Young, 2013). It is also subject-matter specific in order to assess pedagogical content knowledge, an essential attribute of successful teaching according to many scholars (Haertel, 1991; Lewis & Young, 2013; Shulman, 1988). As a performance assessment portfolio, the edTPA allows pre-service teachers to contextualize their work within the actual settings of their field experiences, forming a clearer bridge between theory and practice than would be possible using any traditional standardized examination (Margolis & Doring, 2013). Supporters of the edTPA believe that the data it provides will lead to the improvement of teacher preparation programs, establish evidence of the

competence of pre-service teachers, and, through the very act of completing the assessment, serve as a powerful tool for delivering teacher training itself (Margolis & Doring, 2013).

Validity and reliability of edTPA. Though certainly a variety of stakeholders have endorsed the edTPA, many question whether the necessary research base exists to justify either its utility or validity (Lewis & Young, 2013). The National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) argued that “there is not compelling evidence that the edTPA is either reliable or valid” (NAME Political Action Committee, 2014). Henry et al. (2013) noted that, “The predictive validity of the [performance assessment] instruments [used by most teacher preparation programs] has not been demonstrated” (p. 442), and even strong proponents of portfolio assessment such as Tucker et al. (2002) have called for increased empirical research to validate the strong anecdotal tradition of portfolio success. Though the edTPA authors themselves note that longitudinal research over the course of several years will be necessary in order to fully establish the predictive validity of the edTPA, they point to recent studies of the PACT as justification for their faith in the edTPA (AACTE, 2014).

Validity of the PACT. Newton's (2010) preliminary study linking PACT scores to student achievement on standardized tests via several value-added models (VAMs) showed correlation between pre-service teachers' PACT scores and the future learning gains of those teachers' students. However, Newton himself noted that a much larger study—his only included 14 teachers and 259 students—would be necessary in order to truly validate the PACT.

Like Newton (2010), Duckor, Castellano, Tellez, Wihardini, & Wilson's (2014) study of the structural validity of the PACT produced limited favorable results. With a data sample of 1711 pre-service teachers from 7 different universities, the authors determined that sufficient evidence existed to continue applying the PACT for “limited summative—not formative—uses

and interpretations of score data” (Duckor et al., 2014, p. 18). That is, the PACT can measure, in aggregate, whether a teacher candidate has mastered the broad standards on which it is based, but it cannot, as it is currently written, make valid judgment of the separate strengths and weaknesses of a candidate.

edTPA content validity. According to Haertel (1991), “new teacher assessments must be grounded in some conception of the knowledge base of teaching” (p. 8). That is, to be a valid assessment of teaching, the content of the assessment must represent the knowledge that is necessary to be a teacher. The authors of the edTPA did perform content validity studies as part of the 2013 field test of the edTPA (Pechione et al., 2013). Their report claims that

A set of validation studies was conducted to confirm the content validity, job relevance, and construct validity of the assessments. In combination, these studies documented that the assessment is well-aligned to the professional standards it seeks to measure, reflects the actual work of teaching, and that the score measures a primary characteristic of effective teaching. (p. 2)

To assess content validity, edTPA rubrics and tasks were provided to external reviewers who were asked to rate individual items in the material on a scale of 1 to 5 to indicate how well the tasks align with INTASC standards and how important the skills and knowledge represented by each task is to the job of a beginning teacher. All of the items received an average score of above a 3, which means that raters on average believed that the skills and knowledge were “important” or “very important” and that they represented INTASC standards “well” or “very well.” Unfortunately, the publicly available documents do not provide the number of reviewers or the procedure by which they were selected (Pechione et al., 2013).

The authors of the edTPA also performed a job analysis study to confirm content validity (Pecheone et al., 2013). They asked a panel of classroom teachers and teacher educators—again, no information is provided regarding how many or how they were chosen—to draft a list of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that were essential to teaching. The panel generated a list of 105 KSAs. This list was then provided to another national group of educators—size and selection process not provided—who rated each KSA regarding its importance to the job of teaching and the amount of a teacher’s time spend utilizing that KSA. These ratings were compiled into a “criticality score” (p. 21) to determine how critical each KSA was to the job of teaching. Those KSAs which were deemed critical were then compared by another panel of educators to the tasks and rubrics of the edTPA, who found that “the 15 rubrics were strongly related to the critical tasks and behaviors” (p. 21). However, because the authors of the report fail to establish criteria for the selection process of any of the panels involved or to provide information about how the “criticality score” was calculated, this particular validity study remains unconvincing.

Even if these studies are accepted, some scholars question whether the general approach of asking current educators to determine a list of KSAs is the best way to generate a knowledge base for future teachers (Haertel, 1991). The KSAs that make up the edTPA may all be essential to the job teaching, but they may not be the only KSAs that are essential; in fact, they may not even be the most critical KSAs, as the process undertaken to validate the edTPA content, as described in the *2013 edTPA Field Test: Summary Report* did not include an opportunity to nominate new KSAs (Pecheone et al., 2013).

As such, the edTPA presents an unproblematic view of teaching wherein teaching as it is currently done is assumed to be teaching as it should be done. Haertel (1991) argued that “new,

professional teaching tests must address examinees' qualifications for some roles that do not now exist, and must reach beyond traditional stereotypes of classroom teaching” (p. 9). Additionally, if a teaching assessment is going to provide an accurate picture of a candidate’s ability to fulfill the full job of teaching, it will need to reach beyond classroom level tasks to include measures of curriculum planning, mentoring, and school leadership (Haertel, 1991). In other words, these scholars believe that a professional assessment for pre-service teachers should determine whether they have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to create the schools of the future, not just to exist within the schools of the present (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010). Adherents of this viewpoint believe that the content of professional teacher examinations should be drawn from a theory of teaching that has been established via empirical research into the practice of pre-identified, exemplary teachers (Haertel, 1991; Shulman, 1988).

edTPA reliability. The reliability studies of the edTPA are more conclusive. Each edTPA submission is scored by a rater who has undergone 20 hours plus of training; approximately 10 percent of the submissions are also scored by an anonymous second reader, and the resulting two scores are compared (Pecheone et al., 2013). In 92% of comparisons, the two scores were within a single point of each other, which places edTPA inter-rater reliability at approximately the same rate as more established performance assessments like the National Board Certification for teachers and the free response components of Advanced Placement Exams (Pecheone et al., 2013).

edTPA bias and sensitivity. Though the authors of the edTPA conducted analyses to determine if subgroup biases due to first language, culture, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status existed in the assessment, by their own admission, the sample size of these individual subgroups in their field test was too small to achieve statistically valid comparisons, so the

authors recommend that “differences should be interpreted cautiously” (Pecheone et al., 2013). Future studies and analyses should be undertaken with larger samples of underrepresented groups, as cultural, class, and linguistic bias are major issues affecting the validity of standardized assessments (Díaz-Rico, 2012). This seeming lack of concern regarding cultural bias within the construction and validity analysis of the edTPA is continued within the actual content of the edTPA itself.

Standardization and the edTPA. Some stakeholders argue that such a lack of concern is inherent in any standardized assessment, and so believe that localized, context-rich assessments would be more equitable and valid measures of teacher education (NAME Political Action Committee, 2014). However, proponents of the edTPA maintain that the field of teacher education cannot perform meaningful program evaluations or comparisons without common standards and means of judgment of pre-service teacher performance (Sato, 2014). Peck, Gallucci, & Sloan (2010) argued that implementation of any educational policy mandate will have to negotiate tension between external control and local commitment, but that successful negotiation of such tension will lead to programmatic improvement. In their analysis of the adoption of the edTPA’s precursor, the PACT, in the teacher education program at a University of California campus, the authors concluded that “outcomes of accountability policies may be affected significantly by the way in which they are interpreted and taken up by local practitioners” (p. 461). Their institution, according to the authors, used the mandate of the PACT as an opportunity for inquiry into their program, and so found that their program was strengthened in the process. They suspected that, regardless of the merit or lack of merit in the policy itself, their own attitude and adoption process was the largest determiner of outcomes, and

that standardized assessment did not necessarily have to translate into a lack of local control or responsibility to local context.

Multiculturalism and the edTPA. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998) argued that a missing component in many teacher portfolios is a requirement for the inclusion of exemplars of the “moral and ethical dimensions” (p. 238) of teaching, by which she meant empathy, reflective practice, and culturally relevant teaching. While the edTPA does require significant reflection, it falls short in the other two categories. This is precisely the issue raised in the *NAME Position Statement on the edTPA*, which noted that “credential candidates’ attributes such as kindness, promotion of social justice, the ability to think on one’s feet, or to adjust teaching to the exigencies of the moment [are not] assessed or assessable by the edTPA” (p. 2).

A major criticism of the edTPA is that it fails to specifically address pre-service teachers’ dispositions toward multicultural education, social justice, or culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). In their mixed method analysis of edTPA prompts, Hyler et al. (2014) concluded that the edTPA provides space where teachers *could* discuss social justice issues and demonstrate mastery of CRP, but that it does not *require* them to do so. The authors of that study argued that in order to have sufficient flexibility to be used in all teacher preparation contexts, the edTPA, by necessity, had to sacrifice specificity in certain areas, including CRP. Liu & Milman (2013) reached a similar conclusions. For other stakeholders, this value positioning is unacceptable, as it makes the edTPA just one more tool to reinforce current sociocultural inequalities within education and society at large (Au, 2013; NAME Political Action Committee, 2014). Such social justice advocates would agree with Ladson-Billings’ (1998) assertion that “unless teachers pay attention to the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching, the technical aspects of the craft are for naught” (p. 239).

Au (2013) believed that by failing to legitimize sociocultural or political knowledge and dispositions, the edTPA is leading to a de facto narrowing of teacher preparation. He noted that, in analyzing his students' edTPA submissions, "Students who demonstrated explicit commitments to teaching for social justice in coursework and during student teaching, who saw curriculum and instruction as an important place to ask students to critically consider inequality and power, simply left their politics out of their edTPAs." If one of the major purposes of the edTPA is to further the professionalization of teachers, a goal that inherently includes training teachers to be advocates in educational policy, then the outcome that Au (2013) described is anathema to that purpose.

Privatization and the edTPA. Beyond issues of content and standardization, critics of the edTPA also object to the administration of the assessment by Pearson Education, a for-profit corporation (Sato, 2014). Proponents of the edTPA maintain that Pearson's only role is administrative—that is, they provide the infrastructure to administer, store, and score the exams, but they make no decisions regarding content (Darling-Hammond, 2012). However, in a study of pre-service teacher experience with the edTPA at Washington State University, Margolis & Doring (2013), though ultimately noting the edTPA's favorable impact on student reflection, found that "the university's perspective on readiness to teach is intentionally and systematically being replaced by a specious and corporate (specifically the Pearson Corporation) model of teacher evaluation" (p. 282). This has led some stakeholders to believe that the major strength of the edTPA, its creation by teachers and teacher educators, will soon fade away.

Au (2013) saw two possible futures for the edTPA: 1) total irrelevance as corporate education reformers move completely away from performance assessments and refocus on traditional high-stakes standardized exams, or 2) co-opted success, wherein the edTPA does

serve as the gatekeeper that the teaching profession has searched for, but, in the process, it becomes a de facto high stakes exam with all the issues of artificiality and teaching-to-the-test that are inherent in such exams.

Rival exam. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) is currently developing a rival exam to the edTPA, the Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers (PPAT) (Sawchuk, 2014). This exam is in field-testing, with a modified version of it already having been fully adopted by the state of Missouri. However, most stakeholders harbor exactly the same concerns about this new ETS exam that they did about the edTPA, concerns about issues of validity, standardization, privatization of scoring, and multicultural content (Sawchuk, 2014).

Good Teaching

A second strand of literature informing this study is comprised of scholarship exploring varying constructions of good teaching. Before delving too far into that literature, however, it is necessary to briefly discuss the contested nature of teaching itself and varying definitions of teaching that have shaped the field of research on teaching and teacher education. As Fenstermacher & Richardson (2005) asked in their own analysis of good teaching, “It would be odd, would it not, to embark on a search for a superb example of a thing if we had no idea of the thing itself?” (p. 187). However, in the case of *teaching*, the thing itself has proven somewhat difficult to define.

Defining teaching. Examples from the four editions of the *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (1963, 1973, 1986, 2001) provide a useful snapshot of the broadening understanding of the term *teaching* within the field of educational research. In the first edition, Gage (1963) defined teaching as “any interpersonal influence aimed at changing the ways in which other persons can or will behave” (p. 96). Ten years later, in the next edition of that handbook,

McNeil & Popham (1973) broadened that definition to include intended outcomes beyond behavioral change. For those authors, teaching was “interactive behavior with one or more students for the purpose of effecting a change in those students. The change, whether it is to be attitudinal, cognitive, or motor, is intentional on the part of the teacher” (p. 219). In the third edition, Greene (1986) defined teaching as “intentional activities or complexes of activities aimed at moving others to take cognitive (and, perhaps imaginative or creative) action on their own initiatives” (p. 479), increasing emphasis upon student empowerment or agency as part of the teaching process. By the time of the most recent handbook, Greene (2001) argued that teaching was providing learners with “opportunities to articulate, or to give some kind of shape to their lived experience, [so] all kinds of questions may arise. Gaps appear in narratives; awareness of lacks and deficiencies become visible; bright movements and epiphanies highlight the dark times, the fear, the felt failures” (p. 83). She sums this up, saying that to teach is “to learn to let others learn” (p. 83). Such an open-ended and indirect construction of teaching contrasts sharply with the concise, behavioristic definition provided by Gage (1963) almost 40 years earlier. In fact, throughout the course of educational scholarship, defining the nature of teaching has resulted in significant tension and intellectual partisanship.

Several scholars have explored the tension created by competing and seemingly contradictory definitions of teaching that have shaped educational discourse and practice (Jackson, 1986; Lefstein, 2005). Jackson (1986) described what he considered two competing traditions of teaching—*mimetic* and *transformative*. According to Jackson (1986), the goal of transformative teaching is for “a transformation of one kind or another [to occur] in the person being taught—a qualitative change often of dramatic proportion, a metamorphosis” (p. 120). He juxtaposed this with what he considered a more common tradition of teaching—the *mimetic*

tradition which “gives a central place to the transmission of factual and procedural knowledge from one person to another” (p. 117). Jackson (1986) argued that these “two distinguishably different ways of thinking about education and of translating that thought into practice undergird most of the differences of opinion that have circulated within educational circles over the past two or three centuries” (p. 116). From Jackson’s (1986) perspective, these two traditions, while “depicted at swords’ point” (p. 116), are actually parts of the same whole, and the best teaching would probably involve a synthesis of the two traditions. He was not, however, optimistic that such a synthesis could be fully realized, given the ascendancy of the mimetic tradition, as evidenced by the fact that “achievement test scores have become *the* outcome variable by which to measure teaching effectiveness and the quality of schools in general” (p. 132) and by “the gradual emergence and the ultimate hegemony of the ‘scientific spirit’ within the educational community...[which] constitutes a challenge to the transformative tradition through its endorsement of greater precision, objectivity, and reliability in the conduct of educational affairs” (p. 132).

Jackson (1986) was writing almost 30 years ago, but more recent scholars have described a similar phenomenon, lending credence to his predications. Lefstein (2005) described conflicting visions of *technical* and *personal* teaching. In the former, teaching is conceptualized as a “a technical method, which can be ‘identified, disseminated and universally adopted’” (Lefstein, 2005, p. 334). In the latter, teaching is “viewed primarily as a relationship, which is constituted by how teachers and students interact holistically” (p. 347). Like Jackson (1986), Lefstein (2005) noted that the two sides of this dichotomy were frequently considered to be in violent conflict with each other, and, again like Jackson (1986), he believed that a more constructive approach would be to explore ways to address both conceptualizations. He argued,

Purely technical teaching would lead to inflexible, unthinking, insensitive and amoral educational activity. An absolutist personal approach would deny teachers essential technical tools and important scientific insights, thereby confining them to the horizons of their own experience. Either vision, embraced exclusively and in its totality, becomes a dangerous hallucination. (Lefstein, 2005, p. 347).

While Lefstein (2005) described ways that such a synthesis might occur, at present, discourse about teaching is still firmly divided along ideological lines (Lefstein & Snell, 2014).

Since so little consensus exists regarding teaching itself, it is not surprising then that there is even less consensus regarding *good teaching*. However, despite this lack of consensus about definition, many researchers agree about the importance of exploring the constructions of good teaching held by both pre-service and in-service teachers.

Importance of defining good teaching. A variety of educational researchers have established that the definitions of good teaching held by teachers shape their professional practice (Jackson, 1986; Sato, 2014). According to Korthagen (2004), “The beliefs teachers hold with regard to learning and teaching determine their actions” (p. 81), influencing, among other things, how teachers view students, how teachers view themselves in relation to their work, how teachers judge the success of their practice, and how teachers make pedagogical and curricular choices. Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005) argued that “learning to teach requires that new teachers come to think about (and understand) teaching in ways quite different from what they have learned from their own experience as students” (p. 359). Given the importance of belief in shaping practice, a number of researchers have called for further inquiry into the ways that teacher education programs can impact teacher candidate beliefs about good or effective teaching (Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, & James, 2002).

Educational researchers have used a wide variety of adjectives to label what they consider to be the very best in teaching. Some terms used by researchers and policymakers include good (e.g. Chingos & Peterson, 2011), quality (e.g. Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005), exemplary (e.g. Feldman, 1997), effective (e.g. Calabria, 1960), expert (e.g. Berliner, 1986), and excellent (e.g. Chen, Brown, Hattie, & Millward, 2012). Such wide variance in descriptive vocabulary is representative of the larger concern identified by Grossman and McDonald (2008) that the study of teaching lacks a “common language for naming its constituent parts” (p. 186). What one researcher may label *good* teaching another may label *excellent* teaching and vice versa. Additionally, even researchers who use the same label to describe ideal teaching often define that ideal in very different ways. Some of the more contested issues within the discourse of good teaching include questions of whether *teaching* encompasses all of the actions that a teacher performs as part of his or her job or if *teaching* is a more specialized activity distinct from, for example, *planning*, *assessing*, or *curriculum-building*.

Previous researchers have attempted to bring clarity to some of these terms. Wang et al. (2011) reviewed use of the term *quality* in the context of teacher education, noting several very distinct ways in which educational researchers use the term and comparing these varying views on *quality* to the fractalization of a single image when viewed through a kaleidoscope. For example, when Zumwalt and Craig (2005) discussed *quality* in an educational context, they were referring to variables in teacher background which included college entrance test scores, college major, GPA, and certification status. However, when Lampert (2010) mentioned *quality*, she was referring to elements of teacher practice rather than teacher background. Similar discrepancies in meaning and usage exist for all of the terms mentioned above which are used to positively describe teaching—*good*, *exemplary*, *effective*, and *excellent*. Since this study focuses

on participant constructions of teaching, as the most general of these terms, *good* is used throughout this study in an attempt to allow participants the most leeway in defining the term themselves. The following section provides an overview of historical definitions of good teaching. Implied within each of those definitions is an understanding of the intended outcomes of teaching; that is, to return to Hume's Law, the proponents of each of the definitions below might answer the question of what education *ought* to do very differently, and, because of those differing answers they come to different conclusions about what constitutes good teaching.

Historical overview of definitions of good teaching. Many early writers, such as McKeachie (1963), Russell & Fea (1963), Meckel (1963), and Carroll (1963) argued that organization was an essential element in helping students better acquire information, and so good teaching entailed heavily structured planning and sequencing of learning activities. These scholars advocated for sequential learning experiences with predetermined progressions as indicative of quality teaching. This particular view of good teaching resulted in highly defined lesson planning formats and procedures such as those developed by Hunter & Russell (1981), and the view of "systematic teaching" described by Rosenshine & Stevens (1986). In general, advocates of sequential planning measured the quality of teaching by its ability to improve student academic achievement.

An opposing viewpoint sees good teaching as reflective and flexible, constantly changing and adapting to new contexts and learners. This view of teaching draws its inspiration from the thinking of Dewey (Dewey, 1910, 1933) and, more recently, Schon (1987). According to Menges & Austin (2001), excellent teaching is discursive, adaptive, interactive, and reflective. Darling-Hammond (2006) argued that in order for practice to be effective, "what teachers do must be continually evaluated and reshaped based on whether it advances learning" (p. 304).

Kane et al. (2004) saw reflection as the concept which could integrate all aspects of quality teaching; it was “the hub of the teaching excellence wheel” (p. 303). Feiman-Nemser (2001) concurred, noting that one of the most important habits which new teachers could pick up was “wondering about teaching” (p. 25). Hattie (2004) argued that excellent teachers “tend not make hard and fast plans, but rather adapt pacing and instruction depending upon context and learners” (p. 27). This ability is what Stronge et al. (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011) referred to as the Instructional Differentiation Subdomain in their cross-analysis of teacher effectiveness research. Teaching that embodies this definition gives teachers the abilities of “detecting and remediating error and confusion [which] are skills of considerable magnitude” (Fenstermacher, 1978, p. 174).

Another view of good teaching sees such work as the application of proper instructional treatments to identified academic problems. This construction tends to use a medical metaphor involving teachers diagnosing student learning difficulties and treating those difficulties with research-based instructional interventions (Doyle, 1979). These treatments tend to be based upon teaching behaviors such as those identified by Dunkin & Biddle (1974) and Brophy & Good (1986), and focus on the question of “which skills to use and when to use them” (Katz, 1981, p. 22). Schussler, Stooksberry, & Bercaw (2010) also overview this definition in their discussion of the intellectual domain of teaching.

Classroom management and student motivation is another factor that many scholars have equated with good teaching. Brophy & Good (1986) noted that time allocation to academic tasks and effective pacing were among the most replicated links to increased student achievement. The authors were able to show that the more time students spent actively engaged in academic tasks, the more likely they were to meet their learning goals, establishing a convincing argument that good teaching is excellent classroom management and student motivation. Calabria (1960)

also noted that control and discipline were essential elements of quality teaching. This definition is fully developed in Doyle's (1986) overview of research on the impact of classroom management. Stronge, Ward, & Grant (2011) further explored the concept of management as effective teaching under the domain of Learning Environments. Hay/McBer's (2000) study of teacher effectiveness also supports this definition, detailing the importance of time and resource management in effecting student achievement.

An alternate view of good teaching sees teachers primarily as transmitting information and knowledge to students, and, therefore, argues that the transmission must be as clear and efficient as possible. According to Feldman (1997), the second highest correlate with student achievement from student evaluations was teacher clarity. This corresponds with Cruickshank's (1992) assertion that good teaching is clear teaching, and with Brophy & Good's (1986) finding that "clarity of presentation is a consistent correlate of achievement" (p. 362).

While the previous definitions primarily focus on one-way transmission of information from teacher to student, other scholars see good teaching as highly interactive and cooperative, building a community of learners working toward common purposes through caring and trusting relationships. Probably one of the most influential advocates of this view of excellent teaching was the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, who argued in most of his works for pedagogy based upon a dialogue of equals working toward common purposes (Freire, 1993, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2011). Another significant advocate of this approach is Nel Noddings, the educational philosopher who popularized the importance of an *ethic of care* in education (Noddings, 1984, 2001). Kane et al. (2004) "suggest[ed] that teaching at all levels is primarily about building relevant interpersonal relationships with students" (p. 296), and Hay/McBer (2000) noted that creating trust was essential to establishing an effective classroom.

A correlate to the previous construction sees good teaching as inclusive of multiple perspectives and empowering of diverse populations and cultures. Again, the work of Freire (1993, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2011) heavily emphasized this particular view. From this perspective, good teaching must be culturally responsive (Wang, Odell, Klecka, Spalding, & Lin, 2010) and should prompt action to address issues of power differential and social justice (Apple, 1979; Giroux, 1979). Zeichner & Liston (1990) discuss this view under the heading of the social reconstruction tradition in teacher education reform, and many other scholars have analyzed the ways in which some version of social and cultural empowerment have impacted the views of good teaching proposed by various teacher education reforms (Britzman, 2003; Kennedy, 1998; Schussler et al., 2010; Zeichner, 2006).

A final conception argues that teaching can only be good if it embodies moral and ethical action and decision-making. As Charters (1963) noted, teachers transmit values to their students, both directly and indirectly, and so this definition argues that in order for teaching to be good, it must both encourage and exemplify moral and ethical action. This vision of excellence in teaching is probably best articulated in Fenstermacher & Richardson's (2005) overview of "good" teaching, by which they mean teaching that is morally and ethically defensible. Kane et al. (2004) also argue that excellent teaching must include both integrity and honesty, and Schussler et al. (2010) stress that teaching must include activities and content which are "morally worthwhile" (p. 351).

Given the wide variability in definitions and understandings of good teaching, it is no wonder that a number of scholars have determined that good teaching is essentially unknowable, at least from a research standpoint, and have, therefore, advocated that the educational research community focus on more easily identified and studied input variables like teacher personality or

educational background (Watson, 1963). However, the recent professionalization movement in teacher education has brought somewhat more clarity to the discourse.

Good teaching and professionalization. As previously discussed, high-stakes portfolio assessments in teacher education, the phenomenon on which this inquiry is centered, are a product of the professionalization agenda of teacher education reform (Mehta & Doctor, 2013). At the heart of that agenda is a construction of good teaching that includes research-based instructional practice planned and executed in a professionally responsible manner and mediated by deep knowledge of subject-matter content and learner characteristics and context (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

InTASC standards. This view of good teaching is perhaps most clearly manifested in the recently revised *Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Teaching Standards* (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013). In order to receive accreditation, teacher education institutions must align their programs to these standards, and so they are likely to become the single most influential construction of good teaching in the United States (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2015). The InTASC standards shaped the conception of good teaching embedded in the PTPA in two ways. First, as mentioned in the previous section on portfolio assessments, the InTASC standards form a major part of the conceptual backbone of the edTPA (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2015; Lewis & Young, 2013), and, therefore, by proxy, of smaller-scale performance examinations like the PTPA which were inspired by the edTPA. Second, the PTPA was developed to directly align with the professional education standards for the state in which the study took place (Nelson, 2013), standards which were, in turn, adaptations of the InTASC standards (Myers, 2015).

The InTASC standards define good teaching according to “knowledge, dispositions, and performances” (p. 6) relating to the four major categories of Learners & Learning, Content, Instructional Practice, and Professional Responsibility (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013). InTASC describes the connection between good teaching and Learners & Learning using three standards—Standard 1: Learner Development, Standard 2: Learning Differences, and Standard 3: Learning Environments. As a whole, this category focuses on the aspects of good teaching relating to knowing and collaborating with students and families, creating safe and productive learning environments, promoting engagement and motivation, and differentiating based upon individual student needs and characteristics. The second major category in the InTASC framework is composed of Standard 4: Content Knowledge and Standard 5: Application of Content. These standards describe good teaching as it relates to in-depth knowledge of subject matter and the ability to help learners understand the relevance of that subject matter to their own lives, experiences, and goals. InTASC describes the next major category, Instructional Practice, with three standards—Standard 6: Assessment, Standard 7: Planning for Instruction, and Standard 8: Instructional Strategies. These three standards define good teaching as the ability to “integrate assessment, planning, and instructional strategies in coordinated and engaging ways” (p. 9). The last major InTASC category, Professional Responsibility, is composed of Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice and Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration. This category focuses on aspects of good teaching relating to reflective practice, ethical behavior, and positive change. As a whole, the InTASC standards define good teaching as a complex process of active decision-making and collaboration to meet the needs of individual learners in diverse contexts.

Teacher Identity

Regardless of the construction of good teaching to which a teacher subscribes, that construction will shape the practice of that teacher and, therefore, will significantly impact the students with whom that teacher works (Jackson, 1986; Korthagen, 2004; Sato, 2014). One of the reasons for this impact is that the particular views of good teaching that teachers hold are integrally related to their own senses of professional identity, which is the topic of the final strand of literature that informs this study. Understanding pre-service teacher identity is vital to the work of teacher educators (Bullough, 2005). Pre-service teacher identity helps to shape teacher candidates' interactions with teacher preparation coursework and experiences (Horn, Nolen, Ward, & Campbell, 2008). Webb (2005) maintained that "The beliefs, attitudes and habitual behaviours of preservice teachers can cause stress in identity formation during teacher education, if not examined consciously and systematically" (p. 2). Such stress, if unexamined can significantly undermine the efficacy of teacher preparation. According to Poulou (2007), "an important factor contributing to the incomplete transfer of the theories taught in the university to classroom teaching practice...lies in the failure of prospective teacher training programmes to act upon and challenge the student-teachers' already formed beliefs" (p. 94). On the other hand, systematic examination of identity formation "will lead to the development of more effective teacher education programs that prepare highly qualified teachers for 21st century school-age populations" (JE Cooper & He, 2012, p. 89). Jarvis-Selinger et al. (2010) believed that teacher identity research should "be used by teacher education programs to support, challenge, build, and enhance teachers' developing professional identity and commitment to teaching" (p. 71). Oruç (2013) summed this up, saying "The more we know about teacher identity—the phases and the reasons of identity development—, the better we can design our

teacher education programs” (p. 210). Understanding identity is essential to improving teacher education.

Defining teacher identity. However, identity is not easily encapsulated into simple definitions. Its essential attributes and components are heavily contested (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Hong, 2010). Walkington (2005) defined identity by its impact on practice, noting that “The uniqueness of every teacher’s approach to teaching, shaped by personal teacher identity, is what makes every classroom ‘look’ different” (p. 54). Alsop (2006) defined identity as a “general sense of selfhood or understanding of the self; a set of distinguishing characteristics of an individual that emerge from this sense of selfhood” (p. 205). Bucholtz & Hall (2005) put it another way, noting that “Identity is the social positioning of self and other” (p. 586). According to Delahunty (2012), “Identity is a complex notion due to its dynamic state of formation and redefinition over time and space, its multi-faceted nature, and the complexities associated with what is occurring interpersonally and perceptually between others and self” (p. 409). In order to clarify the concept of identity and provide analytical guidance to researchers, a variety of scholars have developed teacher identity frameworks.

Identity frameworks. Trent & Lim (2010) established a two-part identity framework based upon a combination of the work of Wenger (1998) and Fairclough (2003). Wenger (1998) was concerned with the way in which people manifest their identities through their actions or practices. That is, he wanted to know how what people did helped to both define and project who they were. Fairclough (2003), however, focused upon the impact of discourse in constructing and portraying identity. From this standpoint, language, rather than action, becomes the essential vehicle for both identity construction and identity projection. Trent & Lim argued that both discourse and practice were essential components of identity, and that by combining the

perspectives of Wenger (1998) and Fairclough (2003), they could perform “more ‘multi-faceted’ and ‘multi-layered’ analyses of identity construction” (p. 1611).

Gee (2000a) also understood identity to be multi-faceted, attempting to explain the complexity of identity formation by establishing four different identity categories. The first are natural identities (N-identities), which are determined by natural forces outside of human control, forces like genetics. The second are institutional identities (I-identities), which are formed by institutions of social control like governments. The third are discourse identities (D-identities) which are established and sustained through dialogue with others. The last are affinity identities (A-identities) which are taken by choosing to associate with and take up the behaviors or customs of a particular group. All of these kinds of identity establish Gee’s (2000a) overarching definition of identity as “Being recognized as a certain ‘kind of person,’ in a given context” (p. 99).

In a comprehensive synthesis of teacher identity studies from 1988-2000, Beijaard et al. (2004) determined that professional identity is composed of four major features. First, professional identity is “an ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation” (p. 122). Second, professional identity is formed by the interaction of “both person and context” (p. 122). Third, “A teacher’s identity consists of sub-identities that more or less harmonize” (p. 122). When these sub-identities do not harmonize, teachers experience conflict and tension commensurate with the importance of that sub-identity. Lastly, “Agency is an important element of professional identity, meaning that teachers have to be active in the process of professional development” (p. 122). In sum, identity construction does not happen to a person; it is a task that person must undertake.

Building on the work of Beijaard et al. (2004), Hong (2010) postulated six major factors that shape teacher professional identity: value, efficacy, commitment, knowledge and belief, emotion and micropolitics. In this framework, *value* referred to positive or negative feelings about aspects related to teaching, including school settings and content areas. *Efficacy* meant a judgment of personal ability “to work as a successful teacher” (p. 1536). *Commitment* meant a level of dedication to the profession including the amount of time and energy someone was willing to put into improving knowledge and practice. By *knowledge and belief*, Hong (2010) meant both “subject matter content knowledge, which refers to knowledge of facts and concepts in subject matter, and pedagogical content knowledge which means the transformation of content knowledge into the way that best facilitates student learning” (p. 1538). *Emotion* in this context meant specifically “emotional burnout and stress” (p. 1537). Lastly, *micropolitics* referred to a teacher’s understanding of “power relations and their connection to their teaching practice” (p. 1538). According to Hong (2010), the interplay of these six factors help to construct teacher professional identity.

Akkerman & Meijer (2011) took a slightly different approach from the previous frames, conceptualizing identity as a continuous dialogue in which six seemingly contradictory positions are explored or reconciled: “teacher identity can be typified as both unitary and multiple, both continuous and discontinuous, and both individual and social” (p. 309). In maintaining that identity is both unitary and multiple, the authors argue that, in any given context, different facets of a person’s identity, the “sub-identities” mentioned by Beijaard et al (2004), rise to the forefront, giving a person a multiplicity of identities. However, that person is constantly working to synthesize those different facets, and, in that synthesis, forging, at least for the moment, a unitary identity. As contexts change, and new facets of identity rise to the forefront,

ongoing synthesis is required, which leads to the authors' assertion that identity is discontinuous. At the same time, while identity may be discontinuous from instance to instance, Akkerman & Meijer (2011) maintained people must feel that they have a unitary identity, and so they continuously weave discontinuous identities into a narration of who they are. The structure of the story, then, helps them create a unified understanding of their own identities. Part of that story, of course, involves other people, and the associations a person makes with other people help to construct his or her identity. In the specific context of teachers, this means that "teachers implicitly construct and negotiate their identity in relation to the various people they meet and the communities they are or become engaged in" (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 314). This is the social aspect of identity. However, identity is also individual because no two people share membership in all of the same social groups. Each person is unique in the sum of their memberships and in the importance that they place upon those memberships.

Constructivist view of identity. Essential to this research is the constructivist view of teacher identity, which states that identity is not fixed, but, rather, is constantly being constructed (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004; Bloomfield, 2010; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Chong, 2011; JE Cooper & He, 2012; Estola, 2003; Franzak, 2002; Galman, 2009; Gee, 2000a; Hong, 2010; Horn et al., 2008; Jarvis-Selinger et al., 2010; Olsen, 2008; Oruç, 2013; Pillen, Den Brok, & Beijaard, 2013; Webb, 2005). For much of history, a person's identity was assumed to be simple and unchanging, established either by social position or biological characteristics (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Constructivist views challenge this idea. Beijaard et al. (2004) maintained that "Identity is not something one has, but something that develops during one's whole life" (p. 108). Olsen (Olsen, 2008) described identity development in this way:

Teacher development is circular even as it is also forward-moving: a teacher is always collapsing the past, present, and future into a complex *mélange* of professional beliefs, goals, memories, and predictions while enacting practice. (p. 24)

In pre-service teachers, this means that teacher identity will morph throughout the process of teacher preparation; understanding of that identity requires systematic inquiry throughout the process, since “interns’ teaching identities are an ongoing project” (Horn et al., 2008, p. 70). Construction of pre-service teacher identity is dependent upon personal definitions of the work of teaching, some of which candidates bring to their teacher preparation coursework, and other parts of it are created or modified throughout their education (Horn et al., 2008). Bloomfield (2010) noted that such a view of identity construction “stands in contrast to common assumptions of a coherent, heroic, unproblematic and progressive developmental journey, one in which becoming a teacher is seen to involve the ‘taking on’ of a prescribed mantle encapsulating the identity of ‘the teacher’.” (p. 222). Gee (2000a) concurred, asserting that the constructivist notion of identity “allows a more dynamic approach than the sometimes overly general and static trio of ‘race, class, and gender’” (p. 99) that have traditionally been used to describe identity.

This constant back and forth in a recursive process of identity construction can be very difficult for pre-service teachers (Jarvis-Selinger et al., 2010; Pilen et al., 2013). Thomas & Beauchamp (2011) agreed, noting that “development of a professional identity does not automatically come with experience, [so] some form of deliberate action is necessary” (p. 767) in order to facilitate that development. Pilen et al. (2013) concurred, noting that “It is essential that teacher educators or mentors in schools support beginning teachers in this respect and are aware of their professional identity tensions” (p. 87).

Tension and Dissonance. Most pre-service teachers do not expect to go through such a process. Instead, they come to teacher preparation programs “with clear images of what teaching entails and how they see themselves as teachers” (Chong, 2011, p. 220). Much of the task of identity development involves “the process of integrating one’s personal knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, norms, and values on the one hand, and professional demands from teacher education institutes and schools, including broadly accepted values and standards about teaching” (Pillen et al., 2013, p. 86). Britzman (2003) argued that

Learning to teach is not a mere matter of applying decontextualized skills or of mirroring predetermined images; it is a time when one’s past, present, and future are set in dynamic tension. Learning to teach like teaching itself is always the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become. (p. 8)

Franzak (2002) noted that pre-service teachers usually experience tension between what they envisioned teaching to be like and what they observe in their field experiences. Dissonance is “a mismatch between students’ idealized perceptions of the profession and the reality that often confronts students in their teaching practice” (Friesen & Besley, 2013, p. 29), and the negotiation of such dissonance is essential to identity development (Chong, 2011; Galman, 2009). Pre-service teachers will experience dissonance between their own inclinations and those of their cooperating teachers and university supervisors, between their past experiences and their current contexts, and between their own visions of teaching and the understandings conveyed by their coursework (Pillen et al., 2013). The participant in Franzak’s (2002) case study struggled to reconcile her own dedication to teacher activism and collaboration with the conditions of isolation that she found in her field experience. Such struggles can lead pre-service teachers to

question what it means to be a teacher and what kind of teachers they are or hope to be. Friesen & Besley (2013) argued that teacher education programs need to help students through such struggles, but that “challenging long established beliefs which may be highly resistant to change requires an approach which is both supportive, respectful, and acknowledges that these beliefs form the initial platform from which a mature professional identity may emerge” (p. 30).

Alsup (2006) discussed her own experience searching for a teacher identity, noting that, as a new teacher, “I certainly wasn’t the teacher I wanted to be—in fact, I didn’t completely know what or who that teacher was yet” (p. 3). This is not what pre-service teachers expect when they enter the profession, however. They come into teaching with preconstructed notions of who and what a teacher should be, notions that are informed by their past interactions with teachers and with media portrayals of teachers. They expect themselves to seamlessly transition into this preconceived identity. In contrast, Alsup (2006) described the process of establishing teacher identity as one of “continual becoming rather than an endpoint culminating in a singular identity construction” (p. 7). Lack of preparation for the difficult ongoing nature of the identity construction process leads to significant tension in pre-service teachers. Alsup maintained that in order to alleviate that tension, pre-service teachers should not seek to establish a fixed new “teacher” identity, but, rather, should seek to become comfortable “reaching the in-between ground, the place of becoming, the space of ambiguity and reflection” (p. 9). Alsup calls this space a “borderland discourse” (p. 9), that is, a space where pre-service teachers can experiment by moving between and combining elements of personal, professional, and societal constructs of teacher identity.

Alsup (2006) argued that, though tension is uncomfortable, the existence of such tension is essential to successfully building teacher identity. It is only through the experiencing of tension

and the testing of ideas and values against context that true professional identity can be formed. Horn et al. (2008) agreed. In their study of teacher identity, they found that

In the best scenarios, this tension helped the interns develop their pedagogical reasoning while, at the same time, honing their ability to adapt and coordinate different practices. If they had too much ease in implementing teaching practices, interns had limited opportunities to develop adaptation strategies and their reasoning. On the other hand, if they had too much difficulty, they often abandoned the practices they learned in teacher education in favor of the ones in place in the classroom, thus limiting their opportunities to develop skills in deploying those practices. (p. 71)

The point for teacher educators, then, is not to eliminate the tension, but to provide pre-service teachers with the proper tools to negotiate that tension.

Narrative & identity. Narratives are one of the most important tools that can be used to negotiate identity tension. Many scholars have maintained that stories are an essential component of identity construction for pre-service teachers (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009; Estola, 2003; Galman, 2009). Bamberg (2005) argued that discursive analysis of narrative provides essential insights into the identities of individuals. According to Galman (2009) “the stories pre-service teachers tell may illuminate the contours of their budding identities as teachers and showcase the structures of belief that may drive thinking and practice, and also serve as schema for interpreting and incorporating their new teacher education experiences” (p. 469). In this viewpoint, identity is conceived as narrative and is established by the stories that people tell themselves and about themselves (Estola, 2003). Teaching biographies, then, become essential components of identity construction (Li, 2007) since “Formative life experiences shape the teaching self and become major determinants of the

teaching experience, and, further, teachers' work contexts strongly influence the type of experiences that educators come to understand as teaching" (Skerrett, 2008, p. 144).

Though he too believed that stories were essential to identity formation and expression, Bullough (2005) cautioned that writing stories down has the effect of freezing the narrative and imposing order and structure on what is actually multi-faceted and ever-changing. He argued that "The stories we tell of ourselves are spoken to specific persons, to an audience, and shifts in audience and of place result in changed stories each of which might be recognized as true and as belonging to a single, whole, embodied, life" (p. 241). In this viewpoint, the act of telling the story is as important as the story itself. In her advocacy of "small story research" (p. 538), Vásquez (2011) argued a similar point, arguing that "big stories" (p. 538), by which she means narratives that are deliberately constructed for research purposes, are artificially ordered and simplified "to produce a sense of coherence out of what may otherwise seem like a jumble of random experiences" (p. 538). She argued that the context of a story's telling shapes the story that is told, as speakers position themselves and their actions differently depending upon their reasons for telling their stories and the audiences to whom they are narrating.

Field experience as an identity arena. For pre-service teachers, the primary arenas where identity work takes place are the classrooms of their university teacher-preparation programs and, often more importantly, the classrooms of their field placements (Chong, 2011). Student teaching "takes on a distinct importance in the formation of [pre-service teachers'] role and perceptions of their responsibilities as future teachers" (Poulou, 2007, p. 91). Coward, Matteson, & Hamman (2011) noted that "the very term *student teacher* implies an individual who plays seemingly dichotomous roles" (p. 33). During field experience placements, pre-service teachers must simultaneously inhabit the roles of student in their university classes and

student teacher in their field placements while trying to establish themselves as full-fledged classroom teachers in their own right (Ottesen, 2007). In order for field experience to shape pre-service teacher identity in ways that are conscious and purposeful, reflection is absolutely necessary.

Reflection as identity work. A wide range of stakeholders have emphasized the importance of reflection to teacher development and educational improvement (Brownlee, Dart, Boulton-Lewis, & McCrindle, 1998; Bullough, 2005; Poulou, 2007; Schon, 1987; Zeichner, 1981). Brownlee et al. (1998) argued that reflecting on pre-existing beliefs through the lens of current experience and understanding was essential to professional growth. Poulou (2007) noted that “Core reflection centres on professional identity, that is the experience of self as teacher, and mission, which is the reason why someone decides to become a teacher” (p. 93). This reflection on identity must be ongoing throughout both teacher preparation and in-service teaching

Shapiro (2010) believed that teacher reflection should be not just analytical, but emotional as well. She made the case that what teachers feel, both positive and negative, about themselves in relation to their work is an important component of identity construction, and that “Through the expression of emotional identity, teachers can develop greater reflexivity, stronger solidarity, and heightened sensitivity toward their colleagues and students” (p. 620). Coward et al. (2012) also emphasized the importance of emotion, arguing that “professional identities are influenced by both how they [teachers] feel about themselves and how they feel about their students” (p. 32). Exploration of these feelings, then, is a critical part of reflection and identity construction (McDougall, 2010).

Identity in changing contexts. Identity work has become all the more crucial given the rapid change that characterizes education and society today. Technological advancement, as

well as the competing forces of regulation, deregulation, and professionalization in education, are continually changing what it means to teach and to be a teacher (Cochran-Smith, 2001).

Clandinin et al. (2009) described these phenomena as the “shifting landscapes on which teachers live and work” (p. 142) and argued that critical inquiry both into the change and into the ways in which teachers and teacher educators respond to the change should form an essential part of future research. Liu & Xu (2011) noted that “in times of change, identity is not static and fixed but negotiated and shifting” (p. 596), and if individuals are unprepared for the emotional difficulty of such constant and rapid shifting, they may experience negative self-efficacy rather than personal and professional growth.

Identity in new times. The interplay of social media, information technology, and globalized popular culture have created both new challenges and new opportunities for educators, particularly in the field of literacy. Several scholars have given recognition to this phenomenon of rapid change by calling it *new times* (Gee, 2000b; Kenway, Bigum, Fitzclarence, Collier, & Tregenza, 1994; Luke & Elkins, 1998; Rodriguez & Hallman, 2013). According to Kenway et al. (1994), *new times* in education is becoming an “increasingly marketized and technologized” (p. 7) experience. Luke & Elkins (1998) argued that what literacy educators now need most is “a vision of the future of literacy, a picture of the texts and discourses, skills and knowledges that might be needed by our students as they enter new worlds of work and citizenship, traditional and popular culture, leisure and consumption, teaching and learning” (p. 4). For educators whose primary duty is the promotion of literacy skill—primary teachers, English teachers, and reading teachers—living in *new times* requires a fundamental shift in understanding of identity, a shift that is not easily made.

In a study of teacher identity in primary literacy teachers in Australia, McDougall (2010) found that her participants responded to the changing demands of *new times* by adopting one of three primary identity discourses: traditionalism, survival, or futures. Teachers identifying with traditionalism expressed “preference for traditional teaching priorities” (p. 683) like basic reading and writing skills, and pushed back against the inclusion of new literacies and discourses. Those teachers who were in survival mode also reacted negatively to expanding definitions of literacy, but did so because they felt unable or unqualified to teach these new literacies, and so, because they did not feel that they could teach them adequately, they hoped not to teach them at all. The last group of teachers, those who identified with a futures perspective, saw expanded definitions of literacy as opportunities for personal growth and motivation of students. For all of these teachers, the way that they defined their subject matter was, in part, the way that they defined themselves.

Regulation and teacher identity. An increased focus on regulation and standardization in education has a serious impact on teacher identity construction (Day, Elliot, & Kington, 2005). According to Bucholtz & Hall (2008), “Identity work is a highly politicized process in which social actors claim, contest, and negotiate power and authority” (p. 154). As governments place increased emphasis on teacher accountability for student performance on standardized tests, and districts increasingly implement standardized or even scripted curricula, teachers’ sense of agency, and, therefore, their professional identities, are threatened (Lasky, 2005). Walkington (2005) noted that “The importance of dedicating sufficient time, reflecting on practice, empowering decision-making and learning through research in action is strongly recommended as means to promoting a positive and personally meaningful teacher identity” (p. 63). However, the demands of increased regulation and decreased autonomy make those tasks much more

difficult. Teachers who were drawn to the profession primarily because of their concern for students, and who give primacy to the building of relationships see “no evidence that these core identities are acknowledged or valued” (Day et al., 2005, p. 575). Day et al. (2005) argued that teacher preparation programs must work to provide pre-service teachers with the tools necessary to sustain their identities and commitment to the profession in the face of such a contradiction.

Connecting the Strands

These three strands of thought—portfolios, definitions of good teaching, and teacher identity—are connected to each other and to PTPA by the process of meaning-making that Wenger (1998) described. According to Wenger (1998), “Human engagement in the world is first and foremost a process of negotiating meaning” (p. 53), the mechanism of which are the concurrent actions of *participation* and *reification*. Participation refers to “a complex process that combines doing, talking, thinking, feeling, and belonging” (p. 56). In the context of teacher education, participation consists of the daily activities of pre-service teachers within their field placements and courses. Reification refers to the process by which “aspects of human experience and practice are congealed into fixed forms and given the status of object” (p.59). Leander (2002) called such objects artifacts, defining them as “any instrument that mediates between subjects in interaction and the object of their activity” (p. 201); high stakes portfolio assessments such as the edTPA and the PTPA are such artifacts.

During their daily activities within teacher education programs, pre-service teachers *participate* in activities and practices that help them to enact or re-conceptualize their definitions of good teaching (Chong, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) and shape their professional identities (Alsup, 2006; Bullough, 2005). As numerous scholars have noted, these understandings of good teaching and teacher identities that pre-service teachers form to attempt

to enact those understandings are under constant tension, shifting and remolding through the course of professional preparation and practice (Alsup, 2006; Chong, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Horn et al., 2008; Pillen et al., 2013). When they complete high-stakes portfolio assessments, pre-service teachers *reify* understandings of good teaching and of their own professional identities into a concrete artifact—the portfolio itself.

Wenger (1998) argued that reification was an essential component of meaning-making; it is “the process of giving form to our experiences by producing objects that congeal experience into 'thingness.' In doing so we create points of focus around which negotiation of meaning becomes organized” (p. 58). Participation is ongoing, constantly changing due to context and circumstance, but reification allows us to “freeze fleeting moments of engagement in practice into monuments, which persist and disappear in their own time” (p.60). Drawing upon Wenger’s (1998) theory, Leander (2002) noted that significant reifications, which he called “artifacts of identity” (p. 198), actually function to stabilize frequently shifting constructions such as identity. As reifications of teaching practice and teacher identity, portfolios serve as “window into the teaching and learning achievements of the teacher and therefore offer valuable insights into the prospective teacher’s practice” (Loughran & Corrigan, 1995, p. 566). Given the high-stakes nature (Sato, 2014) and significant time commitment (Shulman, 1998) involved in the completion of portfolio assessments for teacher licensure, coupled with the timeframe of student teaching in which they are completed, a timeframe when professional identity and understandings of the work of teaching are under constant tension (Alsup, 2006; Bickmore, Smagorinsky, & O’Donnell-Allen, 2005), I began this study postulating that, as reifications of practice, assessments such as the edTPA and the PTPA might have significant influence over participant constructions of good teaching and understandings of their own teacher identities.

Though states across the country seem to be moving toward high-stakes portfolio assessments as requirements of teacher licensure, the broad implications of this move are not yet fully understood. The most widely used and explored of these assessments, the edTPA, is still fairly new, and its footprint within scholarly literature is relatively small. Smaller scale, single state exams are even less well-understood. The PTPA is completely absent from scholarly literature; the exams that inspired it, including the widely adopted edTPA, are still questioned by many in the field of teacher education, in large part because of fears that the exams will negatively reshape the way that teacher candidates view the work of teaching, and that such reshaping will, in turn impact both who enters the teaching profession and how those who do enter see themselves in relation to their work. This study seeks to examine the impact of the PTPA upon a cohort of pre-service teachers to determine if, indeed the exam is shaping teacher candidate identity and understanding of good teaching, and, if so, in what ways.

Chapter Three:

Research Context and Methods

The Interpretive Paradigm

Many of the most important educational questions are questions of value rather than of fact, and must be interpreted through the particular views of reality that individual stakeholders—teachers, students, pre-service teachers, teacher educators, policymakers, parents, researchers—have constructed. Qualitative inquiry is particularly suited to exploration of such value-laden concepts.

The questions that are of most interest to me are those that can be explored, and through that exploration can generate knowledge, but that cannot be answered in the sense of universal, concrete truth. In this, I agree with those researchers who have embraced an interpretive paradigm of educational research, and so this study is one of emergent design rooted in that paradigm (Erlandson, Skipper, Allen, & Harris, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Central to this paradigm is an understanding that multiple truths, multiple realities, exist concurrently and are constructed depending upon the unique perspectives and contexts of participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As described by Denzin & Lincoln (2005) “Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3). Because this research paradigm views knowledge as highly contextual and gives primacy to the meanings established by participants within the study, much of the research design for such a study had to be emergent, that is, developing in response to questions, themes, and concerns that arise throughout the course of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Qualitative Methods

I explored the impact of the PTPA on pre-service English teachers through the use of an in-depth qualitative mixed-methods case study, which provided “an in-depth description and interpretation of the subject as it exists” (Delahunty, 2012) within a “bounded system” (Stake, 1995). My own particular bounded system was a cohort of pre-service English teachers undertaking their advanced practicum and student teaching during the 2014-2015 academic year. This study fits the definition of an *instrumental case study*, where a “particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue” (Stake, 2005, p. 445), in my case the issue of pre-service English teacher constructions of good teaching and the relationship of those constructions to a high stakes performance examination—the PTPA. As Stake (2005) noted, a “case study is both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry” (p. 444).

Case study, then, offers the possibility of providing a holistic snapshot of such an issue in all its complexity, with the goal of helping the reader to develop “vicarious experience” (Stake, 1995). Case study research allows for delving deeply into the unique attributes of an individual case and communicating those attributes through thick description and well-crafted story (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995, 2005). Much educational research carries with it, at least implicitly, the goal of improving education—that is, of discovering that which is advantageous in order to make those advantages more widely available. However, advantages can become limitations when conditions change, so understanding conditions is just as important as understanding advantages. Educational settings are rife with changing conditions—policies, personnel, and students swirl in and out of the halls of American schools, bringing with them changing values, needs, strengths, and priorities. Case studies, with their “intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, 2001, p. 27)

are unique in their ability to capture all of these complexities. Building such a holistic picture required a mixture of qualitative methods including in-depth interviewing (Seidman, 2006) and content analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Context

This study took place within the English teacher education program in the School of Education at a major research university in the Midwest, hereafter called Midwest University. Primary focus was on the experiences of a cohort of teacher candidates who graduated in the Spring Semester of 2015. These 13 pre-service teachers were navigating their final year of coursework during the time of this study. Prior to the beginning of the study, all participants had completed the majority of their general education and English content courses, as well as approximately 30 hours of Education coursework. At the commencement of the study, during the Fall Semester of 2014, all participants were enrolled in an advanced English methods course and an advanced teaching practicum. The former is the final methods course that teacher candidates take prior to student teaching, and the latter is an accompanying field experience linked to that methods course and requiring students to spend a minimum of 70 hours observing and interacting with students in area middle and high schools. Upon successful completion of these courses, teacher candidates student taught full-time in the Spring of 2015 and were concurrently enrolled in a one-hour seminar titled “Developing the Teaching Portfolio.” It is within that seminar that students received the bulk of their instruction about the PTPA.

Participants

Participant selection for this study was based upon the concept of purposeful sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since this study was not intended to produce contextless

generalization, random sampling was not appropriate. Instead, sampling decisions were made in order to achieve maximum variation in information and perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

First, I was particularly interested in the constructions and experiences of pre-service teachers. Walkington (2005) argued that "a view through the eyes of the pre-service teacher is essential for all clearly to understand the personalized and contextualized journey of learning" (p. 56). I chose to focus specifically on secondary pre-service teachers because pre-service teachers at the secondary level are under-researched in general (Merseth, Sommer, & Dickstein, 2008). The experience of secondary teachers is unique because they are often thought to be content experts first and teachers second; this impacts their understandings of what it means to be a good teacher and their sense of who they are as teachers (JE Cooper & He, 2012).

Second, I focused on secondary English pre-service teachers because like other secondary teachers, English teachers must balance their identification as content experts with their role as pedagogical experts (JE Cooper & He, 2012), which can be difficult to do because, according to Hochstetler (2011), "students who choose to pursue a degree in English education often don't fully understand what it means to be a teacher of English until the final semesters of their preparation program" (p. 256) when advanced methods classes and field experiences finally offer them an opportunity to merge content knowledge with pedagogical knowledge. Additionally, the experiences of English teachers are unique in that they "are often seen as responsible for the affective and attitudinal education of secondary students in ways that other content area teachers are not" (p. 259). This emphasis on emotional work may have a significant impact on pre-service teachers' understanding of what good English teaching looks like.

Therefore, the initial participants for this study were the 13 students who make up the majority of the cohort of pre-service English teachers at Midwest University in the 2014-2015

academic year¹. The cohort was relatively homogenous, with most students having grown up and attended school in the Midwest. Twelve of the students were female, and only one was male. All were undergraduates, and most were traditional college students, now in their fourth year out of high school.

Participant biographies. The following section provides biographical and contextual details for each of my 13 participants. Participants chose their own pseudonyms based upon characters from favorite texts.

Anna. Anna is a musician and an artist. She has a passion for world languages and cultures, having grown up as a second-generation American in one of the country's largest cities. She speaks multiple languages and plans to teach abroad after graduation. She student taught in a rural high school.

Anne. Anne comes from a family of educators. She entered higher education initially pursuing a degree in aerospace engineering, but found future career prospects unfulfilling and switched to an education major focusing on both English and science. She would eventually like to pursue her PhD. in education. She student taught in a rural high school.

Bella. Bella is an athlete and outdoor enthusiast. She has lived most of her life in a suburban city about an hour from Midwest University. A self-described "people person," she enjoys opportunities to socialize. Her student teaching took place in a large suburban high school.

Billy. Billy is a father and a science fiction and fantasy enthusiast. His mother was an educator, but he was an indifferent student in high school, alternating between hating difficult

¹ The entire cohort consists of 17 students; however, 4 students opted not to participate in the study

subjects and being bored by those that came easily. He student taught in a large urban high school.

Clarissa. Clarissa grew up in the suburbs of one of the largest cities in the Midwest. She studied abroad in the semester leading up to student teaching, and she enjoys doing community volunteer work. She is seeking dual certification in English and Special Education and hopes to someday chair a special education department. Her student teaching took place a large suburban high school.

Dorothy. Dorothy is a mother and former cosmetologist. She has worked in retail and sales, and has determined that such careers are not fulfilling for her. She loves to dance, draw, and paint, and is interested in arts-based learning. She student taught in a rural high school.

Elizabeth. Elizabeth lived her entire life prior to college in the same city a few hours south of Midwest University. She hopes to stay in the state and teach. She has worked in retail, sales, and early childhood education, and loves baking and riding her motorcycle. She student taught in a rural middle school.

Eowyn. Eowyn grew up in a suburban city in the Southwest and was originally an environmental science major and English literature minor at a liberal arts college in New England. She did not feel comfortable in that institution and ended up transferring to Midwest University in order to pursue a degree in English education. She enjoys cooking and baking, and she intends to one day seek a Master's degree in library science. Her student teaching took place in a suburban middle school.

Eponine. Eponine grew up in the suburbs of one of the larger cities in the Midwest. She is an actress and a singer who enjoys running and traveling. Past work in food service convinced

her to seek a more rewarding career, and she is particularly interested in international education. She student taught in a rural middle school.

Katniss. Katniss is a swimmer, an avid soccer player, and a lifelong resident of the same state in which Midwest University is located. She attended a local community college for one year prior to enrolling at the School of Education. She hopes to pursue a Master's degree at some point in the future. Her student teaching took place in a large urban middle school.

Lin. Lin's father was in the military, and so she grew up on bases around the country, finally settling into a suburban community just north of her university. She is a runner and an equestrian, having two horses of her own and working as a riding instructor. She hopes to someday be able to teach in Department of Defense schools around the world. Her student teaching took place in a large urban middle school.

Minerva. Minerva is a dancer and a musician who has lived in cities and towns all around the Midwest. She is conversational in American Sign Language and would like to pursue an advanced degree in deaf education. Her student teaching took place in a suburban middle school.

Nancy. Nancy grew up in the largest city in the American Midwest. She is an athlete and a sports fan, which is what originally attracted her to Midwest University. Enjoying her work as a babysitter convinced her to pursue teaching as a career. She student taught in a large suburban middle school.

The Researcher's Role

I was a participant observer in this study, meaning that I “assume[ed] a variety of roles within a case study situation and actually participate[d] in the events being studied” (Yin, 1994, p. 87). Lincoln & Guba (1985) established that fundamental to the interpretive paradigm of

research is the epistemological assumption that “The inquirer and the ‘object’ of inquiry interact to influence one another; knower and known are inseparable” (p. 37). As a graduate student, methods instructor, field experience supervisor, and researcher, I assumed many roles in the context of this study; this presented both advantages and limitations (Yin, 1994). I was the instructor for the methods course that all of these students took during the fall semester of 2014, and I was also the university supervisor for 4 of the 13 participants in their advanced teaching practicum. During the Spring of 2015 I was the university supervisor for nine of these teacher candidates while they student taught. Being so deeply embedded in the context under study offered the kind of “firsthand involvement” and full “immersion” that are essential elements of qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 100). Throughout the course of the study, I interacted with these participants on an almost daily basis from August 2014 through May 2015, giving me the “prolonged engagement” (p. 301) that Lincoln & Guba (1985) argued was at the heart of rigorous and trustworthy qualitative research.

However, there were some drawbacks to my position as well. Several of my roles required me to evaluate my participants, which established an inherent hierarchy of power between us, and which held the potential to influence the ways in which participants responded to my inquiries. I attempted to mitigate these effects in a variety of ways. First, as with any ethical research, my participants were recruited voluntarily through a process of informed consent, and no member of the cohort was pressured to participate if he or she preferred not to do so. Second, though I was listed as the instructor of record for two of the courses that my participants took in the fall semester of 2014, I taught those courses to fulfill the supervised College Teaching Experience requirement of my doctoral degree, and so a tenure-track faculty member provided regular insight into and oversight of my practice. Third, the vast majority of

the work that my participants did on the PTPA actually occurred within their spring seminar, a course with which I was not involved in any way. Though I was supervising some of these participants during student teaching, I was not the instructor of record for student teaching, as a clinical faculty member recorded final student teaching grades for based upon input from the university supervisor and the clinical supervisor of each student teacher. Lastly, my study focused on pre-service interactions with the PTPA, an instrument that was designed and scored not by me, but by readers outside of my institution. Clearly communicating these facts to the participants as part of the informed consent process helped minimize the impact of my status as an evaluator upon their responses to my inquiry.

Also, and, perhaps, most importantly, I worked to establish trusting relationships between myself and my participants. Lincoln & Guba (1985) argued for the importance of this, noting that “Meaningful human research is impossible without the full understanding and cooperation of the respondents....Without seeking out cooperative and interacting relationships, the inquirer literally cannot hope to do human research at all” (p. 105). My study sought to explore the mutual interactions between my pre-service teachers’ emergent conceptions of good teaching and the form and substance of their PTPA submissions, so my own ability to form authentic relationships with my pre-service teacher participants was a crucial component of the successful completion of my study.

Data Sources

I utilized two major data sources for this study. The first, and primary data sources were group and individual semi-structured interviews, which occurred at specific points throughout participants interactions with the PTPA. I drew additional data from documents collected within the context of the teacher education program at Midwest University, with the most important of

these being participant PTPA submissions themselves. As previously mentioned, this study presents the views of a particular set of stakeholders, a cohort of pre-service English teachers. This is their truth, but it is no way the only truth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Pre-service teachers from other disciplines at Midwest University, teacher education faculty, cooperating teachers, and state policymakers could, and very likely would interpret these events quite differently from the participants in this study. Their truths are just as valid, and I would strongly recommend that future studies be undertaken to make their voices heard. However, because this research was solely focused upon the beliefs, attitudes, and tensions of the 13 participants in this study, interviews were conducted only with those individuals. Their responses were triangulated with written essays and KPTP documents and with interview responses gathered at various points in their experiences, but because the purpose of the study was to accurately capture participant belief, rather than to judge the validity of those beliefs, participant responses were not triangulated with interviews of other stakeholders such as teacher education faculty.

Interviews. Stake (1995) described the importance of interviewing in this way: “Qualitative researchers take pride in discovering and portraying multiple views of the case. The interview is the main road to multiple realities” (p. 64). My interviews were semi-structured; that is, initial topics and questions were planned in advance, but these questions were tailored to the contexts of individual participants since “each interviewee is expected to have had unique experiences, special stories to tell” (Stake, 1995, p. 65). Merriam (2001) noted that this interview format “allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (p. 74). Such flexibility was essential, as I could not know in advance what each participant would choose to emphasize or

what parts of their experience they would value sufficiently to explore in depth (see Appendix 3 for sample interview questions).

Content Analysis. I triangulated the understandings I gained from interviews with those drawn from other data sources (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995, 2005). Documents, particularly PTPA artifacts and reflections illuminated additional facets of pre-service teacher experience. Merriam (2001) argued that “Documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights” (p. 133), especially if those documents were produced within the context under study, which was true of the PTPA tasks. Interviews are retrospective, asking participants to reflect back on a context, while documents can actually be lifted directly from that context. By comparing insights and themes drawn from interviews with those drawn from PTPA documents, I was able to build a richer understanding of pre-service teacher constructions of good teaching and their relation to PTPA tasks.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred in four phases. Throughout all four phases, data was continuously analyzed through the use of constant comparison and open-coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Phase 1. During Phase 1, which took place during the fall semester of 2014, I sought to gain baseline information about my participants’ constructions of good teaching and teachers. The information I gathered in this phase helped me to understand the issues and questions that I should explore in the following phases. Participants were asked to respond to the essay prompt, “From your perspective, what is good English teaching?” I collected and read these essays, performing a content analysis on them. Based upon this content analysis, I divided the cohort into focus groups made up of participants who shared similar initial constructions of good

teaching. Next I interviewed each group to gain further information and elaboration about the constructions of good teaching that these participants held.

Phase 2. Phase 2, which took place at the beginning of spring semester of 2015, involved analysis of participants' initial interactions with the PTPA. During this phase, I performed a content analysis of participant PTPA tasks 1 and 2 looking for elements relating to participant constructions of good teaching. I then compared the constructions emerging from tasks 1 and 2 with the initial constructions established in phase 1 in order to determine whether changes in construction were occurring. Finally, I interviewed participants individually using tasks 1 and 2 as stimulus documents in order to gain further information and elaboration about emerging changes or tensions.

Phase 3. Phase 3 took place toward the end of the spring 2015 semester, as participants finished their PTPA submissions. First I performed a content analysis of PTPA tasks 3 and 4 and compared constructions of good teaching emerging from these documents with those established in phases 1 and 2, in order to determine whether changes in construction were occurring. Then I interviewed participants individually using tasks 3 and 4 as stimulus documents in order to gain further information or elaboration about these changes and tensions.

Phase 4. Phase 4 took place at the very end of Spring Semester 2015. At this point, I compiled a case report, which I then provided to a member check group drawn from the ranks of the original participants. After the member check was complete, I then revised the case report based upon the data gathered during the member check itself.

Data Analysis

Inductive analysis. Initial data analysis for this study was inductive rather than deductive (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My primary analysis processes were constant comparison

and open-coding, allowing themes to emerge from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This process allowed me to delve into the many interconnected layers of participant constructions of good teaching and understandings of the PTPA without initially imposing pre-determined categories.

Deductive analysis. Once themes and categories were established through open coding in the initial inductive analysis, those themes were then analyzed deductively through the lenses of scholarship on definitions of good teaching and pre-service teacher identity (Patton, 2002). In particular, as participant constructions of good teaching became increasingly complex in the later phases of inquiry, the multifaceted framework of good teaching exemplified by the InTASC standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013) became a useful tool for organizing and interrogating participant constructions of good teaching, since, as described in Chapter 2, the InTASC framework forms the construction of good teaching that guided development of the PTPA, and so comparing participant articulations of good teaching with categories of the InTASC framework helped to determine the degree to which the process of completing the PTPA shaped participant constructions of good teaching.

Trustworthiness

In order to ensure that my research was both rigorous and ethical, I followed the guidelines for meeting trustworthiness criteria established by Lincoln & Guba (1985): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility. By credibility, I mean that the study was performed “in such a way that the probability that the findings will be found to be credible is enhanced, and...[the study will] demonstrate the credibility of the findings by having them approved by the constructors of the multiple realities being studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). According to Erlandson et al.

(1993), credibility is enhanced through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, member checks, and the keeping of a reflexive journal. My inquiry spanned an entire academic year, meeting the requirement of prolonged engagement. Persistent observation means “identify[ing] those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304). Constant comparison and emergent design allowed me to meet this criterion. Erlandson et al. (1993) defined triangulation as “using different or multiple sources of data (time, space, person), methods (observations, interviews, videotapes, photographs, documents), investigators (single or multiple), or theory (single versus multiple perspectives of analysis)” (p. 138). I triangulated my data collection by collecting at a variety of points in time (the four phases previously described) and by collecting through various methods and sources (group interviews, individual interviews, documents). A peer debriefer is someone who is of the same academic rank and background, with whom the researcher can meet periodically throughout the research process to discuss emerging analysis and design, and who can give constructive criticism at a variety of points in the process, offering alternate perspectives on data and serving as a “devil’s advocate” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 309). I recruited a peer debriefer, another graduate student in my department who had just begun his own dissertation work, and who was, therefore, my academic peer in every sense of the word. We met on a monthly basis to discuss my research process, analysis, and decision-making, and both of us kept “written records of each encounter, partly for the sake of the audit trail...and partly for reference by [me] as [I] later [sought] to establish just why the inquiry emerged as it did” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 309). Member checks are, according to Lincoln & Guba (1985), “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). I completed informal member

checks throughout the inquiry process, summarizing interview responses and whole interviews for my participants and asking them to affirm or clarify that what I heard is what they meant. Additionally, I completed a large formal member check during the final phase of the study, where knowledgeable stakeholders were provided with copies of the case report and then brought together to discuss whether the constructions represented in the case report matched their own constructions of the situation. Lastly, I worked to establish credibility by keeping a reflexive journal throughout my inquiry process. A reflexive journal is:

a kind of diary in which the investigator...records a variety of information about *self*...and *method*. With respect to the self, the reflexive journal might be thought of as providing the same kind of data about the *human* instrument that is often provided about the paper-and-pencil or brass instruments used in conventional studies. With respect to method, the journal provides information about methodological decisions made and the reasons for making them. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 327)

This continuous record of reflection and decision helped to ensure that each step of the emerging design was documented and rationalized.

Transferability. The second of Lincoln & Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria is transferability, which refers to the responsibility of the researcher to provide "the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility" (p. 316). Erlandson et al. (1993) maintained that transferability is enhanced through attention to thick description, purposeful sampling, and integration of the reflexive journal. Constant attention to and recording of both contextual and procedural detail throughout the study helped to ensure that I would have sufficient information to provide thick description in my final case report. Purposeful sampling

aided in this endeavor (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2001), and I constantly looked for holes in my data and sought to discover data sources that would help me to fill those holes.

Dependability. Dependability is the term proposed by Lincoln & Guba (1985) to deal with the question of research consistency, what is referred to in postpositive paradigms as *reliability*. Merriam (2001) explained that

Because what is being studied in education is assumed to be in flux, multifaceted, and highly contextual, because information gathered is a function of who gives it and how skilled the researcher is at getting it, and because the emergent design of qualitative case study precludes a priori controls, achieving reliability in the traditional sense is not only fanciful but impossible. (p. 206)

Instead of focusing on reliability, qualitative researchers work to ensure the dependability of their research, which Skrtic (1985) defined as the degree to which the “research processes used fall within the domain of acceptable professional practice” (p. 201). Merriam (2001) argued that researchers could increase the dependability of their work by making clear the context and theory that shaped their studies, including their relationships with participants and their processes for gathering and interpreting information, and by triangulating their data collection and analysis using multiple methods. Additionally, Merriam (2001), Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Erlandson et al. (1993) recommend that researchers establish an audit trail that “describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry” (Merriam, 2001, p. 207). The audit trail helps to establish both dependability and confirmability.

Confirmability. Confirmability is the interpretive corollary to the postpositivist principle of *objectivity* (Erlandson et al., 1993). As Lincoln & Guba (1985) explained, in a qualitative paradigm, the objectivity in question is not that of the researcher, as the paradigm itself rejects the idea that any person can be truly objective, but the objectivity of the data—“the issue is no longer the investigator’s characteristics but the characteristics of the data: Are they or are they not *confirmable*?” (p. 300). That is, to what degree are “the results are consistent with the data collected” (Merriam, 2001, p. 206). As with dependability, confirmability is established through an audit trail, the key to which is, according to Erlandson et al. (1993) “reporting no ‘fact’ without noting its source and making no assertions without supporting data” (p. 150). Throughout the course of my study, I kept an audit trail consisting of the six essential components identified by Lincoln & Guba (1985): raw data, data reduction and analysis products, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, materials relating to intentions and dispositions, and instrument development information.

Chapter Four:

Conceptions of Good Teaching

I began this study seeking to analyze the impact of the PTPA upon participant constructions of good teaching and to understand participant feeling about the role of the PTPA in becoming good teachers. This chapter details the changes in participant definitions of good teaching, both because and in spite of their experiences with the PTPA. Participant views of the role of the PTPA in becoming good teachers will be discussed in chapter 5, and chapter 6 will discuss the identity tensions that resulted from these shifting and conflicting understandings of good teaching. As previously mentioned, as much as possible, the findings in the next three chapters will be reported in the words of my participants in order to portray as faithfully as possible their beliefs, feelings, and tensions. Participant responses should be interpreted not as objective reality, a construct that the paradigm informing this study rejects as essentially unknowable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), but as accurate representations of reality as they perceive it, and which might be perceived quite differently by other stakeholders such as policymakers or teacher educators.

Initial Constructions of Good Teaching

The first phase of this study was intended to illuminate participant constructions of good teaching prior to their interaction with the PTPA. Data from interviews and documents were analyzed and inductively coded, both at the individual level and in aggregate to establish themes across the cohort. Confirming what Chong (2011) argued, participants were indeed entering their field experiences “with clear images of what teaching entails and how they [saw] themselves as teachers” (p. 220). *Relevant, fun, and caring*—these are the words that participants used most often to describe good teaching. At the beginning of the study, prior to interaction with the

PTPA, as a whole, the cohort seemed to agree that the primary characteristics of good teaching were engaging students in fun and interesting experiences, establishing relevance of content and activities, and developing personal connections and relationships with students.

Fun. Most participants agreed that a necessary element of good teaching was engaging students in fun and interesting learning experiences. Nancy explained that good teaching is “about making sure your students are engaged in the lessons, and that you choose materials that will interest your students....In my [best] lesson [what made it good] was that everyone got out of their seats and everyone participated and was involved, mostly because it was fun.” The word *fun* showed up in participant descriptions of good teaching again and again. Anna described good teaching as “fun and interesting,” and noted that the best teacher she had ever observed “made Shakespeare fun instead of attempting to just read it.” Dorothy noted that her best lesson was “really fun.” In fact, more than half of the participants at some point described good teaching as “fun.”

This, of course, prompts the question of what the teacher is actually doing to create these fun experiences? According to Nancy, what makes learning fun is “obviously not sitting up there lecturing them [students] because they're not going to be into that at all. I've seen that so much in high school.” Instead, participants felt that hands-on and creative activities were essential components of good teaching. To illustrate this point, Minerva described one of the worst teachers who had taught her: “There are very few school situations that are worse than sitting through a dull class. My seventh grade English teacher was not a bad person. All I remember about her class though was that she made us copy guided reading questions from the board in cursive to answer. This was basically torture.” As examples of good teaching, Anna told about a teacher who had students retell Shakespeare in different settings and dialects and

who had students transform part of the text of *The God of Small Things* into a newscast. Bella noted that the best teacher she could remember would not only have his students read novels, but also “watch the movies and [do] projects where we'd have to create boxes and then show different scenes....It was really fun.”

Promotion of student choice was a pedagogical practice that most participants felt significantly increased engagement. Nancy argued that the “number one thing to engage students is to give them choices.” Katniss, Eponine, Bella, and Billy all emphasized the importance of allowing students to choose between a variety of texts for some portion of their English instruction. Bella argued that such a practice “really got people who weren't motivated to be motivated to read.” Students could choose texts that they could relate to, helping to establish the relevance of the lesson; they could choose texts that genuinely enjoyed, increasing the level of fun and interest in the classroom; and they the fact that teachers allowed them such choices and worked to find texts with which they might connect showed students that their teachers knew and cared about them.

In addition to allowing students choice in texts, participants also described the promotion of student agency in activities and assessment. Billy explained it this way: “asking students to take some kind of initiative, like—choose to do this or this. I do that with my son sometimes – do you want to wear this shirt or this shirt? If I just give him a shirt, it doesn't always go as well. I think that is a basic rule of thumb that if you give your kids some choice they are going to have maybe just a little motivation to do it well.” Anne talked about avoiding “cookie-cutter” assignments, and Clarissa said that teaching could only be good if it gave students the opportunity to “formulate their own thoughts and opinions” rather than “just having them recite back to you what you recited to them.” Anna said that the best teaching she had ever

experienced as a student involved her being able to research and write about her favorite photograph or artwork. Elizabeth said that the best teaching she had ever done happened when she designed an activity around students demonstrating their understanding of persuasive techniques by making propaganda posters, and the students asked if they could make posters advertising a play instead, but using the same persuasive techniques. She could see that they were excited about it, so she changed gears mid-lesson and let the students drive the activity, with excellent results. Beyond pedagogical choices, teacher personality seemed to be a key component in participant perceptions of good teaching.

Many participants noted that the best lessons required some humor or whimsy on the part of the teacher to keep students interested. This is consistent with DiCamillo's (2010) assertion that "Teachers who use humor or who are humorous often assist students in staying attentive and interested during lessons" (p. 196). Anna described this element of good teaching as "bring[ing] life to [a] classroom that can very easily become boring." Lin claimed that the best teachers she knew "would incorporate a lot of jokes and humor into their teaching so it kept us engaged, even when the materials were dry." Several participants talked about a particular professor at their university who taught grammar classes, and whom they all thought was an excellent teacher because his wry sense of humor made them interested in listening to lectures on a subject that many of them usually found boring. Dorothy praised one of her former teachers who "used to wear like hats for different subjects...like, this is going to require critical thinking, so I'm going to put on my hard hat. And that's like really elementary, but it's like kinda cool. You know, like, teachers wear many hats...it was fun." Billy remembered that his favorite teacher from high school was so good because he was not afraid to make a fool of himself for the sake of learning: "he did a really good job of making [science] engaging. For instance, I still remember when we

were talking about the cell, to explain ribosomes, he would hop. Every time he would mention ribosomes, he would hop, which is ridiculous....He would do that all the time, every time it came up.” Minerva described a similar experience, even using the same word—*ridiculous*. She told about her favorite high school teacher who “made things fun. We'd listen to a lecture for a little while and then we'd take a break and read a comic, or...he'd do something ridiculous, which I find myself doing a lot [to try to emulate him].”

Minerva's mention of transition from a lecture to comic is an example of another way that participants believed learning could be made more fun and engaging, which is the inclusion of elements of popular culture within lessons on less innately interesting or engaging material. Minerva noted that some of her own best teaching occurred when she found out that her students really enjoyed Beyonce's music, and so she taught a lesson on iambic pentameter on Beyonce's birthday, using lyrics from that artist's songs as the material for analysis. When asked to describe an example of her own best teaching, Lin described deliberate selection of *Into the Wild* as part of her lesson on Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, both because it was one of her favorite books and because she thought that its themes would resonate with her students and that the recent film would make the material familiar. Another participant noted that one of the best lessons she had ever experienced was a high school physics activity where students were required to explore the physics within the recently released blockbuster *Batman Begins*. Bella described using Chicago's song “Dialogue” to teach dialogue and punctuation; Minerva reminisced about learning British history through the lens of *Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail*; Lin remembered a teacher pairing picture books with classic literature, calling it “Just fun times.” Anna felt that the best lesson she had ever taught was when she was teaching about Latin American culture and was able to make comparisons between reggaeton, a genre of

Latin American music, and the hip hop music that was popular with her students. As an example of good teaching, Clarissa described a lesson where her teacher had used Twitter as a part of a lesson on summarizing, giving the students a document written in the Civil War era and having them condense it into 140 characters, one tweet. Clearly, the inclusion of elements of popular culture within academic lessons held a strong place in participant understanding of good teaching, both because they and their students found pop culture enjoyable, but also because it helped to establish the relevance of the material, a second important element of good teaching for these participants.

While many researchers have touted the importance of student engagement in achieving a wide variety of educational outcomes (Brophy, 2008; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Wallace & Chhuon, 2014), others have cautioned against automatically equating fun and entertainment with authentic engagement in academic tasks (DiCamillo, 2010; Pace, 2003; Page, 1991). DiCamillo (2010) described a teacher who “believed his curriculum needed to be sweetened with ‘games’ and ‘bells and whistles’ before students would engage in learning...he seemed to assume that engagement at the ‘game’ level automatically translated into engagement at the cognitive level” (p. 190). The researcher discovered that this was not the case and that, in some instances, the teacher’s attempts to entertain students with humor and learning games actually inhibited students from engaging in the critical analysis and deep-thinking that were his espoused learning outcomes. Pace (2003) discussed similar findings in her case study of a teacher whose “lessons were ‘entertaining or ‘‘relevant’’ rather than academic’’” (p. 87). Both Pace (2003) and DiCamillo (2010) observed that teachers’ abilities to be fun and entertaining led to strong classroom management and rapport between teacher and student; it did not necessarily lead to increased student academic performance. At the beginning of this study, my participants were

not emphasizing academic performance as outcomes of the “fun” teaching they were describing. Instead, their focus was upon how this kind of teaching made them feel rather than upon what it helped them know.

Relevance. More than any other element or action, participants insisted that establishing relevance of content and skill was emblematic of good teaching. Drawing upon past experiences as students and observations in practicum settings, participants consistently reiterated that no amount of pedagogical expertise, content knowledge, or innovative activity could make teachers successful unless they were able to convince students that what was being taught was relevant to their lives, experiences, or future goals. Katniss noted that “Good English teaching involves putting things into context and making connections to the real world. Students need to see the importance and practical applications of what we teach them.” As Billy explained it, “English teaching is as much about convincing young people that English class is worth their time as it is about striving for answers to life's confounding profundities. Making texts relevant, or at least answering the question, ever at the tip of students' tongues, of ‘why we have to do this?’ is a good place to start.” Dorothy echoed this assertion, noting, “An effective English teacher makes the literature and literacies relevant and applicable to students' past, present, and future lives.” This emphasis on relevance is congruous with the findings of a study on excellent teaching conducted by Kane et al. (2004). Participants in that study “noted the importance of making real world connections between the subject and student experience to encourage student learning” (p. 294). While the entire cohort seemed to agree that establishing relevance was important, they emphasized different ways to do so. For some participants, relevance meant choosing new content because it was directly tied to their students’ lives, while others focused on the role of the

teacher in establishing connections between seemingly irrelevant required content and the experiences, goals, and interests of their students.

The majority of participants expected that state standards and district curriculum guides would mandate the knowledge and skills they were required to teach, and so establishing relevance would be a matter of pedagogy rather than curriculum. Many participants noted concerns about being able to make the canonical texts they expected to have to teach relevant to their students, but they felt that doing so would be the true hallmark of good teaching in English/Language Arts. As Anne explained, “it is imperative that English teachers make reading and writing relevant to students. It is often so hard for [students] to relate with Chaucer because he lived so long ago, or to associate with Elie Wiesel because they have never been persecuted for their beliefs.” Elizabeth provided another example, describing a lesson that she had taught, and which she thought exemplified some of her best work as a teacher:

When I was teaching *The Scarlet Letter* in my practicum, I witnessed many of my students losing interest in what I was trying to teach them....They were not able to connect with any of the material. So, as a way to slightly promote their comprehension and hopefully motivate them to read more, I tried explaining the novel in the most contemporary way I could. Also, I used many opinionnaires to try and get my students thinking about how issues in the novel might match up to issues in the world we live in today. Once my students were able to see how the novel could still connect to their own lives, they became more interested in hearing what I had to teach them.

Eponine described a similar situation where she was teaching American Romanticism and found that students did not immediately see the relevance of the content and initially resisted instruction. She and her co-teaching partner then led “a poetry activity...about the context in the

era of Romanticism and why they [Romantic poets] would have written [in the Romantic style]. It wasn't just for the purpose of writing pretty literature. Then we brought that to modern day. We talked about why would we do this now? Why would people want to escape their reality now within their writing? We talked about a lot of things that [the students] might experience.”

Billy’s example of establishing relevance was situated upon one of the most ubiquitous texts in ninth grade English—Shakespeare’s *Romeo & Juliet*. Billy explained:

Before taking my English 9 students through a unit focused on *Romeo and Juliet*, I made sure to explain to them why I thought studying the work of a man now dead for 400 years was, in the first place, a worthy pursuit beyond the fact that he was a hallowed literary monolith. My explanation had something to do with universal themes, powerful prose, but I also explained to them that Shakespeare coined many phrases we use today, that he is the patriarch of wordplay in the English language, that his plays are perennially reimagined and reinvented and that examining one would make them all better readers and better writers. This was really a roundabout way of explaining to them that we weren't in class just to read Shakespeare, or be exposed to his work, but that we were using Shakespeare as a vehicle to drive their practice of critical reading, writing, and thinking skills [that they would need in their future lives].

Much of the emphasis that participants placed upon relevance stemmed from the belief that students view school as an artificial environment, detached from the “real world” of careers, family life, and leisure activities. As Minerva defined it, “Good English teaching prepares students for the real world.” Clarissa expressed a similar opinion, noting that, “My goal is for students to take the lessons learned and apply them to their everyday life.” In her view, her

teaching could only be considered good if her students could make direct use of the material in the present.

Other participants agreed with the need for application, but felt that such application could happen in the future; that is, that the knowledge and skills taught would be relevant if students could see how such lessons would help them reach their own future goals. Bella argued that “A good English teacher will [convey] information so that students can relate to it, feed off of it, and make real world connections that will better prepare them for the their future endeavors.” Eowyn concurred, saying that “A good English teacher encourages fruitful discourse about English itself, and how students can utilize it to attain their professional dreams in the future.” Relevance, in these situation, became an essential component of student motivation. Good teaching, then, was more than developing experiences that would allow students to learn—it was helping foster in students a sincere desire to do so by clearly demonstrating the applicability of course content to the achievement of student-established goals.

All participants agreed that good teaching involves not only helping students to master important skills, but also helping them to see how those skills will connect with their lives. Emphasis on relevance may be drawn from two different traditions in the literature of good teaching. The first is the body of literature that defines good teaching in terms of management and motivation (Brophy & Good, 1986; Doyle, 1986). From this perspective, establishing relevance of material while teaching is related to increasing the “*value* that individual students place on engaging in a learning activity or gaining whatever benefits successful completion will bring ([answering] questions such as ‘Why should I care about this?’ or ‘What will I get out of it?’ [helps to establish this value])” (Brophy, 2008, p. 132).

However, relevance also figures heavily in the bodies of literature that define good teaching as empowering and ethical. The assumption of the primacy of learners' lived experience echoes Freire's (1998) assertion that "Reading of the word enables us to read a previous reading of the world" (p. 601). By this he meant that academic learning, "Reading of the word," draws its primary value from increasing students' abilities to make sense of the worlds in which they live. For Freire, life and learning were inextricably linked, and the pedagogies that he developed centered around the daily lives of the learners with whom he was working (Freire, 2011; Warner, 2012). From Freire's perspective, relevance was not just a component of good teaching, it was an essential and defining characteristic for teaching to be *good*, not just in the sense of effectively meeting objectives, but *good* in the sense of "teaching that comports with morally defensible and rationally sound principles of instructional practice" (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005, p. 189). If teaching did not center upon the lived experiences of learners, it risked disenfranchising or oppressing them, as both the pedagogy and the curriculum would likely be based upon the experiences and values of classes and cultures in positions of power (Freire, 2000).

Participant emphasis on both relevance and fun seem to be primarily linked to concern over student motivation—"the process of initiating, sustaining, and directing activity" (Wittrock, 1986, p. 304). That is, a large part of good teaching for these participants centered upon teachers' abilities to motivate students to actively participate in learning experiences and perform the tasks asked of them. This might seem to indicate the primacy of Brophy & Good's (1986) construction of good teaching over Freire's (1998, 2000, 2011) in the minds of these participants. However, the last element that participants considered essential to good teaching, *care*, was

important to them not just because it would help motivate learners to achieve curricular goals, but because of its connection to deeper, more transformative (Jackson, 1986) outcomes.

Care. Most participants agreed that an essential component of good teaching was the establishing of personal connections and relationships between the teacher and the student. Throughout the study, participants used the words *care* and *connections* to describe the best teachers they had observed and the best teaching they personally had done. Minerva told the following story to illustrate this quality:

My homeroom teacher, I was a competitive dancer, and we were somehow in the same city over a weekend. She had like a wedding and I had a competition, and she took time out of her weekend to come and watch me, and she took pictures and put them on the board, and I was like, “look I’m on the board!” It was really cool!

She went on to note that she had similar experiences with another teacher in high school, and that she still visits that teacher’s classroom, volunteers to work with his students, and seeks his advice. Likewise, Bella, Nancy, Lin, and Anne noted that they have maintained lifelong connections with teachers who had worked to establish personal relationships with them as students. Nancy described her own experience with a caring teacher in this way:

She was the one that was...always going out of her way to make sure that there was a personal connection. She was friends with all the moms outside of the classroom. She made a point to go up to every single one and introduce herself and she kept up with each student. She knew that I sunburned easy, so before recess she put sunscreen on me, so it was just personal.

Eponine noted how important it was for students not to just feel like “little boxes to be checked” because she had “had some experiences where I did feel like a check box and that was really

hard for me to feel like I wanted to give my effort to those classes.” Anne echoed this assertion, arguing that “it is the teacher's job to make meaningful connections with students so that the highest quality of work is turned in.” For these participants, then, establishing such connections was an essential component of good teaching.

In order to establish those connections, most participants recommended the seemingly simple practice of taking a genuine interest in the lives of students outside of their classrooms. In the example Minerva shared above, the teacher taking a little extra time to appreciate and validate Minerva’s dance pursuits paid significant dividends in the classroom. Minerva has tried to model this in her own practice, explaining how part of what she describes as her best teaching is the simple practice checking in daily with her students about their activities—from football to ping pong club—and using their efforts as springboards into instruction. Other candidates told similar stories. Eponine said that one of her best lessons was a journaling and small group discussion assignment where she was able to “walk around and sit with the small groups and if they were struggling [with the assignment] we could have personal conversations with them about their own lives” in order to find ways to connect their experiences to the assignment objectives.

Though these simple interactions were emblematic of participant constructions of the daily work of good teaching, they also described more profound and, in some cases, life changing impacts of caring teachers. These are the kinds of experiences that Jackson (1986) described as “transformative” teaching. The very pinnacle of good teaching for many of these participants was teaching that resulted in transformation rather than just transition. Anne’s experience with her high school physics teacher best illustrates the transformative type of

interaction. Anne was a high performing student who was used to school work coming easily to her. In her words,

we [she and her classmates] were the smart kids, we were in the honors classes... We were used to just getting it and physics is hard, and so when we didn't just get it, it was frustrating. I know when I don't get something, I'm just like ok I don't want to do this anymore, because I'm just so used to doing it [right immediately]. And my physics teacher is the sweetest lady. She made connections with us to make us actually want to learn physics, and she inspired me to pursue whatever I wanted to do.

Under the care of her physics teacher, Anne learned one of the most valuable lessons in her life—that struggling is ok, that just because learning something is difficult does not mean that it should be abandoned. In fact, Anne grew to love physics, to pursue a double major in English and science education, and, at the time of the writing of this study, to accept a job that would allow her to teach both high school English and high school physics—all this because one teacher cared enough to get to know her and talk with her one-on-one about her frustrations and her future goals.

Continuities and Changes in Construction of Good Teaching

As the study progressed through Phases 2 and 3, participants' constructions of good teaching broadened and diversified. While participant responses had been generally cohesive in Phase 1, centering on the dispositional and emotional work of teaching, upon teacher knowledge of students and the ability to use that knowledge to motivate and to form trusting relationships, as the pre-service teachers moved through the process of completing their PTPAs, their descriptions of good teaching became far more complex. As Anne described it, the PTPA influenced her by making transparent “how much work it takes to do it [teaching] and every little

thing that goes into teaching and... It made me reflect on how I do all [these different things], but I didn't realize that I did [them]. That was kind of cool.” Anne’s comment indicates that through the process of completing the PTPA, she was able to view teaching through a different lens than she had before, a lens that was more analytic than intuitive, more atomistic than holistic. To a greater or lesser degree, almost all participants experienced a similar shift in awareness, with corresponding implications for their conceptions of good teaching and of themselves as teachers.

Constricted continuities. While participants generally maintained their conviction throughout the course of the study in the importance of fun, relevance, and care to the enactment of good teaching, in later stages of the study, they were much more likely to justify the importance of those elements with their impact upon student academic achievement than with their impact upon student personal or emotional development.

Fun. Participants continued to focus on the development of fun learning experiences as an important part of good teaching. However, whereas at the beginning of the study, their discussion of fun might have considered fun as an end in and of itself, the problem that DiCamillo (2010) discussed, in later phases, fun was lauded specifically because it helped ensure student engagement with and successful completion of learning objectives. Katniss described one of her best lessons so far:

We went over similes and metaphors and we watched a video about those in movies and songs that were relevant to them and they were really [engaged] the whole time. They watched that video and they were really willing to look through a text and were kind of excited...they found [similes and metaphors] in the text and were writing them down.

They were able to write their own [similes and metaphors]. It just went really well, and I think it helped that they were engaged right from the start. I think I need to do that more.

Most participants noted within their PTPAs that motivation of students was a significant struggle within their student teaching placements, and so finding ways of engaging students in the learning process remained an important part of their constructions of good teaching. Katniss said that “Having something engaging...is the most important [part of teaching] because [students] are not going to pay attention [if they are not engaged].” Nancy noted that she “really like[s] to include fun activities for the students so that they can enjoy what they are learning.” Lin felt that her students would “benefit from enriching and engaging activities.” Anne believed that one of the biggest challenges in planning her PTPA unit was developing “activities that maintain the students' attention on engaging schoolwork from bell to bell.” Bella’s PTPA lessons “incorporate[ed] technology into the classroom, [so].....students [would] be more engaged with [the learning] process.” Within his PTPA lessons, Billy chose learning strategies “aimed at boosting student engagement,” and Elizabeth incorporated games and humor throughout her lessons for the same reason. Eowyn also included learning games in her PTPA because, “In order to motivate [students], [she] need[ed] engaging and varied activities.” Eponine believed that “increase[ing] [her] own energy level to increase [student] engagement” would be a key successfully teaching her PTPA lessons. Anna said that one of her major teaching strengths was that “I am playful.” Minerva also re-emphasized the importance of engagement within Phases 2 and 3, saying, “I think you have to be fun. Kids are in school all day and they don't enjoy being there a lot of the time. Whatever you can do to be fun and make it enjoyable makes their life a little easier, a little bit better.” At the end of the study, Clarissa reiterated that good teaching was “Definitely being aware of the content [needing to be taught], but, again, being able to

[teach that content] so your students kind of enjoy it. Find some fun videos or some articles instead of just giving them a textbook.”

Relevance. Most participants still argued that part of what made their PTPA lessons successful was their ability to establish relevance of content. Anne noted that her students “absolutely loved [the lesson] because they got to present their work and got to do something that was relevant to their lives instead of ‘boring old Shakespeare language.’” Billy also taught Shakespeare for his PTPA unit, and found that “addressing the issues in *Romeo and Juliet* that have more bearing on [student] life – such as teen dating and evolving parent-child interactions – will [help students] buy into the unit.” Nancy explained that a key part of her poetry unit was “to make sure that [students] were aware that [poetry] didn't have to be boring, and that they can relate anything they enjoy to poetry!” Minerva’s PTPA lessons asked students to “look back on their work from the past two units and to relate the events and situations to their own lives.” Eponine articulated the importance of relevance within her planning process, saying “Really for every lesson, as much as I was looking at the required content, I was looking equally as much, at how to make [that content] relevant to [students].” Lin concurred, writing within her PTPA submission that establishing “justification for the importance of the materials [students] are learning” would be an important determinant of the success of her lessons. Bella “encouraged [students] to take interests and goals and relate them to work assigned to them in class,” while Eowyn built a literature circle activity in which students were assigned “roles [that] ask students to take the story and write/draw things to help aid understanding and relate it to their lives and interests.” As these examples indicate, relevance maintained an important component in participant construction of good teaching.

Care. While many of the participants still noted the importance of developing caring personal relationships with students, this aspect of good teaching did not permeate their responses in later phases as it had in Phase 1. When participants did discuss care, it tended to be care in the service of meeting academic learning objectives, rather than care as a transformative experience (Jackson, 1986). Minerva indicated that good teachers “have to be caring, because [teachers] are dealing with people, and [those people] have emotions and their [own] lives - and [teachers] are affecting them.” In her PTPA, Anne wrote about the importance of working to “build positive relationships with [students].” Anna agreed, telling me that “I think connecting with your students is definitely [part of good teaching]... just knowing your students definitely helps.” Eowyn, Nancy, and Eponine underscored the needs of some of their students for “encouragement” and affirmation, and the significance of providing it within their teaching practice. In particular, Eponine set as one of her goals to have “more direct, personal, and informed conversation[s]” with her students in order to show them that she cares about them. Nancy explained that good teaching is

building relationship with your students – [that] is what I learned most about my experience in the classroom. Especially at the middle school age, you really have to make those personal connections with them because they are all over the place. They don't know what's going on in their lives. But, if you make that connection with them, they are more willing to learn and more willing to earn your trust. That's what I think good teaching is.

Bella emphasized her work to create an “accepting atmosphere” within her classroom. Billy, Katniss and Elizabeth also discussed their roles as teachers in shaping classroom environment so that students felt safe, comfortable, and valued.

Changing and broadening constructions. In the initial phase of this inquiry, participants had been confident in their abilities to distill good teaching into a relatively small number of dispositional traits and interpersonal skills. By the later phases, however, good teaching seemed much more complex to them. As Lin said, “I think there are a lot of things that go into being a good teacher, and you kind of have to have all of them [to be a good teacher].” Eponine indicated that the PTPA “has shown me that in order to plan whether I am doing a 50 page plan for a unit or not, in order to plan effectively and teach effectively you do have to put a lot of thought into it.” Though participants maintained conviction in the essentiality of relevance, engagement, and care, they indicated additional skills that would contribute to successful teaching practice.

The InTASC (2013) standards serve as a useful framework for discussing and categorizing the ways in which participants’ views of good teaching expanded during the second phase of this study. During the previous phase, participants had described good teaching as primarily an interpersonal activity, highlighting the development of teacher-student relationships and teacher knowledge of students. This interpersonal aspect of teaching is primarily represented within the InTASC standards under the large heading of Learners and Learning (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013). Fundamental to good teaching, according to this section of the standards, is the ability to “better understand students and maximize their learning” (p. 8) by creating “supportive and safe learning environments” (p. 8) in which “positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation” (p. 8) can take place. Participants were also touching on a portion of the Content category of the InTASC standards in their focus on making learning relevant for their students. A key component of good teaching, according to InTASC, is “make[ing] content knowledge relevant to learners by connecting it to

local, state, national, and global issues” (p. 8). The ability to do this, as with the ability to make learning fun and engaging, is predicated upon the deep-seated knowledge of learners developed within caring relationships. Though they heavily emphasized the InTASC category of Learners and Learning, and they touted the importance of one aspect of the Content category—relevance—during Phase 1, participants largely ignored aspects of good teaching relating to the categories of Instructional Practice and Professional Responsibility.

In Phase 2, however, immersion in the PTPA catapulted elements of Instructional Practice into the forefront of their understanding of the work of teaching. InTASC (2013) defines Instructional Practice as the ability to “integrate assessment, planning, and instructional strategies in coordinated and engaging ways” (p. 13). These more technical elements of teaching, while missing from Phase 1 discussions of good teaching, rivaled the more personal elements of relevance, fun, and care in Phase 2 and 3 discussions.

Backwards design. In Phases 2 and 3, participants focused heavily upon Instructional Practice, discussing a cycle of establishing objectives, creating assessments to measure those objectives, planning instruction to teach those objectives, delivering that instruction, administering the assessments, and then determining the next set of objectives based upon the data gathered from the assessment, very similar to the process of instructional design or backwards design described by Wiggins & McTighe (2005). In Phase 1, however, only a single participant, Eowyn, emphasized the importance of assessment within her description of good teaching. She described participating in a unit in her practicum placement, the field experience that pre-service teachers at Midwest University complete during the semester prior to student teaching, where she and her cooperating teacher analyzed student writing samples at the

beginning of the unit to determine specific communication needs and then “created writing, reading, and speaking assignments that could augment what they needed to work on.”

Task 2 of the PTPA, however, requires pre-service teachers to respond to prompts and design their lessons within a framework of pre-assessment, instruction, and post-assessment. Billy explained this cycle in the following way: “you've got to start with where you want them to end up. Which is another way of thinking about how everything you do should be working toward the product or assessment you want them to be able to perform on at the end of the unit.” A number of participants indicated that they had not previously conceptualized the work of teaching in this cyclic way. Katniss said the PTPA helped her to “plan a whole unit and really do a lot of backwards design, considering standards and the needs of your students...it just really makes you think through very thoroughly all of those little details that should be considered in a unit with your students in the content.” Anne noted that the PTPA “made you lay out the objectives; made you lay out the pre-assessment; made you lay out everything bit by bit by bit,” and that this was a more systematic process of thinking about instruction than she would probably have considered prior to completing the PTPA. Eponine explained that the PTPA reinforced for her the importance of “always matching up the objectives to the standards to that summative assessment and then building everything in between...[because students] will get something from [the lesson] if we are not [planning instruction that way], but they will get so much more from it if we are really following that formula.” Eowyn also noted that PTPA helped bring these elements to the forefront of her thinking, and that she found “Having that plan set out was actually really helpful, because I referred back to that while I was teaching.”

Detailed planning. The PTPA definitely played a role in developing participant understanding of and belief in the importance of detailed instructional planning. When asked

where in the PTPA they were able to demonstrate good teaching, participants almost invariably pointed to the lesson plans themselves as providing the best opportunity with the PTPA to demonstrate what they considered good teaching. Anna noted that the lesson plans were “probably the one part where you could see that I know kind of what I'm doing” and that “Being organized and planned” was essential to good teaching. Anne agreed, saying, “I really did like Task 2, the lesson planning, where you had to lay it all out and...what standards applied to it...I think that definitely shows good teaching, as far as keeping your formative assessments, summative assessments for every single lesson that you do tied to your standard.” Eponine echoed these thoughts, noting that the PTPA really helped her to see the importance of “Planning with the assessment in mind, so thinking of the end of your lesson or unit before you plan anything, [asking yourself] ‘what do you want the outcome to be?’ Making sure that [the lesson] is tied to standards from which you derive main objectives.” These comments indicate a growing awareness of a conception good teaching discussed in the literature as organized, sequenced, and systematic (Carroll, 1963; Hunter & Russell, 1981; Meckel, 1963; Russell & Fea, 1963).

Assessment. Participants also emphasized the PTPA’s role in helping them explore assessment as a larger process including pre-assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments. Bella noted that the PTPA “got me thinking about assessment more just because that was so prominent in the [PTPA]...I already formatively assess[ed] a lot in my classroom, but pre-assessing, I really didn't think about it until the [PTPA]....I will definitely pre-assess...more [in the future] and continue formative assessment and summative assessment.” Billy agreed, saying “I am a little more cognizant of being intentional with assessment...because it is so emphasized in the [PTPA]...it sort of reaffirmed that you have to give multiple

assessments, which you work from [and] learn from. [You need to] view them as assessments of your own teaching and [as well as] what kids are learning.” Katniss came to realize the importance of planning and establishing “clear expectations [for assessments] because when I didn't have those you could tell, and the kids were like, ‘I don't know what I'm doing.’ So, clear expectations—having a rubric or telling them what you are going to be grading something with” is an important part of good teaching.

However, despite the fact that participants noted the PTPA's role in helping them develop a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the link between planning, instruction, and assessment, they maintained that, in the words of one participant, the PTPA “shows how well we can plan a unit and reflect on it, but not really how well we can teach it, which is what we are going to be doing [as real teachers].” This type of response indicated that participants saw the act of teaching as conceptually different from the act of planning to teach.

While they rarely stated it directly, almost universally, the participants in this study were drawing a distinction between a specific act—*teaching*—and the larger body of activities and jobs that a teacher must perform. Minerva explained this distinction best, saying “that's what people [need to] see—us teaching, not us planning or reflecting [which is all we have to do on the PTPA and] which are both really important skills.... Actual teaching, [PTPA raters] don't get to see.” What PTPA raters see, according to these participants, is a constrained reification of elements related to teaching practice, but not the elements by which they define themselves.

Primarily through the vehicle of their field experiences, these participants acquired a greater appreciation for the wide variety of tasks that are part of a teacher's job, tasks ranging from planning to assessing to record keeping. However, these tasks were not *teaching*. Therefore, for these participants, the PTPA is not a measure of *teaching* at all, but is instead a

measure of skills related to *teaching*—primarily planning and assessing. While most participants indicated that these skills were important to being a *teacher*, they were not the core of *teaching*. Minerva’s words provide an excellent demonstration of a conceptualization shared by many participants. She described the PTPA as

more like a technical piece of writing, so you can't just say: we had a lot of fun today, and we did this [meaningful activity]. Or, I think in the narrative section where you go over what you do each day, you can communicate [that the kids enjoyed this activity, the kids didn't enjoy this [activity], but it doesn't always give [your reader] a clear picture of what happened throughout the day. It doesn't really ask you about the relationships you have with the kids. So, you can deliver this perfect unit, and it's great, and the kids learned, but the kids don't like you as a person or as a teacher [so you failed].

Inherent in this response is the understanding that simply achieving learning outcomes is not a sufficient measure by which to determine whether or not someone is a good teacher.

The act of teaching, for these participants, inherently involves interacting and building relationships with students. This is the *sine qua non* of teaching—without interaction and relationships, in the minds of these participants, whatever activity a person may be performing cannot be called *teaching*. Such a distinction is important, because in order for a person to assume the identity of *teacher*, that person must participate (Wenger, 1998) in the activity of *teaching*. When teaching is defined in the way that participants in this study defined it, if the PTPA were to serve as a reification (Wenger, 1998) of teaching practice, it would need to allow ample space for the discussion and demonstration of interaction and relationship building. It does not do so.

Flexibility and adaptability. Teaching, according to these participants, meant not just having a solid plan of instruction and assessment, but possessing the skills and habits of mind necessary to change that plan in real time depending upon student responses and needs. Toward the end of the study, Lin noted that good teaching was “being able to adapt, being flexible.” Dorothy agreed, saying, “[Good teaching is] so much improvisation, really. You never know what students are going to say, or what direction you go. I think being able to think on your feet is definitely important. That was one of the components of good teaching. I think the ability to do that and to be flexible is important.”

The two skills of writing concrete plans and of adapting instruction “on the fly” might seem to be unrelated, but for these participants, there was a definite connection. Anna explained this connection, saying “I took spring break to plan through the end of my time. I think doing that helped me adjust what I needed change on the fly because of assemblies and things like that. I was able to get rid of this and do this instead. Instead of scrambling last minute.” Eponine argued “the necessity of being flexible in instruction. I think that when I am putting it down on paper, [I] really do see how much things [may] need to change [depending on student need].” Later in the interview she reiterated that good teaching really did require “that flexibility—having a really specific plan, but having that specific and structured plan for the purpose of being able to change it in live time if you need to [for your students].” In this sense, flexibility and adaptability seemed to be key attributes that allowed participants to form a bridge between their initial conceptions of good teaching as relevant, fun, and caring, and their new appreciation for the technical skills of planning instruction and assessment that are so prevalent within the PTPA. Forging such a synthesis, however, did not happen easily, and, as the next chapter indicates, participants tended to view the PTPA’s role in their development quite negatively.

Chapter Five:

The PTPA's Role in Becoming Good Teachers

Despite its acknowledged role in helping them to establish an expanded lens for viewing the work of teachers, in general, these participants saw the PTPA as having very little role in the process of becoming good teachers. Nancy felt that “a lot of [the PTPA] was just busy work...It's just something that you've got to get done and you've got to do in order to teach.” Dorothy argued that “there are aspects of being a good teacher that can't be assessed through the [PTPA].” When asked what she saw as the purpose of the PTPA, Katniss shrugged, saying, “I guess just so somebody can check the box saying that we know how to do the things we are supposed to know how to do. I guess that's what I see as the purpose. I don't necessarily think it's [designed] for me [to learn anything].” Billy could have spoken for most participants when he said,

I think the [PTPA] might suggest that someone is a good teacher, but...someone who is not a good teacher could make a good [PTPA]. There are some people who would be able to make the [PTPA] look really nice and fulfill all of the requirements of the [PTPA] to a “T” but [doing] that wouldn't reflect that they are a good teacher; they would just be a kind of good student or a good test taker or whatever. Doing the [PTPA]—if you know something about lesson planning, and if you know something about the techniques of teaching, you could do the [PTPA] well and be scored well and not really be a good teacher or a particularly effective teacher.

Throughout the course of the study, the majority of participants expressed some level of frustration with the PTPA. Bella noted that when she was working through Task 2, she “got a little frustrated with [it] and took breaks and would walk around the school and would fume and then would come back and finish it.” Not every participant felt the need to physically storm

through the building, but almost all of them felt tensions relating to the disconnect they perceived between PTPA expectations and the needs and norms of their field placements, the artificiality of the PTPA instrument, and a depersonalization of the work of teaching that they felt within the PTPA.

Disconnect

Participants argued that the PTPA was disconnected both conceptually and practically from the rest of their experiences of learning to teach. This disconnection seriously undermined the ability of the PTPA to serve as a meaningful experience.

Field experience integration. Most participants objected to what they perceived as a disconnection between the requirements of the PTPA and the needs and norms of their field placements. Dorothy said that early in her student teaching she decided that “I am putting my students first. The PTPA is just [important to] me, but I have a responsibility to be a teacher to all of these kids. So, [the PTPA] was on the back burner for most of the semester.” She did not feel as though she could focus on both the PTPA and her field placement, so she simply put off worrying about the PTPA until after the placement was over. Lin echoed this assertion, noting

I don't think that [anyone] take[s] into consideration that in order to be a good student teacher you need to focus on your student teaching mostly and not this massive portfolio that you have to do. I feel like if you were just focusing mainly on your [PTPA] and getting that done, then you wouldn't be a good student teacher. I kind of just put mine to the back because I wanted to focus on my student teaching because my student teaching will get me a job and will get me the experience. Whereas my [PTPA] just gets me my license.

Anne “felt that the [PTPA requirements] conflicted with what was required [by her] district,” because district curriculum guides emphasized breadth of coverage and expected teachers to move from topic to topic and concept to concept very quickly. While the PTPA was predicated upon planning based upon skill and knowledge objectives, a necessity of the assessment and instruction cycle described in the previous section, her district curriculum was based upon linear movement through individual novels and plays. Anne expressed her frustration, saying, “It was just a little hard to say [to her district], ‘OK, I know that you want me to get through this material, but [the PTPA needs me to do something else]. No matter what unit I was given, whether it was a *Raisin in the Sun* or *Romeo and Juliet* or *Of Mice and Men*, anything, I don’t feel like my district gave me enough time [to plan and implement instruction as it is conceptualized within the PTPA].” Billy had a similar experience, explaining that “the parameters in the [PTPA] feel kind of divorced from what I am actually trying to do with the classroom.” He elaborated on his struggle with the PTPA, saying “I was trying to think of my kids in my school and what I need to do for them...and I was also trying to think of what the [PTPA] is asking me to do to demonstrate these certain attributes. I just felt like I was stretching myself in too many directions.” According to Katniss, the PTPA required a breakdown of teaching “in way more detail than reality would actual merit,” and that she would never be able to plan all of her lessons to that degree of specificity in an actual teaching job. Eponine experienced some difficulties planning for her PTPA because, as she explained, “I wanted my priority this semester to be being here [in her student teaching placement]. [My planning process] was more like choosing what was going to happen to fit this school, what the school wanted, what [her cooperating teacher] wanted. And then saying, ok, how is this going to work in the [PTPA] template?” When participants were unable to reconcile the demands of their

district or their cooperating teachers with the rubric requirements of the PTPA, they found themselves in the position of having to misrepresent what they actually did in the classroom when they assembled their PTPA submissions.

While performance examinations like the PTPA are intended to be seamlessly integrated into field experiences, that is, to be a central component of student teaching (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010; Howey & Zimpher, 1996; Nelson, 2012), participants in this study saw student teaching and the PTPA as distinctly separate, with student teaching being “real” and “valuable” and the PTPA being a bureaucratic hurdle. Nancy felt that she “learned everything [important about teaching by]...just being in the [student teaching] classroom. I don't think [the PTPA] was a really good indicator [of anything I learned]...but since it's required [I had to spend time doing] it.” However, she also said that even though the PTPA is intended to be filled out simultaneously while teaching, she “didn't start my [PTPA] until after I did my unit because it was too hard for me...I couldn't balance it all.” Most participants specifically expressed frustration at the PTPA distracting them from the “real” work of student teaching. Dorothy explained that the PTPA was something she had to do “On top of your obligations to your student teaching. That was really hard because I was acting as if I were the teacher in my student teacher classroom. I spent a lot of time planning and grading and everything. Basically I did this the last week [the final week of the semester after student teaching had ended].” Zeichner & Wray (2001) expressly cautioned against doing what several of these participants did—putting portfolio construction off until the last minute, regardless of the rationale for doing so—arguing that it would decrease the accuracy of the assessment and decrease the opportunity for the experience to be meaningful.

Despite Lin's protest that "I don't think that [anyone] take[s] into consideration that in order to be a good student teacher you need to focus on your student teaching mostly and not this massive portfolio," researchers have recognized that one of the challenges of portfolio assessment for pre-service teachers is the amount of energy and dedication needed to successfully complete such a portfolio during the student teaching experience (Borko et al., 1997). Borko et al. (1997) studied student teacher reactions to a portfolio assessment completed during student teaching, finding that a number of their participants felt the "process of preparing a portfolio drew their attention away from student teaching and students. They were frustrated by this pull away from what they considered to be their highest priority for the semester" (p. 352). All of my participants indicated similar feelings, and, unlike the participants in the Borko et al. (1997) study, the participants in my study did not consider that stress and frustration to be counterbalanced by a deeper understanding of themselves or of their profession.

Field experience discourse. When asked what could have been done to make the PTPA a more meaningful experience, Dorothy responded, "Maybe... really communicating with my clinical supervisors [about the PTPA]...maybe if we were to have talked about how they would [approach different parts of the PTPA] or maybe [asking] their advice [on analyzing and reflecting]. That would have made it more meaningful." When I asked her if she had communicated at all with her clinical supervisor about her PTPA, she responded, "Not really, was I supposed to?" What little discussion participants noted regarding the PTPA within their field experiences further reinforced the perception that the PTPA was divorced from the real work of learning to teach. Billy described how a fellow teacher at his field placement "who graduated last year, said he barely passed the [PTPA] because...it was the last thing on his mind and he just hammered it out and turned it in without thinking about it too much. Just to check it

off his list. And he seemed like he had a head on his shoulders. I observed him a couple of times and he seemed like a pretty good teacher. But his [PTPA] barely passed the minimum.” Elizabeth noted a similar experience, “one teacher that I taught with in [her field placement] said that she didn't even finish Part 4 [of the PTPA] and she got a [passing score]. So then, I was kind of, ‘HmMMMM.’ For a while there, it was hard to get myself back in the mind-set [of working hard on the PTPA], after hearing someone say that.” If the “real” teachers in field placements have such a view of the PTPA, then it is unsurprising that the participants in this study adopted similar mindsets.

University program integration. The PTPA-field experience dichotomy described above is representative of a larger disconnect that participants saw between the PTPA and their teacher education program at Midwest University. At least some of the PTPA’s inability to provide meaningful formative learning experiences seems to stem from the fact that the PTPA did not form an integral component of the English Education program at Midwest University. When asked if he felt that the PTPA was an integral part of his teacher education, Billy responded:

No, I just felt like it was a hoop I had to jump through for the state, for licensure and then the other stuff that I did was for my degree. And even the people who taught the seminar we took referred to it that way. They said, ‘Hey, look, you are still going to graduate. The [PTPA] is totally separate, it is for your license.’ But I felt like it would be nice if all the stuff we were doing was working toward the same thing

Anne agreed, saying that, in retrospect, “It seems like the [PTPA] is the end goal for this whole [English Education] program [but] we didn't realize that we had to do it until maybe last semester. At the end of last semester, we knew it was coming, but we didn't realize how

intensive it was going to be. So, it would have been nice if [we understood from the beginning] and kept it going throughout our classes.” Lin told me that, while she had heard *of* the PTPA throughout her time at Midwest University, she really knew nothing *about* it until she started student teaching. According to her, “We just heard about [the PTPA] for years. [*adopts a deep, mock-serious tone to indicate the voice of a professor*] ‘You’ll have to do your [PTPA]!’ It just sounded like this monster that is super difficult and I’m going to be crying all night doing it. But it was just the process [of filling out the boxes] that was difficult and thinking how [to] write [the answers to the prompts] so [they] will be appealing to [the PTPA raters]. [I just needed to figure out] how do I make [the PTPA raters] happy?” While Lin anticipated a challenging intellectual exercise in the PTPA, what she found was a bureaucratic hoop that she was told to jump through.

Faculty discourse. The discourse that participants described Midwest University faculty using to discuss the PTPA seemed to reinforce, at least in the minds of these participants, the PTPA’s status as an arduous process to get through rather than as an important learning experience. It is, of course, important to remember that these are participant interpretations of the messages they received from their instructors, and so they may have little or no congruence with what the instructors in their seminar actually said or meant. Given the time I spent as an informal participant observer at Midwest University throughout the course of this study, I strongly suspect that the seminar instructors would describe their practice and intentions quite differently, as, without exception, I found them to be caring professionals who were truly dedicated to the success of their pre-service teachers and to the improvement of education as a whole.

However, what is important in answering the research questions that guided this study is not what teacher educators intended, or even what they actually did, but rather how the

participants in this study *perceived* those actions. Dorothy told me “I don't want to have to do [the PTPA] again. They [her instructors] really drove home [that] you need to do well [on the PTPA] so you don't have to do it again.” From her perspective, the emphasis from her instructors was not on authentic engagement or on learning through the experience of completing the PTPA, but on completing the process and moving on. Though Bella spoke highly of one of her instructor’s ability to guide pre-service teachers through the PTPA, she still saw the PTPA not as an assessment and reflection upon the overall program, but as an obstacle to get through. She explained that “As painful a process [as completing the PTPA] was, [my instructor] made it less painful. As far as the teacher prep program [at Midwest University], I think that they just tell you, ‘this is what you have to do and I'm going to help you do it, but you have to do it.’ So, they knew it was probably a painful process.” Anna described the seminar in which she was guided through the PTPA as a monotonous experience. In her words, “They gave you kind of the direction you are supposed to go with it. Making sure that you are using Bloom's Taxonomy, and stuff like that. I felt like that class, at times, was kind of a waste of my time...sitting there and having [the instructors] go through, ‘OK, here's [PTPA box] 1.1.1. This is what you have to do.’ I figured it out on my own anyway.” Lin described a similar experience but with more vehemence than Anna:

we are paying for a class [the student teaching seminar] where we just basically sit there and they read off a power point that's from the [state department of education] website. That really irritated me. Because I was kind of excited for the [PTPA] class because I thought, ‘I'm going to be doing this right. I'm going to have a really great [PTPA].’ Like there is such a thing [*rolls eyes*]. But then I didn't get that feedback.

What Lin did not realize or had forgotten was that she did not receive the feedback she expected because teacher education faculty are constrained by state department of education guidelines regarding the type of feedback they are able to give on the PTPA during student teaching to try to ensure that the PTPA submission is truly the work of the individual pre-service teacher submitting it (Nelson, 2011). However, the message Lin received, intended or not, was that doing the PTPA involved just “just filling out the boxes,” not engaging in serious intellectual work. Katniss described a similar lack of intellectual engagement, noting, “we basically went to [the PTPA seminar], and [the instructors] read us the PTPA directions. I had read those. It would have been more helpful to have them go through the examples [that the state department of education] put online and say, ‘here's why [this example] got 3 out of 3 on this section; you can see how [a student] matched this [teaching attribute] to this part [of the PTPA]. I guess that would have been more helpful, because I read the directions.’” Clarissa felt that she received conflicting messages regarding the seriousness of the PTPA process and the degree to which her submission had to match her student teaching practice. The common message that participants felt they received was that completion of the PTPA was necessary, but learning from the process of completing it was not. Again, it is important to reiterate that this was the perception of the participants, not necessarily the message intended by the teacher education faculty at Midwest University.

Wade & Yarbrough (1996) found that “One key factor in students' initial struggles [with portfolios] is the way the portfolio assignment was presented and explained” (p. 76). Howey & Zimpher (1996) argued that if portfolio assessments are to be useful tools of evaluation, they must be integrally tied to conceptual frameworks of the teacher preparation programs in which they are housed. These participants did not perceive this to be the case with the PTPA at Midwest

University. Participants felt they were introduced to the PTPA as a “painful” experience that they would need to endure in order to become teachers, and so they engaged with the PTPA in an adversarial manner, determined to get past the gatekeeper and into the profession, but not particularly concerned with learning from the process.

Rational responses. Such responses, either from the participants or from the teacher education faculty at Midwest University are not necessarily surprising. A variety of fully logical reasons may exist for the disconnect participants felt between the PTPA and the teacher education program at Midwest University. First, the PTPA is an external mandate imposed upon teacher education programs by state policymakers intending to ensure a certain quality standard for those who will be granted a teaching license in that state. As with any educational policy mandate, the implementation of the PTPA has generated tension between external, centralized control and local practice and commitment, with local practitioners often seeing external mandates as existential threats to their own personal agency and identity (Peck et al., 2010). Second, the possibility exists that Midwest University faculty recognized the theoretical orientation toward teaching inherent in the PTPA and rejected it. As noted earlier, the requirements of a given portfolio assessment are manifestations of specific definitions and understandings of good teaching (Sato, 2014; Shulman, 1998). If faculty disagreed with the theoretical orientation of the PTPA, they may have attempted to minimize its impact upon teacher education at Midwest. Third, given the questions raised about the content validity and implicit bias of other performance assessments such as the edTPA (Haertel, 1991; Henry et al., 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1998; NAME Political Action Committee, 2014), faculty at Midwest University may be unwilling to fully integrate a far less scrutinized instrument such as the PTPA into their programs.

Lastly, teacher education faculty at Midwest may actually have been motivated by a desire to decrease the amount of tension experienced by their pre-service teachers. As noted in chapter 2, research clearly indicates that when portfolios are used for multiple purposes and audiences, those purposes can come into conflict, producing significant tensions for those attempting to complete the portfolios (Hallman, 2007; Hammerness et al., 2005; Lyons, 1998b; Snyder et al., 1998; Zeichner & Wray, 2001). Given their own lack of control over PTPA requirements and scoring, faculty at Midwest may have been trying to simplify the PTPA process for their students by encouraging them to focus on only a single audience, the raters of the PTPA, and a single purpose, demonstrating mastery of the specific skills and knowledge indicated within the PTPA rubrics.

Without in-depth interviewing of teacher education faculty throughout Midwest University if any, all, or none of these reasons contributed to the ways in which the PTPA was incorporated into the teacher education program. While such investigations would fall outside the “bounded system” (Stake, 1995) established for this case study, I would recommend that future researchers consider engaging in such inquiry to add further depth to our understandings of the complex phenomenon of high-stakes performance assessments. This recommendation is discussed further in the final chapter of this dissertation.

Artificiality

Regardless of the intent of teacher education faculty, the experiences of these participants seem to be a clear illustration of the Thomas Theorem, which states that “If [people] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Markley & Harman, 1982, p. 4). Since participants did not perceive the PTPA as integrally connected to their teacher preparation, the instruments itself seemed extremely artificial. In this, the PTPA seems to have fallen victim to

one of the fates that Au (2013) prophesized for the edTPA. He feared that the edTPA might become a de facto standardized exam with all the issues of artificiality and teaching-to-the-test that are inherent in such exams. This seems to be precisely the problem that my participants were describing with the PTPA, where the already artificial nature of a disconnected exam was compounded by logistical limitations in the form itself and a lack of authentic audience.

According to Billy, the PTPA “was hard to take...seriously even though there's a lot riding on it. It just feels so artificial.” Many participants indicated that the format required by the PTPA, including individual prompts and boxes, and even overall length requirements necessitated inauthentic representations of their work as teachers. Katniss called the exercise “contrived,” noting that the PTPA cannot really determine whether or not someone is a good teacher because, “there could be a really good teacher that doesn't know how to check the box, which is kind of what I felt like we were doing [when we were completing the PTPA].” Billy explained the artificiality inherent in the PTPA this way:

I did the [PTPA] after I had taught and sort of retro-fitted some stuff, so it felt artificial. Very artificial. Even the length of my unit, I probably halved for the [PTPA]...like I reduced a lot of the objectives, mostly to save myself the effort of writing all of that and because there are space constrictions. So it's sort of a sample of my unit. I don't feel like writing out an explanation for 30 lesson plans - probably not 30, but it is probably in the 20s. I ended up submitting, or writing out 12. Just because it fulfills the [PTPA] task [requirements] and it saves me time, so it just works better. But it is not what I taught.

Bella complained that the PTPA raters “are not really grading you on the quality of your lesson plans because [the lesson plans] can fail [in the classroom] and you can still get an A on it [from the PTPA raters]. They are grading you on the quality of how you write your experience down.

Whether you sucked at it or not, they are still going to just grade it based off of what you had written down.” Elizabeth explained that her PTPA was inauthentic because it painted a picture of a teacher who “knew exactly what to say and exactly what to do. In reality, this is not always the case. I find myself doing a lot of ‘on the fly teaching’ based on my students’ moods for that particular day.” Later in the study she noted that the problem with judging her teaching ability based upon the PTPA was that “what you see on paper isn't what you see in the classroom; what you see in the classroom isn't what you see on paper.” As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Elizabeth, like most of the participants, felt that being a good teacher meant being able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances and student needs, and that there was no way for the PTPA to capture that ability.

Audience. The PTPA also seemed artificial to participants because they did not have any clear sense of audience. These participants were writing a lengthy document to be sent out to unknown raters whom the participants referred to alternately as “them” or “the state.” When I asked Lin who “they” were and how she thought about “them,” she waived a hand in the air, conjuring an image of Orwell’s (1954) Big Brother, said, “They were just like a separate thing—looking over us, with a stamp of approval [or disapproval].” Several participants registered a wish that some more meaningful audience might engage with their PTPAs. Katniss explained that

We were told that you can basically get an 18 out of 30 and still argue it [appeal the score] and be fine, so I wasn't super concerned that I wouldn't pass...I still took it seriously, but I feel like we all knew, too, that no one is really going to see your scores. You can get an 18 or 19 or a 29 and you are still going to have your license and no

employer is going to see your exact score....I could see where some people might not take it super seriously with that.

Minerva addressed the artificiality inherent in the PTPA by simply relinquishing agency to her professors, who “are really good about going through [the PTPA] and telling us, ‘this is what you need in these boxes.’” Anne referenced a similar perspective, saying “I can regurgitate [what I’ve been told will score well on the PTPA]. I knew exactly what people reading the [PTPA] wanted to hear...I knew [PTPA raters] wanted to incorporate literacy. I knew [they] wanted all this other stuff...Even though it might not have been necessary for the day, I knew what was wanted [so I included it in my submission].” Anna said most of her energy went into “Making sure I had enough buzz words [to appeal to the raters of the PTPA] or just...the sheer monotony of trying to fill in every box.” Several participants used the phrase “buzz words” to describe what they felt PTPA raters were looking for in their submissions. Elizabeth told me that “I felt like I could not reflect fully on what I was going to change in my future instruction because I was so focused on hitting those buzz words and buzz phrases—making sure those were in [my PTPA].” Participants seemed to feel that the people who would be scoring the PTPA were more interested in the use of educational jargon than in authentic representation of practice, deep-thinking, or critical reflection. Given this assumption, participants seemed to be echoing the cautions of scholars who argued that portfolio assessments implemented in less than meaningful ways can become “exercise[s] in amassing paper” (Olson, 1988).

Space limitations. Even though many participants acknowledged that the PTPA helped them to consider their practice in different ways, most objected to the distillation of their practice to what could be represented within the boxes of the PTPA. Space limitations within the PTPA were a contributor to participants’ view that the teaching represented within their PTPAs was

inauthentic. To meet those space limitations, Billy “retro-fitted” what he actually taught to fit into the PTPA framework. Anna noted “if I could go back, I would have picked a smaller unit that's only 7 or 8 lessons long so that I could fit everything without having to be too short about what I did.” Anne described her own personal struggle, saying,

[PTPA guidelines] are so strict on [*adopts a mechanistic, threatening voice*] “limited to two pages, don't go over, or, just don't.” So I felt like I was being very minimalistic, and yes I like being minimalistic, at times, but, at other times, I think it is necessary to elaborate to the point of “I need to get my point across to you because you're going to be determining whether I get a teaching license or not, and I feel like I should be able to tell you everything I need!”

Eponine had similar thoughts, but pushed them aside during Phase 2 of the study, deciding that she would “get all the information out and then later I'll cut it back. I think I'm going to have to cut back kind of a lot.” Later in the interview she expressed concern that she would be able to cut enough to be under the requisite page limit and still thoroughly represent her teaching practice.

Other participants objected not just to the overall length of the PTPA, but also to the allocations of that limited space. Anna argued that the space she was required to use to restate her objectives could have been better used describing other elements of her practice:

[The PTPA] feels kind of really repetitive. ... asking you to state your objectives even though you have said them twice before already. I feel like, if you didn't understand what they were the first time, why am I wasting space? Especially because of the page limit. I feel like I have already said this twice, but I need to say this a third time [*exasperated sigh*].

Many other participants produced similar gestures of exasperation when discussing the repetition within the PTPA. Anna felt that she should have been able to list her objectives in a single box on the PTPA and then refer back to it, rather than use precious space restating and recopying them. Dorothy agreed, noting “It’s very long winded; it seems like it is kind of repetitive....I felt like they were asking a lot of the same questions but in a different format.” Lin also balked at the amount of repetition, saying “A lot of [the PTPA] was very repetitive...It was like—here’s something you did in Task 1 and reflect on it or rewrite it in Task 2 and 3 and 4. The same thing over and over again.” She then lamented the fact that there was no space available to “document if you had a really awesome conversation or discussion with your students on the [PTPA]. You can only say, ‘well, we had a discussion over the topic.’ [That] doesn’t even really sound good.” Eowyn objected to the repetition as well, saying, “so many times when I just repeated myself [I would think as I was writing] ‘and this for the third time!’ There’s too much nit-picky stuff [and not enough of what is important].” Anne agreed, explaining that, “I felt like they gave me more space on the things I didn’t need to elaborate on and not enough space on some of the things I did need to elaborate on.” Given the implications of the exam for participants’ abilities to pursue their teaching careers, and their deep personal investment in those careers, space limitations created significant stress.

Observations. Participants reacted very negatively to the inherent assumption of the PTPA that their teaching could be distilled into written answers to a series of prompts. They frequently argued that the work of teaching encompassed much more than could be expressed on the pages of the PTPA, and said that the only way to really understand everything that they did as teachers was to come and watch them teach. Anna said that she would “prefer someone from the state just come and watch me rather than fill out this giant document [the PTPA].” Dorothy

felt that “Observations [of teaching] are pretty telling [of teaching ability], I think, in multiples, not just one [observation]. I think that [observations] can be more telling than what's on paper.” Elizabeth agreed, telling me “I would actually... much rather have...people from the state come watch us, like [our university supervisors do]. Then we could give them those complete lesson plans and walk through those things face-to-face to judge us rather than going through this non-personal way of doing things.” Anna had a similar sentiment, saying she would have preferred “having someone [from the state] come in and actually watch what I am doing [in the classroom], and then talk about it afterwards. Kind of like [what my university supervisor and clinical supervisor were doing]. That, to me, is easier for me to sit there in the moment and think about it because I had just done it. They can actually see what I need to work on.” Minerva also expressed a preference for observation, saying, “[the PTPA raters] also don't get to judge us actually teaching, so, maybe if we had to submit an observation report or something from somebody [who had actually seen us teach], that might be [a] better [assessment of our teaching].” Lin agreed, saying that “I don't think [the PTPA] does [a good job of measuring our abilities]. I think that can be observed through our clinical supervisor and our cooperating teacher... I think to actually know if someone is a good teacher, you have to actually observe them teaching and see how they interact with students and other staff members.” Throughout the study, these participants reiterated the importance of human interaction to good teaching, and so without detailed representation of those interactions, the PTPA lacked authenticity.

Depersonalization

Participant characterization of the PTPA as artificial seemed to be directly linked to their sense that teaching was a deeply personal activity, and so personal interaction would be necessary to judge the quality of someone's teaching. Lin described the PTPA as,

just listing off the activities you did with the students—“and we had a discussion,” [instead of, more preferably] “Well, what kind of discussion did you have?” and that kind of thing. So, I don't think it really reflects on how good of a teacher you are...I think anyone can do the [PTPA], honestly. You can Google up, learning strategies and just plug that in there. It's just filling in boxes in my opinion.

The PTPA seemed to them to be highly impersonal, both in form and in function. Participants felt that the prompts in the PTPA were highly “technical” and that the form itself did not provide sufficient space to illustrate the complexities of teaching or of themselves as teachers. This critique is representative of the well-documented tension that is created when the creators of portfolios and the evaluators of those portfolios differ in the relative values they assign to various aspects of practice (Borko et al., 1997; Hammerness et al., 2005; Zeichner & Wray, 2001).

Lacking space for emotion. Participants seemed to particularly want space to allow their own personalities and the personalities of their students to be manifested within their PTPAs. As Lin explained, “[The PTPA] doesn't really allow you to have any sort of individuality when you discuss your teaching experience or your unit experience...It's just answering the same question over and over again.” Bella complained that one of the problems with the PTPA was “you don't see a lot of emotion in it. It's so cut and dry, what you are doing. It doesn't say how you felt about teaching.” Later in the study she told me that “I wish there was a lot of room [in the PTPA] for...emotion and people seeing how it made us feel as educator[s], instead of being just so cut and dry.” Participants wanted to be able to portray teaching not just as technical work, but as emotional work, and they did not see space to do so within the PTPA framework. As Minerva put it, “The personal aspects [of teaching]—[PTPA raters] don't get to see. [The PTPA is] more the technical—asking ‘Can you do this? Can you do that?’”

In discussing what she would have to cut from her PTPA responses in order to fit within the length requirements, Eponine said, “The thing that's going to have to go first is the passion part, the emotional part, which there is not really room for anyway and they are not grading me on that. It doesn't really give room to talk about that.” Lin critiqued the PTPA by saying, “It doesn't really take into account the relationships with students and staff and all of the other things that go into teaching besides just having one unit that fits a certain template, an idea that [the developers of the PTPA] want. I am not a fan of it.” Bella felt that the PTPA would be more valuable if it could provide “more of a sense of who they are as a teacher and as a person.” She complained that the PTPA “is so concrete and on paper; there is no emotion behind it.” She felt that the picture of herself, of her students, and of her classroom that showed up on her PTPA was just a small component of reality, because “you need to experience [her teaching] in order to understand it.” She wanted “more of a chance for the teacher to talk about relationships” in the PTPA, criticizing the communication log portion of the portfolio as a single-sided representation that seemed to encourage one-way communication rather than dialogue and connection.

Minerva agreed, explaining “the [PTPA] is kind of impersonal. You don't have a lot of room to say all of the things that are personal...[the personal connections are] what I like about teaching.” Billy characterized the PTPA as just wanting to know “some bare bones stuff” and “the sheer basics of the paperwork side of teaching,” but lacking the emotional and relational depth that provides richness to teaching. Anne felt that “there wasn't quite enough room [in the PTPA] to put in those ‘ah-ha!’ moments, those teachable moments, the personal connections that were made, the various discussions that we had.” Dorothy felt that her PTPA did not showcase her major strengths. She explained, “I have a sense of humor. I kind of play with that a little bit. I smile a lot. I do. I'm energetic. I think my personality [is my major strength]. I try to be very

empathetic and fun....You can't tell that on the [PTPA].” According to Elizabeth, “My [PTPA submission] reminds me a lot of a textbook. Students shouldn't have to learn as if from reading a textbook every day. They should be exposed to real life examples and an exciting nature depicted by their teacher.” She very definitely did not want to be the teacher that she saw depicted within her own PTPA, but felt that in order to meet the requirements of the PTPA, she could not describe the teacher she actually was or hoped to be.

Videos—a lost opportunity. Participants thought that the videos they were required to film in Task 4 might have helped them to portray their teaching more accurately and personally except for the fact that no one but the candidates themselves actually watched the videos. Unlike the edTPA and the PPAT, the PTPA does not require pre-service teachers to actually upload their videos for raters to watch. Instead, completers of the PTPA are instructed to film themselves on two different occasions during their student teaching experience and then answer reflective questions about what they see in the film. The films themselves are not submitted with the PTPA. Elizabeth noted that she did not take the film requirement particularly seriously because she knew no one else was actually going to watch the videos. She said, “I probably would have done better lesson plans if that was the case [if she had needed to send the videos in with her PTPA]...I think I would have taken more initiative towards which lesson [I chose] for the videotaping.” Nancy echoed a sentiment shared by many other participants, saying “I'm surprised that they didn't have [us upload the] video tape[s] of ourselves [teaching], or [have someone come observe] something. I thought those videos were going to be in my [PTPA submission]. I wondered, ‘how can you tell if I'm going to be a good teacher, per se, if you don't see me teach?’”

The PTPA instructions do indicate that “The video recorded lessons will be observed by a faculty supervisor or school administrator” (Nelson, 2014, p. 9) and a sample observation protocol for this observer is available (Nelson, 2013); however no documentation of this observation is required to be submitted with the PTPA, and no reference to commentary by an observer is required within the video reflection prompts on the PTPA. Likely because there was no oversight or meaningful integration of this mandate into the larger PTPA process, participants indicated that no one but themselves watched their videos. As Eowyn exclaimed when asked, “Oh, gosh. I wouldn't ever want anyone seeing my videos. That was the most painful two hours of my life sitting and watching those [videos].” Others had similar feelings. Though they did not state it outright, a few even implied that they had either not done the videotaping at all or had completed the filming, but had not watched the films, instead writing the answers to the PTPA prompts based solely on memory.

Teaching takes a village. Most participants heavily emphasized interaction with students, parents, staff members, and other teachers as being important to good teaching; they also noted that the PTPA did not capture these essential activities. Dorothy said that even though the PTPA might be able to determine whether a pre-service teacher could plan and assess, it would not answer the important question of “can [the pre-service teacher] interact with students and parents?” Anne described one of her most successful moments as a teacher, saying

What the [PTPA] doesn't show is student interactions and the personal connections - interactions with other staff, and the custodians and the secretaries and the principals and parents. I had a student, who, I had no idea she was going through a rough time, but, there's a song by Brad Paisley...called "Letter to Me."...I had them listen to the song and then I had them write a letter to me from the point of view of the character in the book -

write a letter to their younger character self. Anyway, the grandma of one of my students came up to me and said, 'I know you don't know any of this, but I just wanted to let you know that [my granddaughter] was going through a really rough time and you playing that song in class, something clicked. She came to me and she was all excited. It made this huge impact on her.' Then I noticed [the relationship and the buy-in from that student] from there on. The [PTPA] doesn't show that. Those teacher moments aren't reflected.

Though Task 4 of the PTPA does require pre-service teachers to log and reflect briefly upon a few communications that they had with parents or other teachers, its position as the final series of boxes on the PTPA, along with its relatively small allocated space made several participants describe it as “almost an afterthought” of the PTPA writers. Anna claimed that she “like[d] to be more interactive with [her teaching]” and that such interactivity is hard to see anywhere in the PTPA. Nancy complained that “There actually wasn't any place [in the PTPA] that I could [talk about the relationships I formed with my students]. They never asked anything about your connection with your students, or your relationship with the students.” Lin agreed, telling me that “I still think it's important to get to know your students and the [PTPA] definitely doesn't take that into consideration.” Eowyn lamented that “there's not really space to describe the fun that we had in class today; or a certain student who I really struggle with [who] was actually engaged today [or] that [there] was something that we had to celebrate.” For these participants, becoming teachers was about more than just developing specific skills. It was about becoming members of a larger community made up of students, staff, administrators, and other teachers.

Impersonal differentiation. Despite the fact that prompts relating to differentiation for a subgroup of students and two individual focus students make up a large part of the PTPA, some

participants argued that the assessment reduced these students to boxes rather than people. Lin grappled with explaining this, saying, “So I don't really think [the PTPA] takes into account just how [unique] the students are. [It doesn't ask] ‘how are the students feeling about this activity?’ or ‘were they really interested in it?’ It [just asks] ‘what are your plans and how are you differentiating?’” Later in the study she expressed more frustration specifically with the differentiation boxes and with the kind of information that the boxes were asking for. She said,

The boxes for [describing] the focal students...were so small, that I think at one point I was able to say, "Yeah, they have rough home lives," but it's not really describing what exactly is going on...it seemed like they wanted to know more about the school—“Is it an urban school? What's the population?” Instead of “What [are] the students are actually experiencing [in lives outside of school]?” [The PTPA seemed to be saying] "We just want the numbers and the demographics and we'll do whatever we want with that—make our own assumptions...”

Lin's student teaching occurred in an urban middle school, and she was particularly concerned that the way the PTPA seemed to address demographics and learner differences would actually reinforce existing deficit perspectives and cultural biases. This is also one of the fears raised by the National Association for Multicultural Education (2014) regarding the edTPA.

For many participants, the PTPA seemed to send the message that differentiation is something that a teacher only does for students with officially identified learning disabilities or issues of language proficiency. Eowyn explained that while doing the PTPA, she

wanted to show off the work that I had put into making adaptations for students, not necessarily SPED students, but students who didn't have, necessarily, diagnosed disorders...or just needed something, but didn't have any formalized [identification].

There was just that little space for adaptations and it was mostly for your two focus students. So I didn't really feel like I got to show off all of the things that I brought in for my huge range of students.

According to Bella, the PTPA was not even asking the right questions; she noted that the PTPA asked, “‘What are you doing?’ not, ‘what are you doing and, how are you utilizing it for the benefit of the students?’” Clarissa described the most important growth in her teaching as

Just being able to relate to students. I, personally, had my first experience with students who had a lot of issues outside of school, family issues, etc. That was something I had never experienced, so I really had to take that into consideration when, for example allowing late work and just being able to relate to them and understand where they are coming from.

This growth was not reflected in her PTPA, however. For pre-service teachers who felt that good teaching revolved around relevance, engagement, and care, the feeling that the PTPA placed students in a subordinate role produced significant tension.

Technical vs. personal teaching. Katniss could have been speaking for most of the participants when she said that the PTPA portrayed teaching as “really, really technical.” However, for these participants, teaching was not just technical work; it was personal work. This is a clear illustration of the clash between conceptualizations of teaching as either technical or personal that Lefstein (2005) described. The PTPA seems to embody a vision of teaching as a technical enterprise, linked to “accountability measures, and the drive for ‘what works’ research and evidence-based practice (Lefstein, 2005, p. 334). The participants, however, definitely conceptualize teaching as personal and seemed to share concerns throughout that the overly

technical vision of teaching inherent in the PTPA “threaten[ed] to ‘dehumanise’ educational relationships” (Lefstein, 2005, p. 334).

Participants seemed to agree with Noddings (1984, 2001, 2012), who argued that teachers must be *carers*, a term that she defined in the following way:

The carer is first of all attentive.... The attention of the carer is receptive. Its objective is to understand what the cared-for is experiencing—to hear and understand the needs expressed.... Second, as the carer attends, she is likely to undergo motivational displacement; that is, her motive energy will begin to flow toward the needs and objectives of the cared-for.... After listening and reflecting, the carer must respond. If she can, she responds positively to the student’s expressed need. But, if there is a reason why she cannot respond positively to that need, she must still respond in a way that maintains the caring relation. (Noddings, 2012, p. 772)

This is essentially what Lin described when she argued for the importance of empathy to good teaching. She said that good teaching is

just being empathetic at times, too, because there are things out of your control, especially where I was student teaching. Students would come into school already visibly upset over something that happened at home—because they got kicked out of their house [for example]. Just all of those other things - the other side of teaching. You need to understand that too, because sometimes you don't see it, but in the placement I was at, I saw it a lot. So, you have to understand where your students are coming from and understand that sometimes they can't focus on annotating something when their life at home is falling apart. You have to be understanding of that, because on their list of things that are on their mind, you are at the very bottom. So, just understanding that and

just not pushing it too far to where your students are just going to hate you because you are not understanding what's going on.

Though other participants were less impassioned in their emphases, they shared similar sentiments. In their descriptions of good teaching as being relevant, fun, and caring, participants were giving examples of teachers and of themselves recognizing student needs and responding to those needs by linking lessons to their life experiences and goals and by designing or enacting learning environments that could tap into elements of intrinsic enjoyment. The commonality amongst all three of these qualities is the development of relationships between teachers and learners, and the foregrounding of the needs and interests of the learner within those relationships.

Understanding good teaching as so heavily focused upon interpersonal relationships, while certainly supported by a variety of scholars, may produce tensions for pre-service teachers as they enter schools and classrooms where the opportunities to develop such relationships are significantly limited. While Noddings (2001) argued that, “If we are to establish relations of care and trust, certain continuities are required... Teachers and students need to stay together long enough to know one another” (p. 103), Darling-Hammond (2006) noted that, in general, “American factory-model schools offer fewer opportunities for teachers to come to know students well over long periods” (p. 302). This is particularly true in field experience settings in teacher education, where pre-service teachers are on average only in a single placement for ten to twelve weeks (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005). Already dealing with these tensions which are inherent in their *participation* (Wenger, 1998) in field experience settings, participants looked for opportunities to *reify* (Wenger, 1998) those personal caring identities that were so important to them. The PTPA did not offer them that opportunity.

Bureaucratic Ventriloquism

The disconnect, artificiality, and depersonalization of the PTPA for these participants, made filling it out an act of what Rennert-Ariev (2008) labelled *bureaucratic ventriloquism*.

Rennert-Ariev (2008) described bureaucratic ventriloquism as

an inauthentic response so markedly detached from the individual's own beliefs, that the utterances themselves seem to be projected from elsewhere...[in such instances] express[ing] insincere beliefs [is] not solely an individual decision by participants but, rather, [is] prompted by the social and political context in which the program [is] situated...characterized by concerns over compliance with external forms of accountability.” (p. 111).

In such instances, “bureaucratic considerations undermine...opportunities for the authentic intellectual engagement of program participants” (p. 111). Lin described pretty much exactly this process, telling me “I knew that if I didn't get at least a 20 [a passing score on the PTPA] that I could just talk to [the associate dean] about it and fix it [revise based on the rubric scores from the PTPA raters]. So, I guess I didn't take it that seriously. I figured that I would do ok on it; as long as I filled everything out I would pass it.” The emphasis that Lin perceived was on completing the PTPA, not on engaging with it, in what Rennert-Ariev (2008) described as “superficial, sometimes insincere gestures of compliance” (p. 133).

Compliance. This emphasis on compliance over engagement manifested itself in the approach most participants took toward planning their PTPA lessons and units. The PTPA is designed so that participants will gather information about their students and their district in Task 1 and use that information to help design a unit of instruction in Task 2. In Task 3, pre-service teachers are then supposed to teach that unit and reflect on the experience of teaching it,

specifically focusing on learning outcomes as measured by the assessments they created in Task 2. In short, the requirements and sequencing of the PTPA instrument are intended to shape the practice of pre-service teachers while they complete it (Nelson, 2014). This is not how most participants approached the PTPA.

Almost without exception, participants described planning their units either without looking at or after only briefly skimming the PTPA requirements. Anna said that she “taught the lesson and thought about the [PTPA] afterwards. I want[ed] to teach and then whatever [fell] into place, [fell] into place.” According to Dorothy, “[the PTPA] was so much on the back burner that I didn't really think about doing things to fill out the charts. It was more like - I'm going to do what I'm going to do [in terms of teaching and lesson planning] - and then hopefully I can answer all the questions I needed to along the way...and that was problematic as well because I wasn't working on [the PTPA] as I was [teaching], [so] it was a little bit harder to then take what I had already done and [make it fit] in [the PTPA boxes].” Clarissa explained that,

I didn't plan my unit based around [PTPA], or what was [required] in it. I just kind of planned the unit and stuff with [my cooperating teacher], and [the PTPA] didn't really affect that. [Because I did it that way, translating what I did into the PTPA boxes] was difficult. The lesson plans were easy, but then, going back and looking at the boxes, and if [the PTPA] had asked something that I hadn't thought about, asked me to write about something that I hadn't considered while I was teaching, that was kind of difficult to fit in.

Katniss described a very similar experience, noting, “I ended up doing my [PTPA], even the lesson planning part...after I taught [the lesson]. So I planned the lessons in a different way and then went back and [fit it into the PTPA forms]. I made sure that I had the different parts [that

were required by the PTPA], but I didn't fill in the boxes the way, exactly, as it asked me to.”

Several participants told me that Task 1, the demographic information that was intended to guide the rest of the PTPA, was the last part that they completed. Anna stated this very clearly, saying “I had Tasks 2 through 4 done first and then went back to Task 1, because Task 1 was basically finding out stuff about [my placement], and I wanted to get the more important part of my lesson done.” She very clearly had not internalized the intent of Task 1 and was simply filling in the boxes to comply with PTPA requirements.

Even those students who did weigh the PTPA more heavily in their planning processes still considered it from a compliance perspective. Anne’s words exemplify this view:

I knew [the PTPA] wanted [me] to [have] incorporate[d] literacy [into all my lessons]. I knew [the PTPA] wanted all this other stuff...sometimes if one of my lessons didn't have [one of the items like literacy or technology that was specifically required by the PTPA]...I...thought about it in advance and said, "Oh, crap, this would be a really good lesson, but I need to incorporate [a PTPA requirement].” I know what [the PTPA raters] wanted for my [PTPA], so I have to add [those elements] in even though [those] might not have been necessary for the day. I knew what was wanted [*heavy shrug*].

Minerva explained that her focus during the PTPA process was on complying with the requirements so that she could pass and move on. She said, “I took it pretty seriously, so I don't have to redo it.” She did not take the PTPA seriously because she found the tasks intellectually engaging or professionally relevant; she took it seriously because she did not want to do it over again.

Deception. Concerns about compliance rather than engagement with the PTPA led to discussion and admissions of deception throughout participant responses relating to the PTPA.

Eowyn argued that “you could really fill out the [PTPA] without ever stepping foot in a classroom. There's no way they would ever know. You could just make up all this stuff and there would be no way to check it.” Bella agreed, saying, “anyone can write all that stuff [in the PTPA] and they could be the worst teacher in the world. You could make [your PTPA] up and no one knows, and no one would know. You could have someone else completely write it for you.” According to Dorothy, “The thing is, you could just type the answers [to the prompts in the PTPA without actually doing the teaching]. If you know your audience, I think you'd do pretty well. [That is not] a reliable way to assess whether or not that actually happened in the classroom or if it will happen in the future.”

Clarissa admitted that “I embellished a bit in some areas, but, who didn't?” Apparently many of her fellow participants did the same. Anna admitted that she “fudged it a little bit” in order make what she had actually done in the classroom match the requirements of the PTPA. Nancy echoed this sentiment, claiming that “I don't think [the PTPA] meets [the purpose of determining whether or not a pre-service teacher is competent] at all. I'm just being honest. To me, it did nothing. I will be honest with you, I fibbed a little on certain sections.” Minerva noted that “If you forgot to do something [required in the PTPA when you taught your lesson], you can just say that you did it, which is not that great.” Since participants saw very little value in the PTPA process itself, they saw no need to authentically engage with it.

A Weak Intervention

At root, this study found that the PTPA plays a minimal role in shaping participant conceptions of good teaching. Rennert-Ariev (2008) described teacher preparation in general as a “weak intervention—sandwiched in a sense between two powerful forces: previous life history and real experiences in the classroom” (p. 122). In the case of this study, the PTPA certainly

seems to fit such a description. Billy could have spoken for most of them when he said, “I wanted to save myself time and effort. I was kind of cutting a corner [in my PTPA], I guess. At this stage in my schooling, any corner I can cut that is not related to the teaching I’m trying to do, is a corner I am pretty inclined to cut.” The implication in Billy’s statement was that the PTPA is not related to the vision he has of himself as a teacher. A tension definitely existed between the teachers participants felt they had to represent within the PTPA and the teachers they felt they were or wanted to be; that tension is explored in the following chapter.

Chapter Six:

Identity Tensions in Completing the PTPA

Wenger (1998) argued that “our identities form in [the] tension between our investment in various forms of belonging and our ability to negotiate the meanings that matter in those contexts” (p. 188). As these participants completed student teaching, seeking to join the community of professional teachers and assume the professional identity of *teacher*, few meanings were more important for them to negotiate than the meaning of *good teaching*. Construction of pre-service teacher identity is dependent upon personal definitions of the work of teaching, some of which candidates bring to their teacher preparation coursework, and other parts of it are created or modified throughout their education (Horn et al., 2008). The previous chapters in this study have clearly indicated significant differences in the conceptualization of teaching driving the PTPA, that of teaching as a heavily technical enterprise (Lefstein, 2005; Rennert-Ariev, 2008), and the dominant conceptualization of these participants of teaching as personal work (Lefstein, 2005; Noddings, 2012). Since research has indicated that beliefs about teaching form a major part of teacher professional identity (Horn et al., 2008; Jarvis-Selinger et al., 2010; Webb, 2005), the tensions participants in this study experienced relating to constructions of good teaching also translated into tensions in professional identity.

Identity Positioning

The stories that my participants told at the beginning of the study about good teachers who had taught them, and the stories they told of themselves emulating those teachers, painted a clear view of the teachers that participants want to be. They did not just believe that good teaching is fun, relevant, and caring; they wanted to embody those qualities, to be fun, relevant, and caring teachers. Just as Chong (2011) described, they were entering student teaching “with

clear images of what teaching entails and how they see themselves as teachers” (p. 220). As the study progressed and participants moved through the process of student teaching and completing their PTPAs, new experiences led them to expand their understandings of teaching and began to produce tensions within their emerging senses of professional identity. These findings are consistent with Hallman’s (2007) assertion that “preservice teachers frequently try to present coherent and competent identities as beginning professionals while also undertaking the notion of identity building as a fluid, ongoing process” (p. 475). Despite the fact that the participants in this study were in a unique position to understand, forge, and reform their professional identities, they were uncomfortable with presenting unfinished or conflicting professional identities, and so dismissed as meaningless the PTPA process that required them to present a teaching identity that conflicted with their initial conception of good teaching.

Student identities. As Wenger (1998) noted, “the perspectives we bring to our endeavors are important because they shape both what we perceive and what we do” (p. 225). Participant emphasis on interpersonal and relational aspects of teaching to the exclusion of all other aspects at the beginning of the inquiry may have been related to the ways in which participants were viewing and positioning themselves in relation to teaching (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008; Bullough & Draper, 2004; Hall, Johnson, Juzwik, Wortham, & Mosley, 2010). At that phase in the inquiry, participants were primarily responding not as teachers or even student teachers, but as students—the identity that they had worn and been comfortable with for at least the past decade and a half. Though participants were stepping into the awkward and tension-filled identity arena of student teaching, a time when they were needing to simultaneously occupy the identity roles of university student, pre-service teacher, and future professional educator (Coward et al., 2012), their sense of self was still firmly rooted in their role as students,

a phenomenon that a number of other scholars have noted (Britzman, 2003; Knowles, 1992; Lortie, 1975). Students can readily observe the impact of teachers establishing relevance and building personal relationship, of creating fun and engaging environments; they cannot necessarily see or appreciate the underlying theoretical, pedagogical, and ethical frames and decisions that undergird teacher practice (Britzman, 2003). Britzman (2003) argued that

Issues of pedagogy do not enter into a student's view of teacher's work...Hidden is the pedagogy teachers employ: the ways teachers render content and experience as pedagogical, consciously construct and innovate teaching methods, solicit and negotiate student concerns, attempt to balance the exigencies of curriculum with both the students' and their own visions of what it means to know. (p. 4)

That is, aspects like relevance, engagement, and care, which make up portions of the InTASC categories of Learner and Learning and Content are readily visible to students, while the skills and habits of mind that constitute the InTASC categories of Instructional Practice and Professional Responsibility, despite their massive importance, are less likely to overtly register to those occupying the roles of students.

Sources of teaching knowledge. For these participants, focus on interpersonal relationships was rooted not in teacher education coursework or educational scholarship, but in their own personal experiences. Though a few participants referenced courses, instructors, or educational scholars as justifications for their constructions of good teaching, all participants drew heavily upon their experiences as students. Such an emphasis would certainly be expected in response to questions asking participants to describe the best teacher they had ever observed (see Appendix 3), but participants used anecdotes of experiences as students as proof of good teaching in nearly every line of inquiry, including their written response to a prompt simply

asking them to describe good teaching (see Appendix 2). When I probed further, asking for additional evidence, I was met with more stories, not references to coursework or educational research.

This is the phenomenon described by Lortie (1975) as the *apprenticeship of observation*. By the time they reached the final semester of their teacher education, the participants in this study had been observing teachers as students in K-12 and post-secondary classrooms for a minimum of 16 years. They had been judging the quality of teachers and teaching practices based upon the impact of those teachers and practices upon themselves and those within their direct contexts for all that time, and, in Phase 1 of the study, this observation was still the primary influence upon their constructions of good teaching.

Darling-Hammond (2006) saw the apprenticeship of observation as one of the fundamental challenges for teacher education, noting that “learning to teach requires that new teachers come to understand teaching in ways quite different from their own experience as students” (p. 305). Borg (2004) argued that “student teachers may fail to realize that the aspects of teaching which they perceived as students represented only a partial view of the teachers’s job” (p. 274). Though critical of those who have used Lortie’s (1975) construction of the apprenticeship of observation as an excuse for why teacher education has not been successful at changing teaching practice, Mewborn & Tyminski (2006) agreed that pre-service teachers past experiences as students was the most significant influence upon their conceptions of good teaching. However, they argued that strong teacher preparation involving critical analysis of such past beliefs could and should be successful in changing them. Bullough (2010) similarly argued that “it would be wise for those responsible for designing teacher education programs to create experiences...that prove shattering, that undermine [pre-service teachers’ preconceived]

beliefs about self, subject matter, and teaching” (p. 156) in order to allow such beliefs to be reconstructed to more fully and accurately represent the practice of good teaching. At the beginning of the study, participants had clearly not yet lived such an experience.

Student-teacher identities. As the study continued, participants were making the transition from viewing the work of teaching through the eyes of students to viewing it through the eyes of teachers. They were learning to teach, and, “Because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity” (Wenger, 1998, p. 215). Expanding views of teaching to include cycles of planning and assessment, components of practice that are less visible to students, are indicative of such a change in position. They were student teaching, which, as Coward et al. (2012) argued, requires the simultaneous inhabitation of multiple identities, that of student in the university classroom, student teacher in the field placement, and emerging teacher in the broader professional world. Wenger (1998) coined the term *multimembership* to describe the fact that individuals “belong to many communities of practice; some past, some current; some as full members, some in more peripheral ways...all these various forms of participation contribute in some ways to the production of identities” (p. 158). The participants in this study were members in some way of all the various communities that Coward et al. (2012) described above, and so needed to work to reconcile their involvement in those multiple communities. However, as Wenger (1998) noted, “the work of reconciliation may be the most significant challenge faced by learners who move from one community of practice to another...[and] may involve ongoing tensions that are never resolved” (p. 160). Participants in this study certainly struggled with this task.

Participation & Reification

Looking at participant responses through the lens of Wenger's (1998) description of identity development as a process of both participation and reification helps bring additional clarity to their struggles. Within their field experience settings, the pre-service teachers in this study were participating fully in the work of teaching; that is, they were experiencing "membership in social communities and active involvement in social enterprises" (Wenger, 1998, p. 55), with their schools as the "social community" in this instance, and the work of teaching as the "social enterprise." However, as a reification of that practice, the PTPA was lacking. Wenger (1998) noted that identity development within a community of practice is contingent upon an interplay of participation with reification: "they take place together; they are two constituents intrinsic to the process of negotiation of meaning" (p. 62). For participants in this study, a major reification of their involvement in the community of teaching, the PTPA, failed to embody their actual practice. The reification did not match the participation, and, as Wenger (1998) noted, "When too much reliance is placed on one [reification or participation] at the expense of the other, the continuity of meaning is likely to become problematic in practice" (p. 65). Participants felt tension in attempting to represent who they were and what they believed about teaching within their PTPAs.

For these participants, the interpersonal relationships that are fostered and the emotional support provided by the teacher are the defining characteristics of the work of teaching, and, therefore, a person cannot assume the identity of teacher without demonstrating those characteristics. Eponine complained that "I didn't really feel like there were a lot of places [in the PTPA] where I could really be genuine in just talking about who I really am with students. There wasn't a lot of space to be too personal about it. Even in the spots where [the PTPA] tried

to do that [such as the communication log], it just felt a little inorganic to me.” Since the PTPA did not measure or even allow for the demonstration of these characteristics, participants saw very little value in it. It failed to reify (Wenger, 1998) either who they were or who they wished to be, and so they dismissed it, in Eowyn’s words, as “just one more thing.”

Searching for narrative. Participants were searching for some way to reify their practice in order to “negotiate meaning” (Wenger, 1998, p. 53) from and within their student teaching experiences, but they did not see the PTPA as a way to do so. They wanted to tell their stories and their students’ stories. Galman (2009) argued that the primary process by which new teachers are able to build a sense of identity is by integrating past experiences, including their apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) with new knowledge and experience gained through university coursework and field experiences. The act of constructing and telling these stories is integral to the construction of identity expressed with those stories. As I mentioned in my discussion of Phase 1 findings, when asked to define good teaching, these participants answered in the form of stories from their past experiences. Stories are important to them. Souto-Manning (2014) argued that “Narrative is one of the most broadly employed ways of systematizing human experience. As human beings, we experience our worlds and live our lives by telling stories” (p. 162), and it was narrative that my participants seemed to be seeking in order to reify their identities. Stories are important as vehicles both for constructing identity and for communicating it. Wenger (1998) noted the importance of stories in negotiating meaning, writing, “Stories can transport our experience into the situations they relate and involve us in producing the meaning of those events as though we were participants. As a result, they can be integrated into our identities as personal experience” (p. 203). Without space within the PTPA to provide true

narrative of their experience and their practice, participants in this study struggled to communicate who they really were to the PTPA raters.

The fact that they could not do so produced tension. Lin explained that the PTPA forced her to spend time “Writing forever about something I’m not very passionate about...I’m an English major, and I felt like I wasn’t a very good writer [while I worked on my PTPA].” She objected both to the form of the PTPA and to questions it asked, noting that parts of teaching that she felt were important and that sustained her in her practice were unimportant to the PTPA. Bella agreed. When she indicated that the PTPA did not provide a place for her to write about what was really important, I asked her what she would have liked to write about. Bella responded, “How the unit made me feel as a teacher and what I could learn from it; what I could change; what were my strengths? How the overall student teaching experience made me feel. What I did right; what I could do; how I could figure it out.” Participants seemed to view their practice holistically, with every part integrally connected to all the other parts. The analytic and atomistic nature of the PTPA, which required them to isolate components of practice and individual actions seemed anathema to the way that these participants constructed meaning and constructed themselves.

They wanted a narrative. As Lin said, “I would rather write a 30 page paper however I wanted [to write it] to reflect on my entire teaching experience instead of [filling in a] template.” When she found that she could not tell the story she wanted to tell while drafting her PTPA, Eponine “made space for it anyway” needing to put into writing, to reify, the details and experiences that were most important to her. However, she quickly pointed out that she knew the vast majority of these details would end up having to be edited out of her final draft. Bella told me that she did not struggle with the content of the PTPA, but that she found the format

problematic, that she did not like having to share her experiences “the way [the PTPA raters] want [them] constructed.” Elizabeth “wish[ed] there were a different way for them to evaluate [her] skill.” Anna lamented that while filling out her PTPA, “It felt like there were a million and one boxes. It felt like I had been filling out boxes forever. It felt like I filled out a hundred boxes and I had another hundred to go. It didn't feel like I had made progress, even though I did.” The structure of the PTPA, the many different boxes and individual prompts, inhibited the ability of participants to make sense of their experiences, because “It is through narratives that experiences are ordered and permeated with meaning” (Souto-Manning, 2014, p. 162). The absence of space for participants to tell stories detracted from the ability of the PTPA to serve as a meaningful and meaning-making activity.

Reflection. The only parts of the PTPA that offered them even a marginal ability to reify their practice were the reflective prompts contained within Tasks 3 and 4 of the PTPA. This is consistent with the research of a number of scholars who have demonstrated the potential of reflection in teacher development and educational improvement (Brownlee et al., 1998; Bullough, 2005; Poulou, 2007; Schon, 1987; Shapiro, 2010; Zeichner, 1981). Anne felt that “the reflections [were] definitely [the most valuable]...if [the PTPA] would have just focused on Parts 3 and 4, [then] that would have been great! That was what was actually helpful to me as a teacher.” Minerva “th[ought] the reflective part [of the PTPA] was really beneficial... I think that was good because a lot of teaching is reflective, especially going out for our first couple of years.” Clarissa agreed, saying “I thought that those [reflective prompts in Tasks 3 & 4] were the best parts of the [PTPA].” Dorothy thought that her PTPA did help her develop “Reflection on learning objectives.” Even Lin, who on the whole displayed the most vehement dislike of the PTPA throughout the study, conceded that “Maybe just the reflection portions for each lesson

[helped her to display good teaching]. I feel like I'm a good reflector. So, with each lesson, I think I'm very honest with how things go. I don't think I'm the super teacher that knows how to do everything. I can understand when I did something that didn't go well how I can fix that.”

However, even these reflections were so regimented that some participants were frustrated by the lack of space to give the details about their practice that really mattered to them. A variety of researchers have indicated that ongoing reflection on practice and identity is crucial for teacher success and continuous improvement (Brownlee et al., 1998; Bullough, 2005; Poulou, 2007; Schon, 1987; Zeichner, 1981), and that a part of that reflection must include exploration of emotion and personal feelings of connection and adequacy (Coward et al., 2012; McDougall, 2010; Shapiro, 2010; Zembylas, 2005). Because the conception of good teaching inherent in the PTPA is of teaching as technical rather than personal work (Lefstein, 2005), the reflection portions of the PTPA do not have space for candidates to explore their feelings. Katniss provided a detailed explanation of this phenomenon, saying,

there's [in teaching] the moments where you can tell that a kid has learned, that doesn't necessarily show in assessment [data on the PTPA]. Or, the more personal parts of teaching, even in the reflections there's not really [space]. I think I had 12 days of reflections [but] there's not really a whole lot of [space] once you say, “Here's what I did; here's what I did or didn't change; and here's how Focus Student A and B did,” there's not a whole lot of room for much personal [reflection, like] “This is what I thought about what I did,” which is...more what [reflections] are supposed to be for, but once you look at the prompt questions you are supposed to answer in those [PTPA reflection boxes] - that's a lot of questions to answer for every day [and not much space given to do so].

Bella argued that it “would have been really nice to have a reflection piece [where she could say] ‘I’ve thought about [my practice], I’ve self-reflected, and this is how I feel about [my practice and myself as a teacher.]’” Billy thought that “being reflective is just kind of shoe-horned in there [in the PTPA]” rather than forming a meaningful and authentic part of the assessment. Elizabeth said that in her PTPA “reflections, a lot of the time, I wanted to say way more than I was able to because I knew that what [the PTPA raters] would be looking for was, ‘What happened with the sub-group today? What happened with student A and student B...?’” But I really wanted to say what I did and how it affected, not only those special groups, but everyone else.” Despite the importance of those stories to the participants, there was no space for them to be told.

What I Did and Who I Am

Participants felt that if the state was going to use their PTPAs to determine if they were qualified to teach, that is, if they were capable of performing good teaching, then the PTPA ought to reflect who they were as teachers. However, most felt that it did not. Nancy said that “I don’t think [the PTPA is] a good indication of [who] you are going to be a teacher, or setting us up to see how we are going to teach in the future.” Eowyn explained that the PTPA “loses a lot of the personality of me as a teacher, I think. It’s just sort of ‘this is what I did,’ not, ‘this is what I did and who I am mixed into one,’ which I think is part of good teaching, really.” This sense, shared by many participants, meant that Eowyn saw her practice as a teacher tied integrally to her identity as a teacher. Anna told me that she wanted people see that she was “caring and passionate and excited and full of life.” These were key attributes of her identity as a teacher, but she expressed doubts that such an identity could be expressed within the PTPA. When asked if her PTPA would demonstrate to readers the kind of teacher she really was, Lin responded,

I don't know. I was thinking about that. They are probably going to think I am really boring. Because you are literally just [detailing] a unit, and I just don't think it really reflects how any of us are as teachers. It just shows that we know how to write a lot.

For someone who took pride in developing engagement and relevance within her practice, being represented as “boring” was a serious affront. Anne noted that, while her PTPA might be an accurate depiction of her technical abilities, “I don't think it reflected me as a teacher as far as making personal connections with students and being able to say that I've had an impact on them in more ways than just their learning,” something that nearly every participant felt was an important component of good teaching. Bella thought the picture of her represented in her PTPA was “very vague.” Elizabeth said that a stranger reading her PTPA would think she was very “by the book,” by which she meant someone who taught according to a meticulous plan from she would not deviate. This was not how she saw herself. In general, these participants agreed that, while their PTPA submissions might successfully represent a component of who they were as teachers, they did not represent their full professional identities or even the most important parts of those identities.

Professionalization & Dehumanization

Participants were reacting to an implicit professional identity that they saw encapsulated within the PTPA—an identity of teacher as technician or clinician dispassionately analyzing contexts and learners and then applying the proper instructional tools or treatments. Such an identity is rooted in the conception of good teaching as diagnosing student learning difficulties and treating those difficulties with research-based instructional interventions (Doyle, 1979; Katz, 1981), and deemphasizes the emotional work and emotional identities of teachers (Lefstein, 2005; McDougall, 2010; Zembylas, 2004). Anna’s insistence that, as a teacher and a person, she

is “caring and passionate and excited and full of life,” and that she was frustrated by her inability to reify that identity in the PTPA echoed the concerns of other critics of high-stakes performance assessment. Shapiro (2010) argued that “Recognizing emotional identity in the educational process may well be our most effective tool of resistance to the persistent dehumanization of the teaching profession. Teacher identity must begin to encompass the emotional realities of human existence” (p. 620-1). As noted earlier, the National Association for Multicultural Education critiqued the edTPA, saying that “credential candidates’ attributes such as kindness, promotion of social justice, the ability to think on one’s feet, or to adjust teaching to the exigencies of the moment [are not] assessed or assessable by the edTPA” (p. 2). The stakes in identity formation are high. As Wenger (1998) noted,

Identity is a locus of social selfhood and by the same token a locus of social power. On the one hand, it is the power to belong, to be a certain person, to claim a place with the legitimacy of membership; and on the other it is the vulnerability of belonging to, identifying with, and being part of some communities that contribute to defining who we are and thus have a hold on us. (p. 207)

Participants in this study seemed to feel that by embracing the technical and clinical identity that they had to represent in the PTPA, they were rejecting a personal and human one that they had been committed to for most of their lives.

As Akkerman & Meijer (2011) noted, people have a need to feel continuity and unity within their identities, even while those identities are adapting and evolving in the face of changing contexts. They recommended a dialogic approach to understanding identity, recognizing that complex social environments will require people to reconcile seemingly contradictory identity positions while still maintain a sense of self. Participants entered the study

hoping to embody the envisioned identities of good teachers as relevant, fun, and caring professionals. This envisioned identity was primarily drawn from past observations of those they considered good teachers. When student teaching brought additional attributes of teaching to their attention, they looked for ways to incorporate these new characteristics and skills into their existing senses of self so that they could maintain “continuity of identity over time” (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 313). However, teacher identity research clearly indicates that identity construction and reconciliation is a complex and important task for pre-service teachers to undertake, and it may not happen successfully without structure and guidance (Beijaard et al., 2004; Olsen, 2008; Pillen et al., 2013; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). In general, that structure and guidance did not seem to exist for these participants, as they were not able or not willing to meaningfully incorporate the seemingly contradictory positions they confronted during PTPA construction.

The idea that conceptions of good teaching, and, with them, the professional identities that those conceptions represent, can be neatly separated into binary divisions is a seductive one. It renders the world into neat categories that superimposes an illusion of order upon the complex and often messy experience of human existence. It is, however, an illusion (Bhabha, 1994; Flessner, 2008; Soja, 1996). In her seminal study of teacher identity discourse, Alsup (2006) argued against such a binary understanding of the *good teacher*, noting that

A binary is at work in the definition of teacher identity: The teacher is depicted as a failure or hero, villain or angel. Most people I have met can tell stories of both types of teachers from their educational histories. They have ready, internalized narratives for each contrasting characterization of ‘teacher,’ which they can relate on demand and in support of the educational argument du jour...this book provides a deeper perspective on

teachers' struggle to transcend this binary, and urges a recognition of the various and sometimes contrasting subjectivities and associated ideologies that are present as teachers enact their professional selves. (p. 24)

Britzman (1991) argued that the “tensions between...knowledge and experience, the technical and the existential, the objective and the subjective [are] traditionally expressed as dichotomies, [however] these relationships are not nearly so neat or binary. Rather, such relationships are better expressed as dialogic in that they are shaped as they shape each other in the process of coming to know” (p. 2). Jackson (1986) argued that the most productive teaching would come from an interchange of mimetic and transformative traditions. Lefstein (2005) argued the same regarding the interplay between the technical and the personal in teaching. Neither Jackson (1986) nor Lefstein (2005) were optimistic that such synthesis could be undertaken in current systems of teaching and teacher education. However, for the PTPA to be meaningful for pre-service teachers at Midwest University, this is exactly the kind of synthesis that will need to take place.

As this study demonstrates, these participants had to work to reconcile deeply-seated personal beliefs about teaching with the constructions of teachers and teaching enshrined in state policies, including mandated high-stakes performance assessments like the PTPA. Alsup (2006) indicated that requirements for teacher preparation programs to evaluate their successes based solely upon state and national standards for teacher education, “really only measures the knowledge base and skill sets being taught, which, although important, are not necessarily a satisfactory evaluation of the total preparedness of our preservice teachers” (p. 25), as it neglects emotional and dispositional competencies. Lasky (2005) noted that increased emphasis on teacher education reform and oversight of teacher quality, a movement of which the PTPA is a

product, have created new tensions in teacher identity. Day et al. (2005) concurred, finding that teachers who were deeply committed to building relationships with students, and who saw the personal aspects and outcomes of teaching as the most important components of good teaching, were struggling with many new education reforms because they saw “no evidence that these core [caring and relational] identities are acknowledge or valued” (p. 575). Participants in this study seemed to concur with that assertion.

This was the central struggle that I watched participants wrestle with throughout the course of the study. Field experience, particularly student teaching, greatly expanded participant understanding of the complexity involved in being a teacher, a phenomenon that a variety of other scholars have noted (Chong, 2011; Coward et al., 2012; Ottesen, 2007; Poulou, 2007). The PTPA encapsulated one part of that expanded consciousness, the technical skills of planning and assessing, skills that participants did admit were valuable. However, the PTPA did not allow them to demonstrate the emotional dispositions and interpersonal relationships that they believed were even more important. Furthermore, because the former was emphasized to the exclusion of the latter, the implicit message received by these participants was that the two views of teaching and the two kinds of professional identity were mutually exclusive. This lead participants to a perceived Catch-22 of identity representation, in which, as Lin commented ruefully, the PTPA “kinda made us feel like we were bad teachers.” If participants allowed themselves to become the teachers they believed the PTPA raters wanted, then, they felt as though they would be turning their backs upon their deeply-seated beliefs in teaching as humanistic and personal work (Lefstein, 2005; Noddings, 2012), that they would be taking on a false or unfulfilling identity, and, perhaps most importantly, that they would be resigning themselves to measuring their successes based upon mimetic rather than transformative outcomes (Jackson, 1986). This would

make them, in their own eyes, “bad teachers.” However, if they were determined to represent themselves fully as the caring educators they were or hoped to be, they would be “bad teachers” in the eyes of the PTPA raters, and would, therefore, be denied a license to teach. In effect, participants felt they could either reify the identity that they valued—that of a personal and humanistic teacher—and risk being denied the ability to actually participate in that identity—by failing the PTPA—or they could reify a false identity—that of a clinical and technical teacher—in order to gain access to a community of practice—by passing the PTPA—wherein they could fully participate in the work of teaching and, hopefully, be able to embody a personal and humanistic identity.

In general, participants in this study chose the second option, leading to the acts of bureaucratic ventriloquism (Rennert-Ariev, 2008) described in the previous chapter. Wenger (1998) explained what seems to have been my participants’ thought process: “the mix of participation and non-participation through which we define our identities reflects our power as individuals and communities to define and affect our relations to the rest of the world. It shapes...what we care about and what we neglect...what we attempt to know and understand and what we choose to ignore...how we engage and direct our energies” (pp. 167-168). The choice to comply rather than fully engage with the PTPA may have been, at least in part, a statement of identity definition via the rejection of one conception of teaching in favor of another.

However, there are consequences for such choices, as different identities are valued differently depending upon context (Hong, 2010). Currently, technical conceptions of teaching dominate the realm of education policy in the United States, and so an identity encompassing that conception will tend to be more highly valued than an identity centered upon humanistic or relational constructions of teaching (Lefstein & Snell, 2014; Margolis & Doring, 2013). It is

certainly the prerogative of individual pre-service teachers to construct and select the identities that they wish to adopt. However, that process should be based upon active engagement in identity construction and purposeful selection. Pre-service teachers should have the opportunity to fully understand and engage with elements of professional identity before accepting or rejecting those elements. Wenger (1998) argued that “controlling both participation and reification affords control over the kinds of meaning that can be created in a certain context and the kinds of person that participants can become” (p. 93). Since the PTPA existed for these participants outside of either their field experiences or their university coursework, rejection of technical conceptions of teaching as reified within the PTPA may have resulted from a lack of space to fully engage with those conceptions in meaningful ways and to form bridges between perceived binaries. This possibility is further explored in the next and final chapter of the study.

Chapter Seven:

The Need for a Third Space between Policy, Personality, & Practice

This study has helped to illuminate the experiences of pre-service English teachers as they attempted to balance the demands of student teaching with a state-mandated performance assessment, the PTPA. Throughout the course of this study, I accompanied my participants on their journeys to become teachers. Our travels took us through university coursework, practicum experiences, and student teaching. I watched them improve their skills, deepen their understandings, and wrestle with the difficult work of molding personal constructions of good teaching and shaping their emerging professional identities. Throughout the course of that process, I was guided by the following research questions:

- How do pre-service English teachers view the PTPA's role in becoming good English teachers?
- Does the PTPA modify conceptions pre-service teachers have about what it means to be a good English teacher?

I found that participants viewed the PTPA as wholly irrelevant or only tangentially related to becoming good English teachers. While the high-stakes nature of the assessment required them to devote significant time and effort to completing it, in general they viewed it as separate from the actual work of learning to teach. However, my inquiry also revealed that the PTPA was having some impact upon participant conceptions of good teaching, helping them to broaden their understanding of the work of teachers to include not just dispositional and relational aspects of teaching, but elements of technical teaching practice as well. Additionally, I found that participant dislike for the PTPA and its concurrent impact upon their perceptions of good teaching produced a series of identity tensions.

Anna summed up her feelings about the PTPA, by saying, “I kind of feel like it was a pain in my butt for no reason.” Anne agreed, complaining that “It kind of seemed pointless, and that was frustrating.” Dorothy was blunter. She smiled, leaned over the voice recorder, and said, “[PTPA] sucks.” These are hardly the responses of those who had experienced the “dynamite educational experiences” (p. 31) that Shulman (1998) lauded as the hallmark of portfolio assessments. These were not the responses of those who had passed through a meaningful “gateway into the [teaching] profession” (Mehta & Doctor, 2013, p. 8). Instead, these are the responses of those who felt that they had spent between 10 and 80 hours outside of their student teaching seminar, according to participant estimates, working on “an exercise in amassing paper” (Olson, 1988), a task rendered meaningless by “trivialization...[and] mindless standardization” (Lyons, 1998, p. 5). The disparity between the experiences of the pre-service teachers in this study and the participants in Shulman’s (1998) work may be a direct result of the very professionalization agenda (Cochran-Smith, 2001) that led to the adoption and mandate of high-stakes portfolio assessments in the first place.

Portfolio as Third Space

Portfolio assessments in teacher education were designed and have been conceptualized as a means to mediate the binaries of theory and practice, of university coursework and field experience (Darling-Hammond, Newton, & Wei, 2013; Lyons, 1998a; Shulman, 1998; Wade & Yarbrough, 1996). In this sense, portfolios can be understood as an attempt to create a sort of third space (Bhabha, 1994) where pre-service teachers could synthesize both the theoretical knowledge they gained in their university coursework and the practical knowledge gained from their field experiences. Drawing upon the work of Bhabha (1994) and Soja (1996), Zeichner (2010) defined third spaces as “involve[ing] a rejection of binaries such as practitioner and

academic knowledge and theory and practice and involve the integration of what are often seen as competing discourses in new ways—an either/or perspective is transformed into a both/also point of view” (p. 92). The conceptualization of a teaching portfolio as a third space connecting theory and practice is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

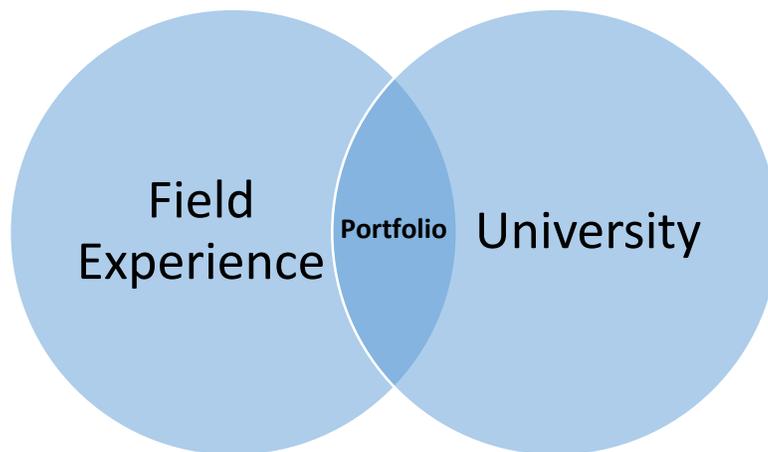


Figure 1. Conceptualization of portfolio as third space

For participants in this study, however, the PTPA, in general, did not lead to the creation of such a space or to the deep integration of theory and practice that performance assessment advocates like Shulman (1998) envisioned.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the PTPA seemed to pose a special identity problem for participants because it existed outside of either their field placements or their university coursework, the two commonly defined spaces of pre-service teacher education. The constantly reiterated themes of disconnect and artificiality that participants associated with the PTPA are clear indications of their sense that the PTPA was from a place that did not belong to them and to which they did not belong. Neither was it a third space bridging the two while not fully belonging to either; rather, the PTPA was a reification of an entirely distinct space of its own. Lin’s characterization of PTPA writers and raters as “Just like a separate thing,” a characterization that she accompanied with a hand gesture literally circling a space at arm’s

length from her body, best exemplifies the way participants perceived this reification. As such, this study indicates that the adoption of high-stakes portfolio examinations as expressions of state and national education policy has introduced an additional defined space for pre-service teachers to navigate. Figure 2 below indicates this new positioning.

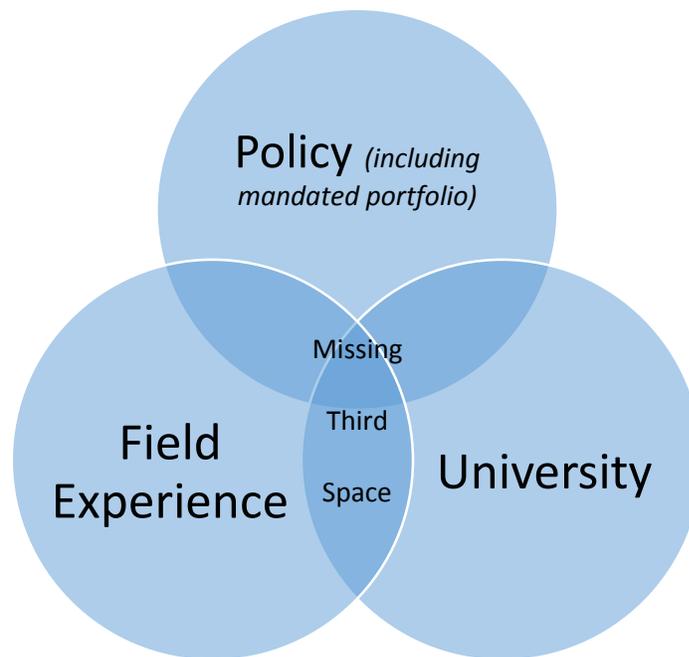


Figure 2: Policy as an additional and separate space in teacher education

Instead of supporting professional identity development by serving as a reification of pre-service teachers' participation in a community of practice composed by professional educators, the PTPA, for these participants, actually served as a reification of a completely different abstraction—teacher education policy—which had significant implications for participant identity development.

Framing Pre-Service Teacher Identity in an Era of Professionalization

The personal beliefs about good teaching that these participants brought into the study remained at the core of their sense of professional identity. Throughout their university coursework, those beliefs interacted to greater and lesser extents with the theories of learning and

teaching promoted by their teacher education program. As they entered their field experiences, both practicum and student teaching, their understandings of what it means to be a good teacher were tested against the observed practice of other teachers and their practice as student-teachers. This interplay of personal belief, theory, and practice to forge emerging professional identity is well-documented in teacher identity research (Beijaard et al., 2004; Bullough & Draper, 2004; Bullough, 2005; Pillen et al., 2013). This study indicates that, in an era professionalization for teacher education, policy, in the form of high-stakes assessments forms a final layer of identity development, conflicting, complementing, and/or merging with core beliefs and understandings gained in theory and practice. Figure 3 below illustrates this complexity.

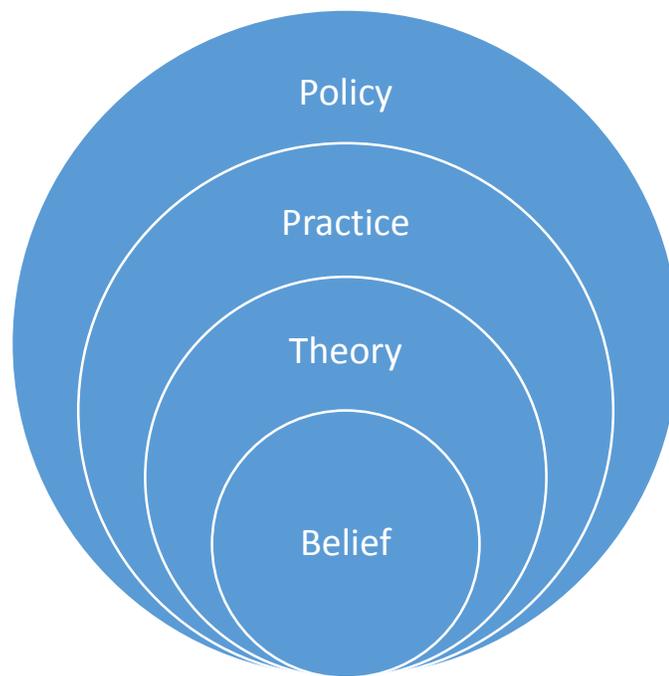


Figure 3: A framework for understanding teacher identity in an era of professionalization

Prior to the mandate of high-stakes portfolio assessments, which were themselves spurred on by the professionalization agenda of teacher education reform, pre-service teachers would have had little sustained direct contact with the realm of state or national teacher education policy. This is not to say that such policies had no impact upon them prior to the large-scale

adoption of high-stakes portfolio examinations, but that impact was generally filtered through their teacher education programs in the form of state and national accreditation requirements for those programs (Darling-Hammond, 2009). High-stakes performance examinations like the PTPA, however, bring pre-service teachers into direct contact with the realm of teacher education policy, contact that in the case of this study, was generally unmediated by their teacher preparation program. As a result, participants were left to make meaning from an assessment that reified a community of practice—teacher education policy making—outside of their lived experience, one in which they did not participate. Wenger (1998) warned that when a reification is encountered divorced from its concurrent participation, “it may seem disconnected, frozen into a text that does not capture the richness of lived experience and that can be appropriated in misleading ways. As a focus of attention that can be detached from practice, the reification may even be seen with cynicism, as an ironic substitute for what it was intended to reflect” (p. 61). In most cases, this was precisely how participants in this study viewed the PTPA, and so, instead of actively engaging with it as a space to meaningfully connect theory and practice, university coursework and field experience, they responded with acts of bureaucratic ventriloquism (Rennert-Ariev, 2008).

In order to work through the PTPA in meaningful ways, rather than through acts of bureaucratic ventriloquism, these participants needed space and encouragement to undergo the “messy” (Alsup, 2006, p. 26) work of moving beyond binary understandings. Tensions are inherent in identity development, and many scholars have argued that that the experience and negotiation of tension is essential for learning and personal growth (Alsup, 2006; Chong, 2011; Friesen & Besley, 2013; Galman, 2009; Horn et al., 2008; Pillen et al., 2013). However, “when tensions [are] too great for the students and there [is] little mentorship or support for negotiating

the dissonance, students [cannot] translate these ‘noisy’ contradictions into identity growth” (Alsup, 2006, p. 183). Participants in this study needed a third space beyond traditional field placement settings and university coursework *and* beyond the space of teacher education policy in order to work through those tensions. They needed the missing third space indicated in Figure 2 in which they could negotiate meaning and identity, blend the technical and the personal, bridge theory and practice, and connect policy mandates to deeply held personal beliefs. Within such a space, pre-service teachers would engage in *borderland discourse*, a concept introduced by Alsup (2006) and defined as

complex discourse reflecting metacognition or critical reflection....in which there is evidence of contact between disparate personal and professional subjectivities and in which this contact appears to be leading toward the ideological integration of multiple senses of self....such integration through discourse can lead to cognitive, emotional, and corporeal change, or identity growth. (p. 36).

My participants seemed to be looking toward their one-hour per week student teaching seminar at Midwest University to create such a third space and help them engage in borderland discourse. Participant feelings were generally divided between seeing their seminar as, in Elizabeth’s words, giving “a lot more detail and papers and things that we needed to know and ‘insider scoop’ on [PTPA requirements]” and seeing it, from Lin’s point of view, as a waste of time where “we just basically sit there and they read off a power point that’s from the [state department of education] website.” Some of this difference in attitude may have been a result of the fact that several different instructors taught the seminar, and so participant experiences would have been slightly different depending upon the seminar in which they were enrolled. Regardless of whether participants harbored positive or negative feelings about their seminar

experience, they shared a feeling that the focus of the seminar was on compliance rather than deep-seated intellectual engagement. However, they were likely expecting too much from a single seminar that met only one hour per week throughout their student teaching. The tools and habits of mind necessary to make meaning through the kind of ideological tension and identity work that participants in this study were struggling with cannot be developed in a short period of time (Alsup, 2006).

As such, I move toward recommending that teacher education faculty at Midwest University consider actively working to encourage “integrative discourse that allows the preservice teacher to combine professional and personal selves and bring about positive transformations within themselves as teachers” (Alsup, 2006, p. 40) within the entire program of teacher preparation in an attempt to create a third space (Bhabha, 1994) for pre-service teachers to engage in critical inquiry and identity development during the process of completing their required PTPAs. In the context of teacher education, researchers have noted that successful teacher education programs share a “common clear vision of good teaching that permeates all course work and clinical experiences, creating a coherent set of learning experiences” (Darling-Hammond, 2006). I would recommend that early in the teacher preparation program at Midwest University, pre-service teachers be explicitly introduced to the vision of good teaching that drives their teacher preparation program and that they be asked to compare and contrast that vision with other visions of good teaching that they may see manifested within their K-12 field experience settings and within the state policy documents such as the PTPA with which they will increasingly have to directly interact.

Implications for Teacher Education Programs

Given the level of scrutiny on teacher education at both the national and local levels and the rise of high stake performance portfolio examinations like the edTPA and the PTPA, teacher education programs will have no choice but to pay serious attention to the impacts of such assessments upon their candidates and programs. Even critics of the such exams recognize that performance examinations are likely to form a major part of the landscape of teacher preparation for the foreseeable future (Au, 2013; Margolis & Doring, 2013). While this remains the case, teacher education programs are faced with two possible paths for interacting with such assessments—passive compliance or active inquiry (Peck et al., 2010). Peck et al. (2010) argued that

The outcomes of accountability policies may be affected significantly by the way in which they are interpreted and taken up by local practitioners....A significant implication of such a view is that it locates considerable responsibility for policy outcomes at a local program level. That is, the answer to the provocative question of whether [mandated high-stakes performance assessments] were a “good thing or a bad thing” may lie largely in how they are taken up by local practitioners. (p. 461)

If teacher education programs adopt a compliance perspective to externally mandated high-stakes performance assessments, then those assessments will be viewed as bureaucratic hoops to jump through rather than as powerful learning experiences in and of themselves (Shulman, 1998). If teacher preparation programs instead consider the adoption of such externally mandated assessments as an opportunity for active inquiry into their programs and candidates, they may find that such inquiry allows them to leverage these assessments to further not just the goals of policymakers, but the goals of their own programs as well.

Participants in this study struggled particularly with their perceptions of disconnection and artificiality with the PTPA, generally seeing the examination as tangential or even fully divorced from the work of teaching and learning to teach. As such, while the PTPA did shape participant conceptions of good teaching, it in no way led to the “dynamite educational experiences” (Shulman, 1998, p. 31) or the “powerful, personal reflective learning experience[s]” (Lyons, 1998b, p. 4) that proponents have touted as the major strength of portfolio assessment. Given the results of this study, I move toward recommending that the teacher preparation programs using high-stakes performance assessments, particularly those programs required to implement the PTPA, look critically at the ways in which those assessments are being integrated and implemented in order to determine if they are being treated as “exercise[s] in amassing paper” (Olson, 1998), or whether pre-service teachers are being guided in using the those assessments as vehicles for developing and articulating personal theories of teaching and learning.

Meaningfully integrating standardized assessments that were developed by third parties, in the case of the PTPA—the state department of education, is not an easy task. Teacher education programs may object to the ideological positions in such exams (NAME Political Action Committee, 2014) or they may question content or predictive validity (Henry et al., 2013; Wilson et al., 2014). The connections of some high-stakes portfolio examinations to private corporations, the edTPA to Pearson and the PPAT to ETS, raise concerns for many faculty members (Margolis & Doring, 2013). Others may simply fear that tying any external assessment too closely to the program will lead to a kind of “teaching to the test” where

Once you’ve got a mode of assessment, you start asking the kinds of questions that best fit that mode. Then follows a shift to lines of least resistance and to the increased

trivialization of what gets documented. If this happens with portfolios, people will start documenting stuff that isn't even worth reflecting on. (Shulman, 1998, p. 35)

Given these concerns, teacher education programs that are mandated to give such assessments in order to receive accreditation or funding, may see compliance and bureaucratic ventriloquism as the only roads of resistance available to them (Peck et al., 2010; Peck & McDonald, 2014).

However, the identity tensions that participants articulated within this study indicate that they are searching for ways to reify their identities and coalesce their knowledge and experiences into personal theory; the literature on portfolio assessments clearly argues the benefits of using portfolios to help teacher candidates do so (Loughran & Corrigan, 1995; Lyons, 1998c; Shulman, 1998). The experiences of my participants as a whole indicated that the PTPA instructions and format alone do not necessarily guide students toward deep-thinking and personal theorizing. Wenger (1998) argued that “Our identities must be able to absorb our new perspectives and make them part of who we are. And our communities must have a place for us that does justice to the transformations of identity that reflection and excursions can produce” (p. 217). Alsop (2006) argued that,

the teaching of teachers has focused on developing the intellect, the cognitive aspect of learning to teach, without recognizing that to separate the intellectual from the affective or the physical is unproductive, even impossible. New teachers will either have to figure out how to connect these multiple ways of knowing and being on their own, or they will fail. (p. 26)

Given the woeful attrition statistics for pre-service and in-service teachers discussed in the opening chapter of this study (JM Cooper & Alvarado, 2006; Hanna & Pennington, 2015), all too many are indeed failing. While the professionalization agenda of teacher education reform was

conceptualized to help address problems of quality and attrition, the findings in this study suggest that for this agenda, including the high-stakes portfolio assessments that have become one of its hallmarks, to be meaningful to pre-service teachers, teacher preparation programs will need to help create spaces and discourses that will allow their pre-service teachers to critically examine their own conceptions of teaching and learning and the conceptions of teaching and learning embodied by assessments like the PTPA, and engage in active construction of professional identity.

Results of this study suggest that these pre-service teachers might have benefitted from an introduction to the role of policy and the tensions inherent in multiple constructions of good teaching earlier in their teacher education programs. The fields of law and medicine, upon which the professionalization agenda of teacher education reform has been modeled, have clearly identified the core epistemological paradigms that inform their professions—empirical physiological science in the case of medicine and precedents of jurisprudence in the case of law. Education, as a field of multiple social science paradigms, is different. State and national educational policy vies with the personal practical knowledge of in-service teachers and with the theoretical and empirical research of university teacher educators to shape the landscape of teacher education. Participants in this study did not seem to fully grasp the complexity of that landscape, including the restraints placed upon their teacher education program by the same policymakers that developed the PTPA. Introduction to this contested terrain early in the program and continuing throughout the program might increase the abilities of pre-service teachers to meaningfully work through the tensions inherent in the process of completing their PTPAs.

Implications for Policymakers

As discussed in previous chapters, advocates of high-stakes performance examinations like the PTPA have pushed for their implementation across the United States as part of a larger “professionalization” agenda for the field of teaching (Cochran-Smith, 2001). Those who subscribe to this agenda seek to influence the daily practice of teaching within American schools by exercising influence over both who teaches and how they teach. Wenger (1998) argued that participation and reification provide dual avenues for exercising influence on what becomes of practice. They offer two kinds of levers available for attempts to shape the future—to maintain the status quo or conversely to redirect the practice. 1) You can seek, cultivate, or avoid specific relationships with specific people. 2) You can produce or promote specific artifacts to focus future negotiation of meaning in specific ways. In this sense, participation and reification are two distinct channels of power available to participants (and to outside constituencies). (p. 91)

The PTPA and other high-stakes performance examinations are clearly intended to be levers of change for the teaching profession in the form of “the politics of *reification*, which include legislation, policies, institutionally defined authority, expositions, argumentative demonstrations, statistics, contracts, plans, designs” (Wenger, 1998, p. 92). However, as Wenger (1998) concludes, “to be effective, the politics of reification requires participation because reification does not itself ensure any effect. Reification has to be adopted by a community before it can shape practice in significant ways” (p. 92). Therefore, if performance assessments are going to have a transformative impact upon the communities of practice made up of teachers in K-12 schools and teacher educators in universities, it will need to achieve legitimacy in the eyes of those community members. As Wenger (1998) noted, “One can attempt to institutionalize a

community of practice, but the community of practice itself will slip through the cracks and remain distinct from its institutionalization” (p. 229). That certainly seems to be what happened with in the case of the PTPA.

According to my participants, both teachers and teacher educators represented the PTPA to pre-service teachers as a reification of pointless bureaucratic paperwork rather than a reification of teaching practice. The pre-service teachers in this study, understandably, responded to that representation with acts of bureaucratic ventriloquism (Rennert-Ariev, 2008) instead of authentic engagement in meaning-making. If the PTPA has any hope of being a successful policy for the improvement of teacher education, policymakers may need to find ways to incentivize meaningful participation with the PTPA. The current assumption seems to be that such participation will result from pre-service teachers’ need to obtain passing scores on the PTPA in order to receive teaching licenses and from teacher preparation programs’ need to see the majority of their pre-service teachers credentialed or risk declining enrollments. However, this study seems to indicate that passing scores on the PTPA can be obtained without meaningful engagement, since all 13 participants received passing scores, and most indicated the adoption of a compliance perspective in their interactions with the PTPA.

Directions for Future Research

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the reactions of participants in this study raise questions regarding the content validity of the PTPA. That is, given participants strong sense that, in Anne’s words, “the [PTPA] serves as a culminating assignment that incorporates only a fraction of what education students learn in school. It seems ridiculous that a teaching license hinges on a stranger grading a 35 page document that, in no way, comes close to showing every facet of this complex profession,” future researchers may consider performing large scale content

validity studies of the PTPA, along the lines of those performed for the edTPA and described by Pecheone et al. (2013). While official PTPA documents indicate that it is a “validated work sample model” (Nelson, 2014, p. 2), the validation studies carried out to substantiate that claim do not seem to be publically available, at least at the time of the writing of this report. Carrying out content validation studies and including a wide range of practicing teachers, administrators, and teacher educators, might also help to address the questions of legitimacy and buy-in discussed in the implications section. Longitudinal studies of predictive validity should also be considered to help determine whether scores on the PTPA have any correlation with teacher classroom performance or student achievement.

Additionally, future studies might delve further into pre-service teacher characteristics such as gender, race, and socioeconomic background to determine if and how such aspects of personal identity may contribute to or mitigate tensions experienced with high-stakes performance assessments such as the PTPA. While generally representative of the overall demographics of the teacher education program at Midwest University, participants in this study were relatively homogenous in terms of these factors, as described in chapter 3 of this study. In particular, this study may lead to questions about the influence of gender upon pre-service teacher identity tensions. All but one of my participants were female, and, as Noddings (1984, 2001) and Alsup (2006) noted, women in the United States have tended to be socialized toward adopting caring and nurturing identities. Labaree (2008) argued that the history of gender divisions within the field of teaching has contributed to some of the questions of status that the professionalization agenda of teacher education reform is attempting to redress. As such, it would be interesting to explore whether more mixed gender or male-dominated cohorts would explore similar or different identity tensions as did the primarily female cohort in this study.

Future researchers may also consider inquiring into the interplay of high-stakes performance examinations, such as the PTPA, upon teacher educators' constructions of good teaching and senses of professional identity. This study indicated that pre-service teachers' responses of *bureaucratic ventriloquism* (Rennert-Ariev, 2008) to the PTPA were influenced by the perceived beliefs and attitudes of the teacher educators in the teacher preparation program at Midwest University. Just as the PTPA introduced identity tensions to pre-service teachers as a result of its role as a reification of external policy mandates, so too might it produce such tensions within teacher educators, tensions which may be passed on to the pre-service teachers with whom they work. Once again, I must stress that this study was concerned solely with the beliefs and attitudes of these 13 participants as they worked through their PTPAs and with the concurrent impact of that work upon their senses of professional identity. The results reported here are reported in the words of their participants and, as much as possible, are unfiltered. This study presents the views of a particular set of stakeholders, a cohort of pre-service English teachers. This is their truth, but it is no way the only truth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Pre-service teachers from other disciplines at Midwest University, teacher education faculty, cooperating teachers, and state policymakers could, and very likely would interpret these events quite differently from the participants in this study. Their truths are just as valid, and I would strongly recommend that future studies be undertaken to make their voices heard.

Limitations

The results of this study should be of interest to teacher educators, policymakers, and educational researchers concerned about the impacts of high stakes portfolio assessments on pre-service teachers and about the influence of such assessments upon education as a whole. However, the study was not without its limitations.

This study should not be misconstrued as a test of the validity or reliability of the Pre-Service Teacher Portfolio Assessment (PTPA). As indicated in the discussion of the edTPA in chapter 2 of this study, determinations of validity and reliability require large-scale quantitative investigation, and, in the case of predicative validity, those investigations must be longitudinal in nature (Pecheone et al., 2013; Wilson et al., 2014). While the reactions of participants in this study may raise questions about the content validity of the PTPA, this study cannot answer those questions. To do so would require further inquiry far beyond the scope of this particular study.

Since it was conceptualized as an in-depth study of a single case, the study was never intended to be generalizable (Stake, 2005). Results of this study should not be interpreted as being universally representative of the experiences of all pre-service teachers completing high-stakes portfolio assessments. The study was not intended to pass judgements regarding the validity of these participants' beliefs or upon the efficacy of any particular teacher education practice. Rather, this study was intended to make manifest participant beliefs, to explore the impact of those beliefs, and to provide readers with access to a "vicarious experience" (Stake, 2005) of the journeys and struggles of these 13 pre-service teachers at Midwest University as they attempted to navigate their final year of teacher preparation and the concurrent state-mandated assessment. I hope that, as a result of sharing in this vicarious experience, readers look critically at their own contexts and determine the degree to which the results of this study are transferrable.

Conclusion

Participants' continued dedication to the ideas of fun, relevance, and care, and their frustration with being unable to adequately communicate those attributes within their PTPA submissions illuminated the central issue in this study—participants' perception of

incompatibility or at least significant disconnection between their own deeply-seated beliefs about good teaching and the conception of teaching that they felt was encapsulated within the PTPA. To return to Jackson's (1986) discussion, these participants were dedicated to the transformative tradition of teaching, a tradition in which the goal of teaching is for "a transformation of one kind or another [to occur] in the person being taught—a qualitative change often of dramatic proportion, a metamorphosis" (p. 120). The PTPA, however, seemed to primarily concern itself with the mimetic tradition, which "gives a central place to the transmission of factual and procedural knowledge from one person to another" (p. 117). While they made some strides toward achieving the synthesis that Jackson (1986) recommended, the continued identity tensions that they experienced indicate that such a synthesis was not fully achieved.

High-stakes performance assessments in the form of standardized teaching portfolios are likely to be a part of the landscape of teacher education for the foreseeable future (Lewis & Young, 2013; Mehta & Doctor, 2013). As a part of the larger professionalization agenda of teacher education reform, it is hoped that such assessments will address chronic issues of teacher quality and teacher attrition by

chang[ing] who is drawn into teaching, develop[ing] a more consistent, higher level of skill among all teachers, improve[ing] student outcomes, and greatly increase[ing] public regard for teachers and teaching. These changes could create a self-reinforcing upward spiral, as increased respect for teachers and improved results would lead to increased public confidence, potentially higher pay, and, in the long run, greater desire for talented people to join the profession. (Mehta & Doctor, 2013, p. 8)

However, this speculation presupposes a level of commitment and active involvement on the part of stakeholders that did not seem to be taking place in the case of this study. Simply mandating the adoption of a high-stakes performance assessment, in and of itself, appears to be an insufficient lever to radically change the practice of teacher education. For the PTPA to have the kind of transformative impacts that Shulman (1998) and Lyons (1998b) described, work may have to be done to help pre-service teachers engage meaningfully with it. Space may need to be made for them to actively participate in critical inquiry and identity construction. Without such space, the PTPA may risk becoming the eternal dummy in an ongoing process of bureaucratic ventriloquism.

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Appendix 1

Human Subjects Committee Approval



APPROVAL OF PROTOCOL

November 5, 2014

Connor Warner
connor.warner@ku.edu

Dear Connor Warner:

On 11/5/2014, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Formative Impacts of High-Stakes Portfolio Assessment on Preservice English Teachers: A Qualitative Study of KPTP Construction and Submission
Investigator:	Connor Warner
IRB ID:	STUDY00001829
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Formative Impacts Consent Form, • Warner Study Proposal October 2014, • Participant Recruitment Email,

The IRB approved the study on 11/5/2014.

1. Notify HSCL about any new investigators not named in the original application. Note that new investigators must take the online tutorial at https://rgs.drupal.ku.edu/human_subjects_compliance_training.
2. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported immediately.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity.

Continuing review is not required for this project, however you are required to report any significant changes to the protocol prior to altering the project.

Please note university data security and handling requirements for your project:
<https://documents.ku.edu/policies/IT/DataClassificationandHandlingProceduresGuide.htm>

You must use the final, watermarked version of the consent form, available under the "Documents" tab in eCompliance.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Dyson Elms, MPA
IRB Administrator, KU Lawrence Campus

Human Subjects Committee Lawrence
Young-Jung Kim | 2385 Irving Hill Road | Lawrence, KS 66045-7568 | (785) 864-7429 | www.research.ku.edu

Formative Impacts of High-Stakes Portfolio Assessment on Preservice English Teachers: A Qualitative Study of KPTP Construction and Submission

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Curriculum & Teaching at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit, the services it may provide to you, or the University of Kansas.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In the state of Kansas, the high stakes assessment for new teachers is the Kansas Performance Teaching Portfolio (KPTP). Teacher candidates complete the KPTP while student teaching during their final year of teacher preparation. The the KPTP requires students to assemble a portfolio of composed of entries addressing four specific tasks: 1) Contextual Information and Learning Environment Factors, 2) Designing Instruction, 3) Teaching and Learning, and 4) Reflection and Professionalism. Given the lack of scholarly literature about the KPTP, additional study is definitely called for. This study seeks to help begin a scholarly conversation about the KPTP, guided by the following question: How do preservice English teachers view the KPTP's role in becoming good English teachers? Does the KPTP modify conceptions preservice teachers have about what it means to be a good English teacher?

PROCEDURES

This study will be based upon a qualitative emergent design model with four phases.

In phase 1 (late November 2014), you will be asked to write a short essay responding to the prompt: "From your perspective, what is good English teaching?" Based upon content analysis of these essays, you will be placed into focus groups of participants with similar understandings of good teaching, and will then participate in a one hour group interview to gain further information/elaboration about constructions of good teaching

In phase 2 (February 2015), you will be asked to provide the researcher with copies of Tasks 1 & 2 of your KPTP. The researcher will then perform content analysis of participant KPTP tasks 1 & 2 looking for elements relating to participant construction of good teaching and will compare constructions emerging from Tasks 1 & 2 with initial constructions established in phase 1 in order to determine whether changes in construction are occurring. You may then be asked to participate in an individual interview of approximately 30 minutes using tasks 1 & 2 as stimulus documents in order to gain further information or elaboration about emerging changes or tensions.

In phase 3 (March/April 2015), you will be asked to provide the researcher with copies of Tasks 3 & 4 of your KPTP. The researcher will then perform content analysis of participant KPTP Tasks 3 & 4 and will compare constructions emerging from tasks 3 & 4 with those established in Steps 1 & 2 in order to

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determine whether changes in construction are occurring. . You may then be asked to participate in an individual interview of approximately 30 minutes using tasks 3 & 4 as stimulus documents in order to gain further information or elaboration about changes or tensions

Lastly, in phase 4 (May 2015), you may be asked to participate in a member check for which you will be provided with a full written case report of the researchers findings and then asked to convene with other participants for approximately one hour to discuss the understanding constructed in the case report.

All interviews will be audio recorded with the consent of the participants, who may choose to not be recorded or to stop that recording at any time. Connor Warner will transcribe the recordings after the interviews. Only Connor Warner will have access to the recordings, and the recordings will be erased completion of the project. This study is based upon grounded theory design (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Some of the prompts that will frame the interviews and focus groups include:

- What does good English teaching look like to you?
- Characterize a good English teacher.
- Describe the best teacher you've ever seen.
- Tell me about the best teaching you have ever personally done.
- How do you feel about the KPTP so far?
- Did you struggle at all to complete your initial tasks?
- Walk me through your thought process as you completed Tasks 1 and 2.
- In our previous interview, you described good teaching as _____. Do you feel like _____ is reflected in your KPTP Tasks 1 & 2?
- If you were a stranger reading your KPTP Tasks, what kind of teacher would you imagine had written them?

Interviews will be recorded, and the interviewer will take notes and observations during the interview. These interviews will be audio recorded with the consent of the participants, who may choose to not be recorded or to stop that recording at any time. Connor Warner will transcribe the recordings after the interviews. Only Connor Warner will have access to the recordings, and the recordings will be erased completion of the project.

This information will only be used for this study's purposes. It will be destroyed when the research project is completed. During the project, research notes surveys will be stored in locked filing cabinets. Reports will be written, and the survey information and notes will be included in the reports. Your name will be changed to protect your identity. Only the researchers will see this data.

RISKS

We anticipate no risks to participants in this study

BENEFITS

This research will help to illuminate the experiences of preservice English teachers as they attempt to balance the demands of student teaching with a state-mandated performance assessment. You may also gain insight into your own constructions of good teaching as a preservice teacher which may help improve both self-efficacy and classroom effectiveness.



PAYMENT TO PARTICIPANTS

There will be no compensation provided to participants.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. Instead, the researcher(s) will use a study number or a pseudonym rather than your name. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.

Permission granted on this date to use and disclose your information remains in effect indefinitely. By signing this form you give permission for the use and disclosure of your information for purposes of this study at any time in the future.

REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You are not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to any services you are receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas. However, if you refuse to sign, you cannot participate in this study.

CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose further information collected about you, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to: Connor K. Warner, Department of Curriculum & Teaching, Joseph R. Pearson Hall, Rm. 321, 1122 West Campus Road, Lawrence, KS 66045.

If you cancel permission to use your information, the researchers will stop collecting additional information about you. However, the research team may use and disclose information that was gathered before they received your cancellation, as described above.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher(s) listed at the end of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385, write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email irb@ku.edu.



I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

Type/Print Participant's Name Date

Participant's Signature

Researcher Contact Information

Connor K. Warner
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785 864-9670



Dear _____:

My name is Connor Warner, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum & Teaching here at the University of Kansas. I am writing to invite you to participate in a qualitative research study titled "Formative Impacts of High-Stakes Portfolio Assessment on Pre-service English Teachers: A Qualitative Study of Belief, Attitude, and Identity." This study seeks to help begin a scholarly conversation about the [PTPA], guided by the following question: How do pre-service English teachers view the [PTPA]'s role in becoming good English teachers? Does the [PTPA] modify conceptions pre-service teachers have about what it means to be a good English teacher? You are being recruited because of your valuable perspective as pre-service teacher completing this high stakes assessment while student teaching.

Attached you will find an informed consent form detailing the specifics of the study. If you are willing to participate, please email me back at connor.warner@ku.edu, and we can set up a time to go over the informed consent form and obtain your signature. I hope you will consider taking the time to participate, as this research will help to illuminate the experiences of pre-service English teachers as they attempt to balance the demands of student teaching with a state-mandated performance assessment. You may also gain insight into your own constructions of good teaching as a pre-service teacher which may help improve both self-efficacy and classroom effectiveness.

Sincerely,

Connor K. Warner
Doctoral Candidate
KU Department of Curriculum & Teaching
(785) 879-4006

Appendix 2
Phase 1 Essay Prompt

Essay Prompt

In a short essay, please respond to the following prompt, giving as much detail as possible, including the reasons for your opinion.

From your perspective, what is good English teaching?

Appendix 3
Sample Interview Protocols

Phase 1 Questions

- Tell me about the best teaching you think you've done.
- What is it with the example that you shared that actually made them "good teaching?"
- Tell me about the best teacher you've had or seen.
- Can you analyze what these teachers were doing from a professional standpoint? What were they doing specifically that stood out to you?
- We've talked about good teaching in a couple of contexts and you wrote about it, but if you had to give sort of a concise definition, what would you say?

Phase 2 Questions

- How do you feel about the [PTPA] so far?
- Did you struggle at all to complete your initial tasks?
- Walk me through your thought process as you completed Tasks 1 and 2.
- In our previous interview, you described good teaching as relevant and caring. Do you feel like this view of good teaching is reflected in your [PTPA] Tasks 1 & 2?
- If you were a stranger reading your [PTPA] tasks, what kind of teacher would you imagine had written them?

Phase 3 Questions

- How much time did you spend working on your [PTPA]? How seriously did you take it?
- What do you see as the purpose of the [PTPA], and do you believe it meets that purpose?
- Could you tell if someone were a good teacher based upon their [PTPA]?
- Where in your [PTPA] is your best teaching?
- Are there things you wish you could have said in your [PTPA], but no space was given to say them?
- Did the need to do the [PTPA] change how you taught in your field placement?
- What influence do you believe the [PTPA] has had upon you?
- What could have made the [PTPA] a more meaningful experience for you?
- Tell me what characterized good teaching?