Questioning the Tensions: Action Research within a Teacher Collaboration

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

BY

Rachel Anne Malchow Lloyd

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Timothy Lensmire, Adviser

September 2009

Acknowledgements

I am so thankful for the many family, friends, colleagues, and mentors who have helped me accomplish this work.

My husband, Tom, has always been my best friend, best critic, and most ardent supporter. My daughter, Beatrice, is our brightest joy each day. You have both been unfailingly patient with this process, despite the hours and days it cost. Next project—livin'. Promise.

I am so grateful for the support of my parents, Bill Malchow and Kathryn Malchow Currell, my in-laws, Tim and Terri Lloyd, and my siblings: Emily Malchow, April Racette, Claire Malchow, Erianne Malchow, Ean Malchow; and my nephew, Luke Malchow. There have been so many ways, big and small, that you all contributed to our well-being throughout these years: thank you for the listening and for the love.

Heather Hansen cared for Bea almost every day I could not. Thank you for your good humor, flexibility, and mostly for loving Bea. We have been so lucky to have you as part of our family.

There have been many faculty, staff, and peers in the University of Minnesota, Department of Curriculum and Instruction who have supported me in this work.

My adviser, Tim Lensmire, is a model of courageous writing and compassionate teaching. Your generosity of time and spirit, and your skill in balancing compliment and critique have been invaluable to this work. Thank you for the freedom to pursue this study in a way that was most relevant to my own learning.

My committee members, Richard Beach, Cynthia Lewis, and Misty Sato, have all supported my learning inside their classrooms and throughout this study. This study is deeply informed by the theory and practice I gained under their expertise as researchers. I am so thankful for all your feedback and encouragement.

Deborah Appleman was my first teaching mentor, and remains the most dynamic practitioner I have ever met. Her devotion to her students is unparalleled. It may have been fifteen years since I first walked into her classroom as a shy undergraduate, but her generosity and friendship continue to support my professional growth.

Finally, I want to thank the faculty and staff at Lafayette Falls High School, and most especially, the English 12 team: Madeline Jorgensen, Lydia Kramer, Sam Carter, Natalie Steward, and Kathy O'Neil. The trust you gave me to try to understand, to improve, and to represent our work together was probably the most generous gift of my professional life. Although we may no

longer share the daily joys and tensions that are teaching in collaboration, I know that one of the things we all carry will be our passion for doing good work with good people.

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my mother, Kathryn.

Her passion for learning,

love of all things beautiful,

and care for others

are the foundations of true community.

Abstract

Professions are defined in part by the presence of communities of practice which share knowledge and monitor standards (Shulman, 1998). However, beginning with Lortie's (1975) seminal description of the American teacher, teachers have been found to be autonomous and isolated. Despite sustained critique of these norms of isolation, subsequent research has suggested that little has changed in actual school structure or practices over the last thirty years (Little, 1990; Darling-Hammond, 2005). The purpose of this study was to understand and improve a collaboration of six English teachers which defied these traditional norms of isolation in the teaching profession.

Set in the large suburban high school where I taught for ten years, this collaborative team was comprised of three veteran and three early career English 12 teachers including myself.   As such, this project was most closely aligned with the epistemology of action research, but employed multiple interpretivist tools such as narrative inquiry, discourse analysis, and activity theory to examine the product and processes through which our team accomplished its work.

The research explored multiple aspects of our collaborative practices: the curriculum created, the language of team meetings, the norms of time and labor, and the evidence of teacher learning apparent in our work. It also attends to the importance of affective relationships within collaboration. This research found that like many teacher collaborations, multiple tensions existed and complicated our work.   The most salient tensions included: the relationships between the veteran and early career teachers; the relationships between dual purposes of curriculum development and mentoring; and the relationships between individual autonomy and community practices. However, despite such challenges, the study evidences the benefits of collaboration for teacher learning, particularly when in concert with inquiry into our own practices. As such, this research offers an alternative view of teachers' professional development as embedded, enduring, and empowering; and of teachers' professional practice as striving for the ideals of a democratic learning community.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1 : Beginnings

It has been estimated that approximately one third of the new teachers who entered a classroom this fall will not be there in three years (NCTAF, 2007). Educators have to ask ourselves, what is true about a profession which procures such high attrition? What do teachers experience, or not experience, that causes them to leave in such record numbers?   What do "survivors" experience that allows them to maintain and continue in the profession?

Like other professions, teaching is marked by a high level of uncertainty and complexity which demands that effective teachers continuously develop their clinical reasoning skills in and through their practice. Such work is most challenging at the start of a new teacher's career, and yet new teachers typically received little or no additional support during their induction years. Professions are also defined in part by the presence of communities of practice which share knowledge and monitor standards (Shulman, 1998). However, in Lortie's (1975) seminal description of the American teacher, teachers were found largely to be autonomous and isolated: almost half of teachers reported having no significant contact with their colleagues in adjoining classrooms. Despite sustained critique of these norms of isolation, subsequent research has suggested that little has changed in actual school structure or practices over the last thirty years (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Little, 1990). Until schools find ways to sustain teacher collaborations, teaching will remain only quasi-professional, teacher attrition will remain high, and neither teacher nor student learning will achieve their full potential.

In an effort to understand what sustains and complicates teacher collaborations, and what might improve their effectiveness as sites of teacher learning, this action research project explored the collaborative practices of a longstanding team of high school English teachers of which I was a part for ten years. During the 2007-2008 school year, I worked as a team member, facilitator, and researcher within our group of three veteran and three early career teachers. We were challenged to understand how to create and recreate an effective professional community for the benefit of our students and ourselves as learners. It is my intention that this study will contribute to a growing body of research which investigates how the local processes of developing and sustaining professional learning communities for teachers can offer a viable and empowering alternative to traditional models of professional development. At the same time, it is my hope that my unique positionality as an insider to this particular collaboration will

offer a candid and complex perspective on what it means to live and teach in a community of peers.

A story

Although I am embarrassed to admit parts of this story now, my inquiry into teacher collaborations originates in my own experiences as an early career teacher. I was on the verge of being a teacher drop out.

Nothing in my pre-service experiences suggested the struggles I would have as a first year teacher. I had been educated at a prestigious liberal arts college, majored in English, and graduated with honors. I had completed my licensure requirements in the small, but dedicated and well-respected Education Department at the same college. I had a very positive and motivating student teaching experience at Lafayette Falls High School, a large comprehensive high school in the outer ring suburbs of a large Midwestern metropolitan area. For ten weeks, I worked under the supervision of Madeline Jorgensen, a twenty-five year veteran English teacher, who successfully had hosted four student teachers prior to my arrival on her department's doorstep. I student taught two blocked periods of English 12 that fall, and although I was always exhausted, I was also exhilarated. Madeline was a wonderful mentor. We planned every lesson together, debriefed every day, and we co-taught for several weeks. And yet she also knew when to push me out of the range of her watchful eyes as well. Despite my nerves and self-doubt, Madeline and the other twelfth grade teachers with whom she worked encouraged me: I gained confidence and felt respected as a colleague almost immediately.

After student teaching, I substitute taught briefly at LFHS and then in a small alterative program. That spring, I was fortunate enough to have two job offers for the following school year. One was back at LFHS; the other was at the high school from which I had graduated just five years earlier. I struggled to choose between the two schools. I had very much enjoyed working with Madeline, but I had loved my high school experiences and teachers as well. My alma mater was a ten minute drive; LFHS was forty minutes away from home. I composed list after list in my head of the pros and cons of each position. But here is the embarrassing part. Ultimately, my decision boiled down to one iconic cultural feature: the teacher office space.

At LFHS, the teachers share cubicles, as is true in many other workplaces across the country. Even in my short time at LFHS as a student teacher, there were aspects of the

configuration which troubled me. As an introvert, I had at times been overwhelmed by the lack of privacy. As a newcomer, I was disconcerted by the micro-politics of shared space, and the dilemma of private conversation in such a space. To whisper was to raise suspicions; to speak at full volume was to alert up to twenty other people of your personal and professional trials, tribulations, or successes. As Madeline's former student teacher, I would be immediately placed on one side of the department politics. At twenty three years old, I just wasn't sure I could find myself in the midst of those cubicles.

In contrast, at my alma mater high school, teachers received a private office. Closet-like to be sure, but it had a door. A pocket door. A door to close—suited to a private conversation with a student, a parent, or a colleague. A door that could offer the quiet and reflection I was used to as a student, and that I imagined I would require as a teacher.

That spring, as a naïve and independent twenty-three year old, I choose autonomy over collaboration: I choose the private office with the door. If I am honest with myself now, this was part of the image I held of teaching as I entered the profession. The professorial ideal of Mr. Holland and Mr. Keating, with their opuses and their dead poets, as well as my own powerful relationships with several high school and college instructors, had lead me to imagine that being a teacher meant I made the decisions—alone. I wanted a door. I wanted independence. And so I turned down the position at LFHS.

But it was not a happy ending. It was a perfectly literary case of situational irony.

When I returned to my former high school as a faculty member in late August, I was told the English Department's block of private offices on the first floor were full. I found myself sharing a third floor windowless office with three other new English teachers. But even within that shared space, I found that over the next ten months I experienced the type of isolation and "trial by fire" that has classically defined the culture of teaching (Lortie, 1975). It too was symbolized by the closed doors of the classroom and those individual offices I had coveted. I was assigned five different preps over the course of that year. I had little meaningful sustained contact with my colleagues, yet alone mentorship. I experienced for the first time how the political forces outside my classroom could impact my classroom. In November the district announced all first year teachers would be pink slipped at the end of the year due to budget cuts. Although the other English teachers were always cooperative and apologetic, department veterans knew that they would not see much return for their investment in me over the long term. Quietly, I was drowning; searching out assistance and support from other new teachers in

the same situation. Sometimes that meant brief curriculum collaboration; more often it meant a consoling cocktail and complaint session on Friday afternoon.

I began to dread going to school. I struggled with the students, with the curriculum, with the paper load, with the isolation. After a long winter of witnessing my Sunday night anxiety attacks, my partner Tom suggested I should start exploring other careers. I agreed. I was pretty convinced I would be changing professions.   Maybe I'd start graduate school in English.   A job in publishing. Marketing. Anything else would have to feel better than teaching was at this moment.

And then in April, Madeline called. We had kept in touch throughout the year, and she knew I wasn't happy or employed for the next school year. So when the staffing numbers at LFHS revealed they would be hiring for the following school year, she encouraged me to apply. It was an awkward cover letter to write, but one which honestly conveyed that I had learned quite a bit in my year and a half away from LFHS. Most importantly, I learned that I couldn't survive the demands of the teaching profession on my own. Both professionally and personally, I needed to have mentorship and friendship outside of the classroom in order to insure that I could survive the physical, intellectual, and emotional demands of becoming a teacher. I was fortunate enough to be offered a position at LFHS for the second time, and took up residence in my cubicle and in the English 12 team for most of the next decade.

Objectives: Personal and Professional

In a very real sense, I credit my collaborations within the Lafayette Falls English Department, and specifically the English 12 team, with saving my teaching life. I know that this isn't the normal stance one takes in a dissertation; but much of this work originated in the sense of gratitude and love I have for the teachers with whom I have worked, and their generosity in facilitating my professional growth from student teaching, through my first years in the classroom, and on into my graduate studies and appointment as a department leader.

At the same time, while I came to this study with the personal belief that supportive professional relationships between teachers can enrich the learning and lives of teachers and their students, this inquiry examined both the promising and problematic aspects of our collaboration. As I discovered during the research year, like all reforms in education, teacher collaborations are fraught with contradictions, complications, and ambiguities. If I believe in the power of the teacher communities personally, professionally I owe it to my belief to explore our

team's experiences honestly, with open and critical eyes. Thus, this inquiry has had interrelated and evolving professional and personal aims.

The original and primary purpose of this study was to understand and improve the teacher collaboration of the Lafayette Falls High School English 12 team. The three veteran teachers in this study—Madeline, Lydia Kramer and I— worked together since 1999 developing and re-developing the English 12 curriculum. In 2007-2008, after almost a decade of "unofficial" collaboration and fairly stable team membership, and one year into our school's new era of required collaboration, Lydia, Madeline, and I unexpectedly found ourselves working with three new twelfth grade English teachers on our team in one year. Our team grew to include Sam Carter, Natalie Steward, and Kathy O'Neil. Their addition to the team, and my growing interest in teacher education as part of my graduate studies, created a need and desire for mentoring to be a more explicit part of our work together.   I found myself as a midcareer teacher, a department leader, and a graduate student contemplating the process of induction into teaching and the ways in which teacher collaboration might provide a context for mentoring.   In concert, this inquiry was also about understanding my own professional growth as an English educator and teacher educator. If I hoped to continue to improve my practices, I needed to explore the practices of the professional community which sustained my career to this point, and my own evolving roles within that team.

As a result of these intermingled personal and professional aims, this research was most closely aligned with the epistemology of action research. Action research problematizes the subject/object relations of more traditional research: it cannot be constituted as research done on others, but as people investigating their own work in a systematic way (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993).   As both action research and teacher communities are meant ideally to be democratic, dialogical, collaborative activities, this methodology was an appropriate epistemological match, despite the challenges that such ideals present to the lived reality in most schools.

Thus the primary research questions explored during the research year and in this accounting of that year had three interconnected aims:

- Understanding our practices as collaborators: What happened when our team of English teachers collaborated to develop a high school literacy curriculum?

- Improving our practices as collaborators: How did we improve our collaborative practices to make them more productive, professional, and just for all members of our team?
- Understanding and improving my practice as a researcher and teacher educator: What did I learn about the processes of collaboration and action research? How did I improve my practices as a collaborator and as a researcher?

In order to fulfill these aims, I found myself utilizing an evolving *bricolage* of theoretical and practical tools. Like many teachers, under the stresses of limited time and resources, I have developed a healthy habit of foraging for ideas, for texts, and for practices. Action research follows teaching in this way. While action research always strives for a consciousness of action and reflection, and systematic inquiry, the fact that I was working as a team facilitator and a researcher at the same time meant that I was often negotiating between roles and improvising practices to remain responsive. As a facilitator, sometimes that meant revising a meeting agenda midstream; as a researcher, it meant recombining research methods as they were practical and needed to help understand and improve the work of the English 12 team. As such, the research tools I utilized draw heavily on interpretive methods of research, and given the nature of collaboration as the object of this study, primarily sociocultural perspectives. However, within that frame, I have borrowed and adapted ideas from ethnography, activity theory, discourse analysis, narrative analysis and narrative inquiry to help me make sense of the work we did and did not accomplish during the research year. I found that these varied analytic tools functioned like different wavelengths of light shone through a prism: as I tried to make sense of our work, each analytic tool illuminated certain aspects: our language, our work practices, and the product of our collaboration, the English 12 curriculum. While any single analytical tool might have yielded a more focused interpretation, I hope the result here is a richer, more saturated portrait of the work we endeavored to achieve.

Significance

Throughout this research process, self-doubt kept creeping in. I was and am worried that this work would be of little significance outside our immediate circle of personal interest. "Who cares?" is a question that is hard to shake, and pretty demoralizing to the writing process. On one hand, the fact is the project does and did matter to those of us who lived and worked in our collaboration. At the end of 2009, as I was completing this writing, Madeline retired, and I

accepted a university position. As we mourned the loss of our daily professional and intellectual and personal relationships, my desire to capture a part of it certainly sustained my writing; Madeline and Lydia's willingness to devour each partial draft I sent along for critique suggests that this work continued to matter to them as well. For a decade, this team was the most consistent and affirming aspect of our often chaotic professional and personal lives. It mattered to us. That should be enough.

And then the more academic and less confident version of myself recites: research must contribute to generalizable knowledge in the field.

In 2007, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future reported the following:

- One in three teachers leaves her school in the first three years.
- Teacher attrition costs the nation over $7 billion dollars per year.
- Low student achievement is correlated with high teacher attrition rates.
- The poorest schools have highest turnover.

The study specifically points to the isolation of new teachers as a part of the cycle of attrition:

> As a result of high turnover, high-need urban and rural schools are frequently staffed with inequitable concentrations of under-prepared, inexperienced teachers who are left to labor on their own to meet the needs of their students. This isolation has a crippling effect on many new teachers who feel overwhelmed by the challenges they face. They leave after several years of working with a frustrating lack of support – perhaps they find a better school, but in too many cases they abandon teaching altogether. And when they go, they leave a host of problems behind for the eager young teachers who take their place. (NCTAF, 2007, p. 5)

If our nation is committed to improving education for all children, to closing the achievement gaps that exist across lines of race and class, something needs be done to address these trends. We must find ways to provide adequate support for new teachers so that they have the opportunity to become accomplished practitioners. We must develop structures of support that keep qualified teachers sustained and nourished inside schools for the sake of their own learning, and their students' learning. However, it seems improbable that when the chalk dust settles each June, large scale policy reforms such as No Child Left Behind or changes to state licensure requirements would encourage an individual teacher to return to her classroom. Instead, this study began with the assumption that one key element in improving teacher development, teacher retention, and ultimately student learning must be a localized change:

schools should afford teachers the opportunity to plan, to reflect, to inquire, to learn, and to build relationships with one another in small professional learning communities.

For schools that have defied the professional norms of autonomy and isolation and encouraged teacher collaborations, there is evidence of organizational change, improved teacher leadership capacity, teacher development, and improved student achievement (Grossman, Wineberg, & Woolworth, 2001; Louis & Marks, 1998). Yet the process of re-culturing an entire department, building, or profession is complicated by a number of tensions. Despite promising research findings in aspects of the teacher collaboration movement, current research on teacher communities also reveals three consistent and likely interrelated problems within such collaborations: struggles with purpose, leadership, and interpersonal conflicts. Conflicts that arise within teachers' communities are frequently over the purpose of the group. Is the group dedicated to teacher learning? Or student learning? Developing curriculum? Or changing pedagogy? Improving teachers' knowledge in subject matter? Or creating interdisciplinary knowledge? Even when a group's purpose has been more clearly articulated, the tension between the definitions of collective and individual work can remain (Little, 2002). Joyce (2004) argued that ultimately problems with leadership stem from the pre-existing egalitarian and autonomous norms of practice within the teaching profession as a whole. He suggested that teachers need to study the patterns of their own collaboration from within to uncover ways to make it sustainable. However endemic such tensions are in teacher collaborations, several researchers have also theorized that conflict might actually be a prerequisite for change in teaching practices, as it can help structure dialogue, promote reflection and improve practice (Achinstein, 2002; Grossman et al., 2001; Little, 2002).

Admittedly, this single case of one team of six teachers will not and could not solve the dilemmas of student achievement gaps or teacher attrition generally, nor cure the ills which plague many teacher collaborations. It is my intention that by exploring the practices of one long standing teacher collaboration as we attempted to improve curriculum and mentor our newest teachers, that some of this story will resonate with educators who have struggled in isolation or in collaborations themselves. With colleagues, with student teachers, with students, with family and friends, we can only improve our habits of being if we force our taken-for-granted assumptions and practices back into our consciousness and hold them up for scrutiny. This action research accomplished some of that work for me; and I hope this reporting of it may be a cause for reflection for others. It is also my hope that despite the struggles we

encountered, our successes, joys and sorrows in working together might inspire other educators who have not had the opportunity to work in meaningful and sustained ways with colleagues to organize and to insist that the time and resources required to sustain professional teaching collaborations be afforded to all educators.

Audience

I need to be clear from the outset of this writing, that this study is not intended as a how-to-do-collaborations handbook. Neither is it a statistical analysis of student achievement data, or teacher satisfaction rates. This is an inquiry into the collaborative practices of one team of twelfth grade English teachers trying to learn and work together. It is a narrow and bounded case to be sure. But if there is one generalizable principle about collaborations that I feel confident to assert here, it is in saying that each learning community is as unique and idiosyncratic as a family. And given this familial and human component, collaborations cannot result in neat, predictable patterns of statistical success. Like teaching, this was a messy project to live, and a messy story to tell. Thus, if you are an educator who will require statistical justification for implementing or expanding teacher collaboration in your department, school, or district, you perhaps had best look elsewhere. If instead you are interested in the complicated and storied professional practices of teachers, and dedicated to finding ways to help teachers learn more humanely and effectively in order that our students might learn more humanely and effectively, then perhaps this story is for you.

Another warning: this is very much a personal history, the story of my own professional family. I have attempted, as poor as seamstress as I am, to quilt together my narrative recreations of key events from our professional history with analysis of our collaboration based on the curriculum we created, the language of our weekly meetings, and the group practices as they evolved over the yearlong formal inquiry.

As such, it brings with the telling a complicated set of ethical and relational concerns. Labov (1997) argued that while many stories reflect a polarizing structure, classically pitting protagonist against antagonist, stories told about family members more commonly utilize an integrating structure. Integrating narratives tend to minimize guilt of the protagonist, and relieve her of responsibility for any breach of community norms. Although I find this heuristic useful in certain respects, to tell this story as either polarizing or integrating would run counter to the dual purposes of both localized improvement and shareable knowledge generation, as

well as two core values of our team. First, we try "to take care of each other" (Madeline, team meeting 9.26.07). Second, we are always under self-review and evaluation in order that we may better serve our students.

These dual values and dual purposes live in tension with each other, and in order to maintain some fidelity to all, this writing must traverse a high wire between them. I hope that my vantage point as a member of this particular community of teachers for almost a decade, paired with the theoretical and historical grounding I have gained as a university researcher-in-training, might result in a probing into some of the lesser observed corners of what Little's (1990) called the "black box" of teacher collaboration. My experience of living and working with these tensions in perspective has been disorienting at times, but also generative of much personal learning. To rely, as I often do, on a literary reference: throughout this inquiry, I felt like Gulliver in a pair of bifocals. Through the more distanced perspective, I hoped to intelligently situate one Lilliputian-scaled island of collaborative work in the midst of a growing national concern over teacher education, professional development, and teacher quality. In the extreme close-up Brobdingnagian view, I also want to honor and attempt to preserve the "wisdom of practice" (Shulman, 1987) that existed within the English 12 team, although it will reveal some of our pock marks along the way.

Organization

Although the triple processes of collaboration, action research, and writing about each was often messy, I hope that the organization of this text helps readers explore the multiple layers of one teacher collaboration with greater clarity. In Chapter Two, I present an overview of the present state of knowledge regarding teacher collaborations. This chapter explores the ways in which teacher collaboration is both a highly touted and a highly contested reform of traditional conceptions of teaching. It argues that given the complexities of teacher collaboration, the only viable basis for sustained joint work among teachers is a democratic ideal which strives to honor both community responsibility and individual autonomy (Dewey, 1916; Gutmann, 1993). In Chapter Three, I turn to two foundational aspects of this study, the theoretical grounding which resulted in the methodological design of this project as an action research project, and a more detailed introduction to the context and people at the center of this study.

The organization of the following chapters explores the product and processes of the collaboration of the English 12 team at Lafayette Falls High School.   Each chapter offers a different perspective on the work of our team, with each perspective shift akin to a photographer altering perspective on her subject.

Chapter Four takes a wide-angled and long view on the original purpose and product of the English 12 team: curriculum development. This chapter utilizes narrative inquiry and document analysis to understand the curricular history of the team as I experienced it over my decade of teaching; and then zooms in to capture in greater detail some of the revisions made during the research year. This chapter investigates the vision of teaching English 12 constructed in this team.

While Chapter Four explores the curriculum as a product of our work together, Chapters Five and Six focus on the processes of collaboration constructed and reconstructed by our English 12 team during the year of data collection. Chapter Five examines the language of our collaboration in extreme close-up. Using aspects of discourse analysis and narrative analysis, I explore two predominant features of the team's language: intertextuality and narrativity, and the implications each had for relationship building and mentoring within the team.

Chapter Six is the medium shot: utilizing aspects of activity theory, I describe ways in which time and division of labor were enacted within our team's practices, as well as the attempts we made at improving these practices during the research year. I describe key features of our collaboration as I experienced and observed them as a group member. When applicable, I also narrate the changes in practice undertaken to improve our collaboration. Then I evaluate these traits for the constraints and possibilities they hold for mentoring new teachers and the democratic participation of all team members.

Chapter Seven returns to a broader perspective. It explores a necessary question: can our collaboration be substantiated as teacher learning? Drawing on interview data with each team member, as well as my reflections on team meetings throughout the research year, I explore the ways in which our collaboration can be described as teacher learning in three distinct ways: learning about teaching English, learning about reflective practice, and learning about the commitments required for successful classroom practice (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

Finally, in Chapter Eight I reflect on the inherent tensions in purpose and vision that constructed our collaboration.   Using the criteria of catalytic validity for action research (Herr &

Anderson ,2005), I describe the understandings I achieved through experiencing those tensions in both the collaboration and the action research.   Most importantly, in keeping with action research methodology, I explore the evolving nature of my own research questions for future study. I meditate on some of the unanswered and critical questions this study has generated for me.

While these analyses began with the intention of holding a mirror up to our own and my own practices of collaboration, I hope that they also offer a window for other teachers and researchers into the complexity of working and inquiring within a professional collaboration.

Chapter 2 :

A Critical Analysis of Existing Knowledge about Teacher Collaboration

Despite the complexity of problems that affect the American education system, there seems to be a increasingly uniform chorus of education reformers and researchers promoting one solution: allow teachers the opportunity to inquire, to plan, to reflect, and to build relationships with one another in professional learning communities. While many reformers espouse a variety of "seductive" discourses about the value of collaboration (Lavié, 2006; Huberman, 1993), the knowledge base regarding teacher collaboration suffers from vague conceptualizations and overly optimistic visions of teacher communities (Westheimer, 1998; Little, 2003). It is the purpose of this chapter to provide a critical review of the literature regarding teacher collaborations by addressing these questions:

1. What concepts can help clarify the range of teachers' collegial relations?
2. What are the significant discourses that inform teacher community reforms and research?
3. How does previous research inform the understanding of both the promising and problematic aspects of teachers' professional collaborations?

It is hoped that through a critical perspective that honors both the potential and the problematic in teacher collaborations, I can establish the need for further research into such groups without falling prey to a naïve belief that teachers' professional communities are a "magic bullet" and doomed to become the next faddish (and failed) attempt to reform American schooling. My personal faith in the potential of critical and democratic teacher communities to develop and sustain excellence in learning and teaching demands this attention to the problematic, in order ultimately to promote the sustainability and integrity of such projects.

The Range of Teacher Collegiality: From Isolation to Democratic Community

> Such words as 'society' and 'community' are likely to be misleading, for they have the tendency to make us think there is a single thing corresponding to a single word.
>
> --John Dewey, 1916, p.21

Collegiality, cooperation, collaboration, or community? Communities of practice, professional learning communities, or democratic learning communities? The range of terms currently en vogue to describe teachers' professional relations (and their respective acronyms)

suggests the growing variation in and confusion over what is meant by "collaboration" and "community" when applied to educational contexts (Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001; Lavié, 2006; Westheimer, 1998). Thus there is a need to sift through the various descriptors commonly employed to describe the professional relationships in which teachers engage. Theoretically, teachers' professional relations, or collegiality, can be best described on a continuum. This continuum begins with teachers in isolation, moves into cooperation, then collaboration, community, and ultimately perhaps, democratic community (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: A Range of Teacher Collegiality

Isolation ↔ Cooperation ↔ Collaboration ↔ Community ↔ Democratic Community

Although I employ this metaphor of a continuum to describe and clarify the distinctions across a range of relationships between teachers, it is also paramount to distinguish this theoretical construction from the practical, lived reality of collegiality. Given the reflexivity of social practice, any particular school or individual team will likely exhibit multiple and dynamic positioning along this continuum. The traits of collegiality exhibited by any particular group will be shaped by the specifics of context including setting, history, membership, and task; as will the context be constituted by the group's orientation to collegiality.

Isolation as the norm of teacher's professional relations

Isolation and a persistent individualism have been found to be the most prevalent norms in relationships between teachers in American schools. Lortie's (1975) seminal description of the American teaching profession described a "cell" or "egg crate model" of teaching, in which teachers have little or no professional relationship with other adults in the same school. Others have offered more positive metaphors of these professional teaching norms describing "the independent entrepreneur" or "the independent artisan" models (Huberman, 1993).   Regardless of the analogy used, this model has been extremely influential on the culture of the American teaching profession: forty-five percent of teachers in Lortie's study reported having no significant contact with their colleagues in adjoining classrooms; while 35% claimed some contact, and only 25% said they had "much" contact with their colleagues. Despite sustained critique of these norms of isolation, subsequent research has suggested that

little has changed in actual school structure or practices over the last thirty years (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Little, 1990).

While the critique of teachers' isolation has been persistent and is central to this argument, it is also useful to consider the historical basis for this system, as well as its affordances in order to recognize some of the systemic pressures which preserve norms of isolation. Beginning with the one room school house and continuing through the development of the factory school, teaching was institutionalized as high turnover work which required independent not interdependent instructors (Lortie, 1975, p.15). Even today, with high rates of teacher attrition, shifting student populations, and districts' financial instability, it would be difficult to justify and maintain the personal or institutional investments required to develop meaningful relationships between teachers if those relationships are likely only temporary. Furthermore, isolation may provide some potential benefits to both teachers and students. Norms of isolation and egalitarianism protect teachers' autonomy; such autonomy may allow teachers to remain "context-sensitive, evolving, [and] interactive" in their responses to the specific minute by minute needs of students within the classroom (Huberman, 1993, p. 19; also Lortie, 1975).   The culture of professional individualism may be "a far more complex, coherent, and resilient ecosystem than most observers realize, and it has an awesome capacity to wait out and wear out reformers who would introduce a different division of labor" (Huberman, 1993, p. 44). Allowing that certain benefits of isolation and autonomy may exist, it is also at a cost of potentially greater career rewards for teachers and coherence of instruction for students (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001).

Cooperation: Offering "Aid and Assistance"

Next in the range of teacher collegiality, cooperative relations among teachers may be seen as supportive relationships which do not require any significant loss of professional autonomy. Little's (1990) typology described three dominant professional relations which may be termed cooperative. First, Little found that "aid and assistance" was a common feature of cooperation, particularly as a component of new teachers' induction into a school or department. However, such relations are predicated on asymmetrical power relations; supporting Lortie's (1975) observations, teachers who requested assistance could expect help, but solicited or unsolicited advice could also be interpreted as an assumption of power, and against the egalitarian norms of the profession. A second feature of cooperative relations Little

called, simply, "sharing," indicating the routine exchange of lessons and materials. However, like aid, such practices may be asymmetrical, and dependent on the relative availability of resources. Finally, Little observed that storytelling, an "omnipresent feature of teacher's work lives," seemed to be one way teachers offer one another cooperative support. Little speculated that teachers' stories may perpetuate a present-oriented perspective, and thus might not be conducive to improvement in practice. However, the prevalence of storytelling in teachers' work rooms alone suggests that there may be an important psychic benefit to such exchanges. As all of these activities are elective, and ostensibly remain peripheral to the main site of practice, the classroom, such behaviors may indicate cooperative school or department cultures without any significant changes in autonomy of individual teachers or improvement in their practice.

Collaboration: Joint Work but Limited Sustainability

Although some researchers use the terms "collaboration" and "community" synonymously, I take collaboration to indicate specific task-oriented work that is accomplished through shared, joint or common responsibility (Little, 1990; Achinstein, 2002). It is suggestive of a shared process, shared product, and ultimately shared power; as such, it is a necessary component in the construction of professional communities (Irwin & Farr, 2004). However, collaboration alone does not constitute "community." Unlike merely cooperative relationships, collaboration does require an exchange of personal autonomy for increased collective authority (Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, 2002; Little, 1990); but this exchange may also remain susceptible to "cronyism and corruption" (Hargreaves, 2003). Hargreaves (2003) also noted the phenomenon of "contrived collegiality" which occurs when the context, participants, and purposes of collaboration are imposed by hierarchical leadership structures, ultimately undermining chances for more enduring collaboration or community building.

Broad scale studies of collaboration patterns have found that most teachers who participated in collaborations did so voluntarily and informally; furthermore, collaborations rarely were sustained over time or included more complex arrangements such as co-teaching (Hargreaves, 2003; Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975). Such types of collaboration have been described as indicative of a culture regime of "permissive individualism" (Hargreaves, 2003), or what Westheimer (1998) called a "liberal" teacher community. In Westheimer's (1998) ethnographic case studies of two California middle schools, "liberal" collaborations perpetuated norms of

autonomy and individual responsibility. While teachers supported each other outside the classroom, they did not engage in much activity that fostered interdependence on group work for individual practice. Additional studies on collaboration indicate the difficulty of developing or sustaining meaningful collaborative relations among teachers, as well as raising questions about the transformative effect that collaboration can have on classroom practices that are still privatized (Huberman, 1993; Little, 1990). More recent studies have gone inside collaborative teacher groups to understand better how they accomplish their joint work. As dialogue is one of the main tools of collaboration (Irwin & Farr, 2004), recent empirical studies have analyzed teachers' talk in collaborative activities to investigate the content and impact of conflicts that can arise as a result of negotiating the boundaries between individual and collective practice (Little, 2003; Little, 2002; Achinstein, 2002; Grossman et al., 2001; Thomas, Wineburg, Grossman, Myhre & Woolworth, 1998). All of these studies agree that meaningful collaboration is difficult to achieve, and even more challenging to sustain.

Communities: Vagary and Variability

If what has been termed collaboration frequently retains an individualistic orientation and is often wrought with conflict and tensions, then this suggests that the optimistic promise of building learning communities in schools may also be more difficult to achieve than the rhetoric around it has suggested (Lavié, 2006; Little, 2003; Westheimer, 1998; Huberman, 1993). Again, some researchers have used conceptions of community as virtually interchangeable with collaboration, and I agree that there can be significant overlap. However, I would argue that community suggests a longer term, sustained "culture of collaboration," and thus a greater focus on the relationships and ongoing interdependence between participants. Whereas a successful collaboration could occur on a shorter term project, it would not necessarily indicate a community.

Some of the confusion between the terms "collaboration" and "community" may be linked to one of the most commonly utilized theories in support of collaboration learning: Lave & Wenger's (1991) articulation of how learning occurs in "communities of practice." Communities of practice are "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (in Wenger, 2007). Lave (1996) argued that this theory is against individualistic, psychological theories of learning and teaching, and the traditional dualism between informal and formal schooling. Under this conception,

learning becomes an "identity-making life projects of participants in communities of practice," while teaching is "a process of facilitating the circulation of school knowledgeable skills into the changing identities of students" (Lave, 1996, p.157-8).

Lave and Wenger's work is an important model of situated learning that can inform teaching of both adults and students. However, this theory also allows that intentionality and consciousness of learning may vary among communities of practice (Wenger, 2007).   Thus Lave & Wenger's theories seem to describe the process by which beliefs and practices might come to be held in common, but do not differentiate qualitatively between the types of values and practices learned. Under such a theory, all groups, organizations, and teams, constitute a community of practice, however conscious or unconscious, innovative or conservative, liberatory or discriminatory their joint learning is (Hargreaves, 2003; Little, 2002; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Thus a community of practice may be an effective instrument for teaching and learning, but the attendant relativism regarding both the ends and means of participation in some communities of practice may privilege a liberal view of collaboration with its emphasis on individual rights over collective responsibility. This may be particularly true in schools, where traditional norms of privacy make the transfer of knowledge from a teachers' community of practice into enacted classroom practice less likely (Huberman, 1993; Little, 1990; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Westheimer, 1998).

Additionally, as "community" seems to have a generally positive connotation in educational contexts, the ubiquity of its use may belie its ambiguity and vagueness, as well as the more coercive aspects of the metaphor (Hargreaves, 2003; Lavié, 2006; Westheimer, 1998). Westheimer (1998) compiled conceptions of community from a variety of theorists. He found the following traits most consistently used to define community:

- Meaningful relationships
- Interdependence
- Shared interests and beliefs
- Interaction and participation
- Concern for individual and minority views (p.17)

While aspects such as interaction, participation, and shared interest might overlap with definitions of collaboration, the prominence of "meaningful relationships," "interdependence" and "shared beliefs" distinguishes communities from collaborations.

In practice, these traditional features described by community theorists can mask significant differences in the values orientation of different collaborative groups (Lavié, 2006; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Westheimer, 1998). While most variations on teacher community claim to be efforts at school improvement, what is meant by improvement differs in both its ends and means, and it remains unclear whether teacher community provides a means or an end in itself (Lavié, 2006; Westheimer, 1998). Westheimer (1998) proposed that teacher communities could be viewed on a continuum from "liberal" to "collective." The values and practices of "liberal" teacher communities privilege individual rights and responsibilities, and an instrumentalist belief in the worth of teachers' joint work; "collective" teacher communities' values and practices promote interdependence and joint responsibility for the education of all students, and the intrinsic worth of community. McLaughlin & Talbert (2001) also suggested that communities may vary from weak to strong, and in their traditional or innovative orientations to practice. Furthermore, some strong but traditional communities may reinforce social inequalities in teaching practices (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001, p. 63).   However, I agree with Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth's (2001) more restrictive definitions: weak or "liberal" collaborative groups do not constitute a community, because they lack the requisite depth of relationship and interdependence. They argued that such groups demarcated by hierarchical leadership, suppressed conflicts, and illusions of consensus, were better termed "pseudo-communities." Finally, I propose that it is the concern for individual and minority views, and as such, beliefs and collaborative practices which encourage distributed leadership and critical reflection, that define the contours between communities which are more normative and traditional in their approaches to teaching and learning from those which are innovative and more democratic. It is these differences in underlying beliefs and values that have also contributed greatly to the wide variety in structures and rationales for the development of teacher community.

Variations in the context for teachers' communities. Teachers' work in communities is influenced by a variety of settings and organizations all at once, and such contexts may reinforce or contradict one another.   These contexts include sector (public or private), districts, schools, departments, and professional organizations (such as unions or subject matter organizations) (Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994). Thus, teacher communities may exist both inside and outside schools (Hargreaves, 2003). Communities may also be conceived as school-wide (Bezzina & Testa, 2005; Louis & Marks, 1998), although it has been suggested that different conceptions of

community are required for elementary schools versus high schools (Grossman et al., 2001; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001).   Except for private or some small "mission" driven high schools that have achieved a school wide community of practice, in most comprehensive high schools the subject department serves as the most influential context, though one which may inhibit the development of school-wide community norms (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Louis & Marks, 1998; Huberman 1993). Ultimately, while each of these local contexts matters, teachers participating in strong professional communities within subject area departments or related professional networks had higher levels of professionalism as measured by indicators of shared standards for curriculum and instruction, service ethic to students, and commitment to the teaching profession (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). While some studies have looked at interdisciplinary communities across schools (Gunn & King, 2003; Grossman et al., 2001; Westheimer, 1998), it has also been argued that the closer a teacher community is situated to the daily needs of teaching, the greater chance of its success (Supovitz, 2002; Riordan and de Costa, 1998; Huberman, 1993).   These studies indicate that the most appropriate organization for the development of a teacher community maximizes the potential for interdependence, whether such a group is embedded within a school, across a district, or throughout a professional organization.

Variations in purposes and processes in teachers' communities. In addition to varying in terms of the contexts for community, descriptions of teacher communities vary in terms of their purposes and processes for interaction and participation. While generally teacher communities require a clear task orientation (Little, 2003), and that task is typically collaboration for improvement in education (Hargreaves, 2003; Little, 2003; Eaker et al., 2002; Achinstein, 2002; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Louis & Marks, 1998), the express purpose may vary from a focus on school-wide issues (Bezzina & Testa, 2005), to teacher development (Grossman et al., 2001), curriculum development (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993), student learning (Eaker et al., 2002) or a combination of any of the above.   As such, interaction structures may include collaboration which engages in planning and enacting curriculum (Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, & Beckingham, 2004), de-privatizing classroom practice (Little, 2003; Little, 2002; Little, 1990; Louis & Marks, 1998), the use of evidence and data (Hargreaves, 2003; Eaker et al., 2002; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993) and/or reflective dialogue (Butler et al., 2004; Vander Ark, 2003; Louis & Marks, 1998; Lee & Barnett, 1994). Thus, the multiplicity of formal structures that may be employed include action research, peer coaching, lesson study, and book clubs among others

(Lent, 2007). This continuing burgeoning of purposes, interactions, and formal structures for collaboration and community development might account for the limited impact of the collaborative movement thus far (Hargreaves, 2003), and a reoccurring research focus on typologies, structural variations, and descriptions of teacher communities over close examination of the content of teacher collaborations (Little, 1990). Ultimately, the tremendous variation in structures for the development of teacher communities seems to be a result of a wide range of discourses which have argued that an increase in teacher collaborative work will result in improvements in schooling; but these are also discourses which can have conflicting and contradictory goals for teacher communities.

Competing discourses of teacher community

Regardless of the vocabulary used to name or describe the structures of collaboration utilized by teacher communities, the philosophies, research, and practices which encourage the development of collaborative cultures within schools are shaped by a variety of competing discourses of educational and political philosophy. Competing discourses of teacher collaboration offer conflicting visions of the purpose of schooling, and therefore the roles that teacher collaboration might have in improving schooling. Lavié (2006) described one range of discourses which impact teacher communities. In this review of prominent literature from the last 20 years, Lavié argued that there are five main discourses which dominate rationales for teacher collaboration:

- *Cultural* discourses which look at aspects of collaborative cultures in schools, and focus on improving affective relationships between teachers.
- *School effectiveness and improvement* discourses which view schools as workplace cultures managed by principals, and focus on improvement as discrete measures of student achievement. (Also termed "managerial" model by Huberman, 1993).
- *Community* discourses which are anti-bureaucratic, and look to improve relational patterns between all community members within and beyond school.
- *Restructuring* discourses which view collaboration as an aspect of improving teacher professionalism.
- *Critical* discourses which promote a vision of schools and collaboration as discursive and potentially democratic communities, but also problematize teacher collaborations. (p.776)

Lavié argued that these multiple discourses can be seen as evolutionary and sometimes complementary; for example, most models of teacher collaboration will contain aspects of cultural discourses. However, there can also be significant variety within a discourse: i.e. community discourses may vary in how much attention they provide to issues of difference and inclusivity. Finally, these discourses can often conflict in their purpose for and process of instituting collaborative work: "Approaching the practice of teacher collaboration from one discourse or another ultimately depends on the vision of schooling we are committed to and the type of changes we wish to bring about" (Lavié, 2006, p.796). For example, one can imagine how an administrator's adherence to a managerial rationale for teacher communities, with an emphasis on improving student test scores or standardizing instruction, could be antithetical to a critical discourse concerned that teacher communities might become a mechanism for increased hierarchical control of practice (Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Myers, 2007). Although Lavié's (2006) model works as a strong starting place to consider the variety of discourses supporting teacher community, I will examine a slightly modified set of discourses for teacher community and research in these traditions. I also found five main discourses informed the research on teacher community: however, I identify the primary discourses as those centered around 1) school reorganization, 2) teacher professionalism, 3) teacher development, 4) student learning, and finally, 5) political discourses of education and society, such as liberalism, communitarianism, and democracy.

School Reorganization

Despite codification of professional collaboration as a standard of teaching practice (NBPTS, 2002), and support from a wide variety of reformers and researchers, most of today's schools are still not organized to support the demands of effective teaching and learning, particularly in the allotment of the time required for teachers' collaborative work (Darling-Hammond, 2005). One of the main rationales of the teacher community movement seems to be the ongoing desire to achieve significant structural reform of schools. Schmoker (2004) argued that the on-going and responsive nature of teacher communities can better address substantial and sustained reform of school organizations, and Vander Ark (2003) proposed that "the alternative to anonymity and incoherence" in traditional schools "is rigor and relationship" for students and adults alike within smaller learning communities.

For schools that have defied the traditional norms of autonomy and isolation, and implemented aspects of teacher community, there is some evidence of organizational changes. Teacher communities have been credited with a number of structural improvements in schools. The development of teacher communities has been credited with fostering school climates which are "warm, positive and conducive" to learning (Bezzina & Testa, 2005; also Supovitz, 2002). As collaborations can aid the development of teachers' leadership capacity (Grossman et al, 2001), it improves their understanding of schools as organizations and can assist in the development of school-wide policies and programs (Achinstein, 2002; Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Mason, 2003; Bezzina & Testa, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Louis & Marks' (1998) mixed methods study of twenty-four schools attempted to bridge the gap in understanding the relationship between school level and classroom level re-organization. This study found there was a correlation between schools structured as learning communities and the improved social and pedagogical organization of individual classrooms.

However there are also continuing problems with achieving school-wide learning communities. It has been demonstrated that small, individual teacher communities encounter difficulty in attempts to extend collaborative practices throughout a school culture, and that highly departmentalized schools, such as traditional high schools, are harder to develop as professional communities (Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Grossman et al., 2001; Louis & Marks, 1998; Huberman, 1993). Another enduring challenge encountered in both school-wide and small teacher communities remains the need for substantial collaborative time, preferably within the school day; likewise, collaborations must be conceived as long term investments, and administrators must have the patience to allow communities to work through their conflicts without pressure for quick, measurable results (Bezzina, 2006; Little, 2003; Gunn & King, 2003; Lortie, 2002; Westheimer, 1998; Little, 1990). Ironically, although some of the pressure for collaborative restructuring is directly related to the standards and accountability movement, it has also been suggested that the rigidity of initiatives such as NCLB actually hurt the viability of schools which attempt to structure themselves as learning communities. Some schools have not been able to "secure sufficient 'learning space' from reform pressure to find the time and latitude to learn, flex, adapt, and regroup, when even the availability of time has been standardized by policy mandate" (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006, p. 152).

Teacher Professionalism

A second major discourse of teacher collaboration holds that such work will lead to increased professionalization and thus improvement in teacher practices.   Like other professions, teaching is marked by a high level of uncertainty and complexity which demands that effective practitioners develop adaptive expertise or clinical reasoning (Dewey, 1916; Lampert, 1985; Huberman, 1993; Shulman, 1998; Rose, 1999) "in the context of a schema that provides a means for reflection and further learning" (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 374). But unlike many other professions in which communities of practice share knowledge and monitor standards internally, teaching has been highly subject to external standards of practice, and teachers have remained isolated from each others' practice (Lortie, 1975; Little, 1990, Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). While professional learning communities perhaps should be viewed as a "duty and right" for teachers (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 175), there are also likely to be individuals who will prefer to teach in isolation, and perhaps even entered the profession for the autonomy it affords (Joyce, 2004; Huberman, 1993).

Talbert and McLaughlin (1994) contrasted a traditional technical culture of teaching with teacher professionalism. Their survey results found that a higher level of collegial relations were related to teacher professionalism: specifically, in shared curriculum and instructional standards, service ethic toward students, and commitment to profession. A later study (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001) observed that collegiality offers teachers greater career anchors. Teachers' experiences of intrinsic rewards vary with the strength and type of community present in the school or department. Weak communities offered only weak rewards, especially for new teachers; while traditional communities offered only competitive rewards based on a meritocracy and teacher tracking (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Additionally, there is a growing body of researchers who agree that the induction and retention of new teachers is improved through the development of structures for collaboration (Bezzina & Testa, 2005; Huberman, 1993; Lortie, 1975; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Schmoker, 2004), although some structures may not offer a transparent enough view of teaching practice to be meaningful, and may be based on assymetrical power dynamics (Little, 2003; Little, 1990). Research influenced by the discourse of professionalism seems to concur that until schools find ways to sustain teacher collaborations, teaching will remain only quasi-professional.

Teacher Development

 Unless initial teacher education can prepare beginning teachers to learn to do much more thoughtful and challenging work, and unless ways can be found through

professional development, to help teachers to sustain such work, traditional instruction is likely to persist in frustrating educational reform, and reformers visions are likely not to permeate practice broadly or deeply.

--Ball & Cohen, 1999, p. 6

Discourses of teacher development, while clearly connecting with aspects of the teacher professionalism discourses, offer a distinct view on teacher communities as a site of ongoing and meaningful learning for teachers. Researchers and reformers have lamented the lack of rigor in both pre-service and in-service teachers' education, in particular an over emphasis in technical and conformist perspectives of teaching (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Ball & Cohen, 1999; Britzman, 1991; Schon, 1987). Additionally, traditional workshop-style professional development has been criticized as superficial, faddish, incoherent, fragmented, non-cumulative, and disconnected from significant issues of curriculum and learning (Schmoker, 2004; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Ball & Cohen, 1999; Lortie, 1975). In contrast, there is increasing call for professional education opportunities for teachers which are on-going, embedded in daily work, active, inquiry-based, and which facilitate teachers' understanding and revision of their own theories of practice (Wilson & Berne, 1999; Ball & Cohen, 1999; Schon, 1987; Handal & Lauvas, 1987). Professional development through teacher communities potentially can offer an alternative to workshop style approaches which fulfills such reforms, with the additional benefit of being a social enterprise (Lent, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Ball & Cohen, 1999; Lave, 1996). Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005) (drawing on both Vygotsky,1978 and Lave & Wenger, 1991) suggested that learning to teach in purposefully constructed communities of teachers offers rich potential for the development of a professional identity, including development of:

- Understanding: deep knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and social contexts
- Practices
- Vision: images of the possible
- Tools: conceptual and practical resources
- Dispositions: habits of thinking and action regarding teaching and children (p.386)

Through collaborative structures such as team teaching, peer coaching or critical colleagueship, teachers can begin to extend their understanding of their own theories of action, and develop

alternative practices (Lent, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Butler et al., 2004; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Ball & Cohen, 1999; Handal & Lauvas, 1987).

Several empirical studies have indicated that participation in teacher communities can provide a reflective structure for teacher development throughout the various career stages including pre-service (ten Dam & Blom, 2006; Thomas, Wineburg, Grossman, Myhre, & Woolworth, 1998), induction (Grossman, et al., 2001; Bezzina, 2005; Lloyd, 2006a) and in-service teaching. Perhaps because of their prior socialization into autonomous norms of practice, veteran teachers have demonstrated more difficulty with initial phases of collaboration, but still found satisfaction in the intellectual stimulation of collaborative study (Grossman et al., 2001; Thomas et al., 1998). Collaborative work has also been successful in developing subject matter knowledge in a variety of disciplines such as science (Hoban, Hastings, Luccarda, & Lloyd, 1997; Andrews & Lewis, 2002), middle school literacy (Frey, 2002), high school math, English, and history (Little, 2002; Grossman et al., 2001).

The five year study of a PLC of urban English and history teachers described in both Thomas et al. (1998) and Grossman et al. (2001) was particularly notable. Its purposeful design as a cross disciplinary book club was able to help teachers begin to develop new frameworks for reading texts utilizing multiple perspectives. Although the teachers in this study struggled with learning to read and discuss texts in new paradigms, the researchers did observe an eventual accommodation of these other epistemologies. In contrast, the teachers appeared more resistant to explicit involvement in each others' teaching practices; the pursuit of a video-based sharing and discussion of teachers' actual classroom practices was abandoned after only one attempt due to lack of interest . Little (2002) found similar resistance regarding the details of practice among a group of ninth grade English teachers collaborating on a common curriculum. The teachers claimed to have a unified philosophy, but could not agree on uniform practices. My previous experiences in and study of two PLCs of English teachers also concurred; suggesting that while teachers can agree to common assessments and some uniform activities , the direct involvement in daily instruction remains minimal (Lloyd, 2006a). Although not conclusive regarding instructional practices, the extant research has suggested that regardless of the grade level, subject matter or years of experience teachers bring with them, teacher communities hold promise for supporting teacher learning in subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge. However, there is little research that examines how teacher collaborations might help improve classroom instructional practices more directly, or that traces the knowledge generated in

communities back into individual practices which might improve student learning (Little, 2003; McLaughlin & Talbert 2001).

Student Learning

Discourses regarding students and their learning have also shaped the reform movement for and research of teacher communities, but little research has clarified how these processes might be related. Little (2003) used the metaphor of "the black box" to describe the "plausible but unexplored and unspecified relationships" between teacher collaboration and student learning (p. 914-15), while also noting that "Claims about the generative power of professional community for individual development and whole-school reform frequently founder on evidence that not much has changed at the level of teaching and learning in the classroom" (p.940; also Huberman, 1993).

That black box remains largely unopened, as just a few studies have attempted to show the impact of collaborative cultures on student learning. Louis & Marks' (1998) mixed methods study of twenty-four schools suggested that there was a correlation between schools structured as learning communities, the social and pedagogical organization of individual classrooms, and ultimately student achievement. Their quantitative data correlated school-wide indicators of professional community to higher student achievement on authentic assessments. Their investigation indicated that individual classrooms in schools with strong professional communities, particularly those with deprivatized practices, exhibited higher levels of social support for students and improved pedagogy. However, Supovitz (2002) found that in schools with formal teacher collaborations changes in instructional practices and gains in student test scores were minimal and inconsistent, except where the collaborations focused their work on improving instruction practices. Although each study offers intriguing results, particularly in support of Little's (2003) calls for deprivatized practiced, neither can be considered conclusive regarding the likely complex relationships between teacher collaborations and student learning.

Other attempts to connect teacher communities to student learning remain more theoretical than empirical, or more distant from the classroom in their object of study. McLaughlin & Talbert (2001) posited that there are two main competing discourses on teaching which influence the orientation of teacher communities: traditional discourses focused on curriculum and testing, or innovative discourses regarding achievement of high standards of content knowledge and problem solving (p. 130). As a result, when faced with changing student

demographics, they found teacher communities either continued to enact traditional standards, lowered expectations of those traditional standards, or innovated to make their practice more appropriate for increasingly heterogeneous classrooms (p. 19). This range indicated different stances toward teaching practice (traditional or innovative) as well as beliefs about teaching diverse students. Although left unspecified within the study, I might call these three stances toward students' diversity "student difference as irrelevant," "student difference as deficit," or "student difference as teachers' collective responsibility."   Given these variations in norms and beliefs regarding teaching and students, it is possible to conceive how some strong but traditional teacher communities might actually propagate educational inequities rather than alleviate them (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001).

The continuation of traditional orientations toward teaching within some teacher communities seems to be most closely associated with the school effectiveness or managerial discourses, which evolved out of social efficiency discourses. Social efficiency theories and models of schools and teaching emerged in the early 20th century from the mechanized, assembly-line fragmentation of the factory, to educate cheaply those who would return to labor at the factory. The hallmarks of such discourses are hierarchical and atomized organizations, as well as instrumentalist views of education, and an orientation toward progress as product driven and value-free (Lavié, 2006). While concepts of collaboration or community might seem paradoxical within such discourses, contemporary theories of the workplace (such as Senge, 1990) view collaborative practices as more adaptive and responsive and therefore more effective than older more atomized structures. Much of the research done in this paradigm of collaboration focuses on the centrality of the principal as a cultural manager, quantifiable measures of student or school success, and views teacher community as a means to improved standardized test scores.

For example, in the "professional learning community" model articulated by Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour (2002), and adopted by the administration at my research site, a PLC is any group of teachers within a school who work together as part of their professional duties in an effort to improve student achievement. This model is guided by three essential questions: 1) What is the essential knowledge that students need to learn? 2) How will teachers know if students' have this knowledge?   3) What will teachers do if learning has not occurred?   While this PLC model states a concern with "collaboratively developed and widely shared mission, vision, values, and goals," (p.10) such goals are already highly limited to "results-oriented,"

"research-based," "measurable," and "monitored" student achievement goals.   While a number of other researchers and reformers argue for increased use of evidence and data to inform teachers' practices, they are more cautious about a critical use of research, particularly as research contexts may not be generalizable to other contexts or participants; in other words, teaching practices should be data informed, but not data driven (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Lent, 2007; Hargreaves, 2003; Mason, 2003).

Orientations to a narrow conception of student achievement clearly link certain models of teacher community to discourses of effectiveness (Lavié, 2006), and as such can be seen as outgrowths of the accountability and standards movements of today, and the social efficiency movements of the early part of the last century. Hargreaves (2003) termed similar models of teacher communities "Performance-Training Sects." He found that typically these groups focused solely on literacy and math skills required on standardized tests. Such collaborations may exhibit short term gains in test scores, changes in teachers' beliefs about student achievement, and support for under-qualified or early career teachers. However, such groups also narrow the curriculum and over-emphasized technical aspects of teaching, and thus may "insult. . .teachers' professionalism" and diminish their reflective capabilities in the long term (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 181).

Others have argued that any consideration of student "achievement" as products of education is flawed. Huberman (1993) argued that this is not an appropriate standard by which to judge schools or teaching:

> Associating teaching effectiveness with gains in pupil achievement levels. . .is an extremely restrictive way of defining either the social mandate of the school or the professional capacity of the teaching staff. Here, once again, we are trying to refloat the demonstrably bankrupt tradition of process-product studies of teacher effectiveness, this time by aggregating the unit of analyses from the classroom level to the institutional level. (p. 42)

Likewise, Dewey (1916) deconstructed such discourses as anti-democratic: "When social efficiency as measured by product or output is urged as an ideal in a would-be democratic society, it means that the depreciatory estimate of the masses characteristic of an aristocratic community is accepted and carried over" (p.117). In other words, such traditional discourses, even if laminated to the feel good image of a "community of teachers," potentially can demean both students and teachers by reducing the complexity of learning and teaching to standardized test results.

Political Discourses of Education and Society

Liberalism and communitarianism. The final category of discourses I examine here are political discourses of education, in particular those which articulate possible relationships between an individual and a community. A central tension within teacher community discourses exists between liberal and communitarian political philosophies (Gutmann, 1993; Huberman, 1993; Lavié, 2006; Little, 2003). While liberal discourses of traditional schooling promote a maximization of individual freedom, communitarianism is more concerned with both the development of shared values and beliefs promoted by learning within a community, as well as the affective needs that can be met through relationships with others in community. Huberman (1993) articulated two assumptions of the communitarian perspectives on teacher communities (citing work by Nias, 1989 and Hargreaves, 1989 most prominently). First, the isolation of teachers in schools can be painful, infantilizing, and deflating, and thus many teachers may desire meaningful relationships with colleagues. Second, schools develop missions through consensus, and the ritualizations of those missions form the basis of collaborations (Huberman, 1993, p. 31).

Westheimer's (1998) finding regarding a continuum from "liberal" communities, favoring the traditional norms of individual autonomy and responsibility for teachers and learners, to more innovative "collective" communities privileging more meaningful relationships and collective responsibility seems to correspond to aspects of these competing discourses. Westheimer found that the more "collective" community was better able to address heterogeneity within both classroom practice and collaborative practices, and thus also seemed to serve the needs of all individuals in the school more completely. However, Huberman (1993) argued that the communitarian view may not generally be "school-wise."   It fails to account for the protection that privacy of practice offers teachers, or address the potentially coercive nature of developing a shared mission, a process that could result in highly normative practices or "groupthink" (Scribner et al., 2007). Thus, while a central tension within the philosophy and practice of teacher communities may exist between liberal and communitarian perspectives, another vision on teacher collaboration is required to strive for a "workable balance between individual needs and collective responsibilities" (Huberman, 1993, p.14).

Democratic Discourses. The discourses regarding teacher community may vary in beliefs about schools, teachers, teaching, learning, diversity, improvement and ultimately, about the political relationship between individual freedom and civic good. Each of these discourses has

its supporters, critics, and some empirical evidence offered as support. With such myriad of discourses over such central ontological issues, it is no wonder that teacher collaboration has become an incredibly popular mantra, but ultimately remained "more evanescent, volatile, and brittle than initial observations had suggested" (Huberman, 1993, p. 12). In order to transcend this cacophony of views, it is necessary to embrace the tensions between them, and it is only a critical and democratic approach to teacher collaboration that supports such work.

The philosophy of democratic community espoused here is most closely aligned with the work of John Dewey. Like the communitarian, cultural, and community discourses described above, the democratic perspective views learning as a social process. Dewey (1916) was critical of the dualistic view of education predicated on an independent, isolated, self-sufficient, and fixed subject, and proposed that all communication, education and knowledge is inherently social. However, Dewey did not take a relativist view of learning as social process: Dewey's education is a process of continual transformation of the individual with the aim of reconstructing society (p. 48, 73).

Dewey reserved the democratic definition of community for intentional and purposeful joint activity arguing that "Individuals do not even compose a social group because they all work for a common end. . . .If, however, they were all cognizant of the common end and all interested in it so that they regulated their specific activity in view of it, then they would form a community" (Dewey, 1916, p.5). This would suggest that a democratic philosophy of education sees teacher community as both an ends and a means: a group's aim may be to improve student learning, but conscious work toward that goal also requires a valuation and cognizance of the relationships within the community as well. But neither did Dewey argue that there must be a complete subversion of individual rights for common good. Dewey instead looked to a balance of "free interchange" (p. 330), neither overly individualistic nor authoritarian: " if democracy has a moral and ideal meaning, it is that a social return be demanded from all and that opportunity for development of distinctive capacities be afforded all. The separation of the two aims in education is fatal to democracy" (Dewey, 1916, p.117). Democratic communities thus must strive for balance between individual autonomy and community responsibility.

Likewise, Gutmann (1993) posited that the "distinctive features of democratic theory are its simultaneous refusal to dissolve the tensions between individual freedom and civic virtue. . . and its insistence on finding a principled way of living with the tensions" (p. 9). As democracy cannot survive without both individual freedom and civic responsibility, neither can

democratic education maximize both goals, but must aspire toward an ideal of "conscious social reproduction" undergirded by three principles:

- Nonrepression: democratic education must "not restrict rational consideration of different ways of life"(p. 4)
- Nondiscrimination: "everyone educated nonrepressively" (p. 4)
- Democratic deliberation: "collective deliberations and decision making" (p. 5), and an "increase in the willingness and ability of students to reason and argue about politics, collectively and critically, respectful of their reasonable differences" (p. 6)

This definition of democracy is not simply a majoritarian, or consensus, mode of government, but a "mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience [which] break[s]. . . down those barriers of class, race, and national territory" (Dewey, 1916, p. 83). Stratification into separate classes is "fatal" to democracy; thus a democratic society "must see to it that intellectual opportunities are accessible to all on equable and easy terms" (p. 84), and educate its citizens to "rebellion" at what divides them from each other (p. 116). As such, democratic communities should espouse virtues of diversity, ambiguity, creative conflict, honesty, humility, self-discipline, critical reflection, nonviolence, and mutual respect (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Gutmann, 1993; Palmer, 1998). It is against these broader ethical standards, not merely standardized test scores, that the quality of teacher communities should ultimately be judged.

Conflicts in Teacher Communities

Research on teacher communities informed by critical and democratic discourses locates the central tensions of community in the contours between individual and collective work. These tensions lead to reoccurring patterns of conflicts: conflicts over purposes and aims for collaboration; and conflicts resulting from interpersonal relationships, particularly over power and leadership. However, conflict has also been seen as a generative force required for the achievement of critical and democratic collaborations. The challenge for communities which aspire to democratic and critical changes in teaching is to find balance between consensus and controversy, ends and means, interdependence and autonomy, and community and diversity (Dewey, 1916; Lavié, 2006; Grossman et al, 2001; Huberman, 1993).

Conflicts over Purpose

Dewey's (1916) discussion of educational aims identified a number of criteria for the goals of democratic education. Good educational aims require conscious thought, flexibility, and a willingness to experiment. Such aims must be outgrowths of existing conditions and address the intrinsic needs of individuals. As only persons have aims, they are "indefinitely varied" (p. 103) and must not be externally imposed with presupposed "general and ultimate" ends (p. 105). These are demanding criteria alone, and presuppose dissent over aims; but given the variety of other discourses which also contend over the goals of teacher collaborations, it is not perhaps surprising that teacher communities frequently struggle with conflicts over purpose.

There are several recurrent themes in empirical studies of teacher collaborations and communities which address conflict in purpose. The first is a process versus product debate, while the second is about aims for consistency and coordination. Given that teachers generally, and teacher collaborations specifically, typically have enormous constraints on their time, one of the goals for many groups is "getting things done": problem solving to figure out how to improve practice (Little, 2003; Scribner et al., 2007; Lavié, 2006; Grossman et al., 2001; Handal & Lauvas, 1987). This is contrasted with purposes which might be more time-consuming, but which center on inquiry and reflection, such as problem-finding and intellectual development (Little, 2003; Grossman et al., 2001; Handal & Lauvas, 1987). Finally, there is an additional layer of tension in purpose added within a community regarding how unified and consistent teachers are in both their philosophies of teaching and their classroom practices (Little, 2002). In other words, a central question of collaborations remains should such work "reduce uncertainties or expose them?" (Little, 1990).

Several studies have elaborated these tensions. Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth (2001) found these main tensions within an interdisciplinary book club for high school teachers. While the goal of the book club was to improve instruction in critical reading, some teachers were frustrated that the groups' process focused primarily on expanding the teachers' own reading repertoires through participation in dialogues about literature. Similarly, Little (2002) study of an English teachers' team found one teacher interested in the experimental options provided by group work, while another teacher saw the collaboration as a way to manage the complex realities of the classroom. Little (2003) observed a similar tension between "getting things done" and "figuring things out" in a team of English teachers' struggle to keep "on track."

When one teacher raised a more philosophical question regarding motivating students for independent reading, the other teachers in the group simply blamed a classroom culture, and pressed on to continue their planning tasks. In both of Little's studies, she also noted the tensions that evolved within the team meetings over individual enactment of joint planning: "unified philosophy" versus "uniform practice 'down to the details'" and the "multiple views of group work and what is central to that work" (2002, p. 931).

Finally, Scribner et al. (2007) completed a comparative analysis of two different teacher teams within the same school. The first was a school-wide group, charged with reviewing and suggesting changes in policies and practices to help students who were failing classes. The second group was an instructional team which was developing a common curriculum. The researchers described the first group's purpose as problem-finding (open), and the second as a problem solving (closed). The researchers concluded that the problem solving group was more efficient, but tended to lack creativity, and refrain from extended reflection; while, the problem finding group was less efficient, but more open to new ideas. Each of these studies suggests that conflicts over purpose will be central features in most teacher communities. Anticipating such conflicts, communities need to make space for ongoing reflection, dialogue, and revision of community goals. An attempt to provide some balance or clarity between the multiple and conflicting purposes of teacher collaborations will be needed in order to develop sustainable and transformative communities.

Conflicts over Leadership

Another pattern of conflicts within teacher communities results from interpersonal relationships, particularly tensions over power and leadership. The importance of leadership at all levels—the state, district, building, department, and team—cannot be taken lightly, for without mechanisms to provide both financial and intellectual resources, teachers communities are unlikely to be effective or sustainable (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Hargreaves, 2003). However, given the variety of discourses advocating for increased collaborations, it is not surprising that a number of different models for leadership have been undertaken. Some leadership models look outside the teacher community, particularly to principals or external facilitators (such as consultants or university faculty), while others look to develop leadership capacity within the communities themselves.

A significant influence on the growth of teacher communities can come from a principal's overall vision and personal management style, and the translation of these traits into organizational structures. Building principals' management style was found to be vital to the initial implementation of collaborations (Huffman & Jacobsen, 2003) and to growth and reform capabilities of such groups (Bezzina, 2006; Giles & Hargreaves, 2006; Achinstein, 2002). However there is also concern that the continuation of hierarchical leadership structures may undermine the development of communities. Hargreaves (2003) and Huberman (1993) both argued that the intense focus on the principal in managerialist models of communities ultimately lowered cognitive goals for both teachers and students, and that collaboration mandated by administration was likely to have limited sustainability.

In addition to building-wide leadership, many collaborations flounder without specific group leadership (Bezzina, 2006), although some small, like-minded groups might not require as much guidance (Hoban et al., 1997; Grossman et al., 2001). Some communities purposefully utilized outside facilitators to help teachers develop a communities' collaborative capacities: in most research studies, these facilitators are university faculty (Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Frey, 2002; Grossman et al., 2001; Thomas et al., 1998), although they may also be paid consultants (Lent, 2007) or classroom teachers on special or additional assignments (Ravitch & Wirth, 2007; Gunn & King, 2003; Westheimer, 1998). Such external and independent intervention might be particularly useful to foster critical reflection (Hargreaves, 2003). It may also be helpful when prior history and established norms of interaction among colleagues renders relationships within the group dysfunctional. However, there can also be unforeseen consequences for leadership from the university setting, who may be repeatedly called on to act as moderators for internal conflicts (Grossman et al., 2001; Thomas et al., 1998). Whether external leadership is provided by principals, university researchers, or consultants, there is some agreement that in order to develop sustainable groups, external leadership must be conscious of providing support without fostering dependence or surveillance, and clearly articulating roles and expectations (Scribner et al., 2007; Ravitch & Wirth, 2007; Butler et al., 2004; Handal & Lauvas, 1987). Additionally leaders must develop capacities in facilitation, coordination, and interpersonal communication, while also finding ways to support an "enabling" autonomy for communities in contrast to the disabling isolation common in many traditional schools (Scribner et al., 2007; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Huberman, 1993).

However, from the perspective of critical theory, external leadership of teacher communities can be problematic, as it may run the risk of disempowering the teachers' ownership of their own work. In democratic communities, "a good life must be one that people live from the inside, by accepting and identifying it as their own" (Gutmann, 1993, p.8), and thus a democratic learning community requires a model of distributed leadership. Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2004) described the social distribution of leadership as practices which are distributed throughout organizations, not embodied in the behaviors of one individual, and which focus on the interaction between individuals, their interdependencies, and their decision making through collaborative dialogue. While some models of teacher community expect that a natural outcome of collaboration will be redistributed leadership from administration to teachers, they do not give any specifics of the process by which distributed leadership might be developed within teams (Lent, 2007; Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, 2002). Other researchers have found that teachers may be uncomfortable with leadership roles required for successful collaborations, such as making decisions about group focus or task organization (Joyce, 2004; Supovitz, 2002; Westheimer, 1998).

Despite the structural supports required to build community, Westheimer (1998) reported that "Educators—and ironically progressive educators who value communities in particular—worry about imposed structures. They assume that enduring structures are authoritarian or condescending and pit them against notions of professionalism and commitment to a democratic workplace" (p. 143). Similarly, Joyce (2004) argued that the conflicts with leadership in teacher communities stem from the egalitarian and autonomous norms of practice within the teaching profession as a whole, and suggested that teachers need to study the patterns of their own collaboration from within to uncover ways to make it successful under their own leadership.

Gunn & King (2003) embodied such an insider study. It was co-authored by a university researcher and a teacher with ten years experience in an interdisciplinary teaching team at an urban arts high school, and offers insight into the evolution of one team's leadership structures. Teachers on this team were able to reach consensus on some significant issues of pedagogy, but even within a seemingly democratic structure there were struggles with power. The study described three phases of leadership in the evolution of this group: consolidated power, laissez-faire power, and shared power. The period of consolidated power was marked by one central team leader with significant decision making authority. As the group had no norms for

constructive feedback or criticism and feared incurring the disapproval of the leader, the leadership structures hindered reflective dialogue, and resulted in a continued privacy of practice. In the second phase, laissez-faire power, a new leader was appointed to the group, and relaxed many of the authoritative norms. However, there was still little critical reflection and thus the relaxation of expectations resulted again in a continued privacy of practice. This laissez-faire structure again prevented substantial questions from being asked, and clear and common understandings of teaching and learning from emerging.

The emergence of shared power in this group came with the addition of two new members. Within this new dynamic, Gunn introduced a substantial question about the role of essay writing in developing students critical thinking abilities, and shared a specific example from his classroom. There was dissent on the team regarding the practice of essay writing, but when a new member supported Gunn's questioning, a new precedent for deliberating central philosophical issues was initiated. Over the course of the next year, three of the four teachers went on to collaborate on the development of common assessments and expectations for student writing. The fourth teacher declined invitations to collaborate on the project. When asked for feedback on the common assessments, he first agreed to the expectations, but later argued that he disagreed with the more normative view of writing that the common assessments suggested. Although a lack of full consensus at the end of this period of study may suggest to some a failure to reach community, the continuation of dissent and deliberation might also suggest the tenets of democratic community had been upheld. Such forms of distributed leadership may not have comfortable resolutions, and certainly demand more from all community members; but without dissent and dialogue to drive understanding, teacher communities may indeed remain stagnant and ineffective.

Generative conflict

Confronting one another across differences means that we must change ideas about how we learn; rather than fearing conflict we have to find ways to use it as a catalyst for new thinking, for growth. --bell hooks, 1994, p. 113

A model of distributed leadership appropriate to democratic communities anticipates the theoretical and empirical findings of critical researchers: conflict and dissent, while challenging for the development of communities, is also a necessary prerequisite for transformation of practice (Little, 2003; Achinstein, 2002; Ball & Cohen, 1999; Westheimer, 1998; Little, 1990). Freire's (1970) metaphor of a banking model of education, in which the

teacher deposits fixed and finite quantities of knowledge into the receptacle of a student's mind is predicated upon stasis and hierarchical authority. This image just as accurately describes traditional workshop models of professional development. In these models, there is no dissent, there is no dialogue, and therefore there is little that can be educative (Freire, 1970; Dewey, 1916; Gutmann, 1993).

If teacher communities are to accomplish transformative work within democratic structures, dissent must come from within teams through a process of critical reflection. Dewey (1916) defined reflection as making the "what" and "how" of connections conscious; the opposite is "routine or capricious behavior," which refuses its responsibility for the future consequences of present actions, while "Reflection is the acceptance of such responsibility" (p. 140). Reflection has been described as a thought process initiated in doubt, confusion, or surprise, which then moves into questioning assumed knowledge, seeking possible alternatives, experimenting, and additional reflecting on that experimentation (Dewey, 1916; Schon, 1987). One critique of these models of reflection is that change is only a possible outcome of reflection, while a primary feature of critical reflection would be the conscious aim of change and improvement (Socket & LaPage, 2002, p. 165). Socket & LaPage stipulated that what is needed is a conception of critical reflection which evolves from merely description of or self-justification for actions, to productive self-criticism (Socket & LaPage, 2002, p. 164). They posited that productive self-criticism would contain language of change and improvement, aim to improve relationships with children, and intrinsically value the process of reflection (p. 165-6). Critical reflection should also maintain a conscious aim of uniting the practical and theoretical aspects of teaching (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Freire, 1998; Huberman, 1993; Handal & Lauvas, 1987)

In order to make critical reflection available as a resource for individual and community development, it must be made public through critical dialogue. Dialogue is essential to critical pedagogy, as it is to collaboration and community building; thus multiple critical theorists have explored the significance of dialogue. Dewey (1916) argued that communication was the basis for all learning, and that both individual identity and social empathy develop from the "free give and take of intercourse" (p. 118). Likewise, Bakhtin (1986) theorized that all thought "is born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others' thoughts" (p.92). Freire (1970) defined dialogue as the "encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world" (p. 88) and stated that "Without dialogue there is no true communication, and without communication there can be no true education." (p. 92-93). Simultaneously, Freire's

critical pedagogy is based on "invention and reinvention" (p. 72), a demythologizing of the old ways and the emergence of new possibilities through which we recreate ourselves and our world. Freire argued that such dialogues require love, humility, faith, hope, and critical thinking—aspects which again correspond to the relationship building required of community.

 Grossman et al. (2001) posited that successful collaborations would also contain evidence of distributed expertise: knowledge and ways of knowing within a community would shift from "distributed cognition" in which each individual supplied different aspects of the group's knowledge, to "cognition distributed" in which the knowledge was redistributed and available to all individuals within a group (p. 975). Such a process would again require dialogue. Although stated in a variety of forms by different researchers, a central question that should form the foundation of critical dialogues in teacher communities attempts to bridge theory and practice: "Is what we are doing consistent with what we believe?" (Westheimer, 1998).   It is the humility of such questions and doubts that will make talk possible (Hargreaves, 2003, p.183).

 Several empirical studies have also described the generative possibilities of conflict that can develop through critical, dialogic reflection within teacher communities. Westheimer (1998) was encouraged by the ways that teachers in the more collectively oriented community publicly embraced and debated their philosophical and pedagogical conflicts, rather than avoiding them as was typical within the more liberal collaborative group. Westheimer found that such deliberations supported the development and valuation of individuals and thus avoided the more normative elements of community building: "Through interaction and participation within the community, identities emerge, and individuality (as difference) is embraced rather than suppressed" (Westheimer, 1998, p.147). Likewise, teachers participating in an interdisciplinary book club of English and Social Studies teachers (Grossman et al, 2001) experienced generative conflicts through dialogues about the texts they were reading. Although initially this group was divided by beliefs about reading grounded in distinct disciplinary traditions, over an extended time, the teachers began to engage in conversations that indicated a redistribution of epistemological knowledge about reading that could inform classroom practices. Little (2003) also observed a math team's weekly planning meeting where a routine "check-in" procedure initiated a debate regarding the dilemma of developing teaching practices that could address the needs of both "fast" and "slow" learners. Disagreements within the group began a questioning of these categorical beliefs, although the pressures of time and desire to stay "on task" seemed to limit the depth of the conversation. Little concluded that "The tensions and

internal contradictions threaded through the talk both open up and constrain possibilities to consider practice in deep or critical ways" (Little, 2003, p. 929).

Achinstein's (2002) ethnographic case studies of two middle schools where school-wide collaboration was practiced provided an important model of generative conflict. Her interpretive framework focused on three central features: a conception of conflict as a process, not a singular event; an assumption that conflict is inherent in teacher communities due to traditional norms of teaching and tensions between individual and community norms; and the "border politics" communities establish demarcating which people and ideas belong, boundaries made visible by conflicts. The first school in her study, Washington, focused more on maintaining a semblance of harmony through conflict avoidance. The adults in the school tended to blame students' deficiencies on the students rather than seek new ways of understanding the problems of schooling. Meanwhile, Chavez Middle School was more about change and activism, and used conflicts to explore diverse possibilities for change.   Achinstein argued that there was a parallel between conflict avoidance, unified but exclusive grouping, mainstream/ congruent thinking and stasis; meanwhile, embracing conflict, diverse / inclusive borders, and critical ideology, was associated with change. Achinstein termed such a process "constructive controversy": "New types of learning are possible because dissent fosters divergent thought processes, opens up possibilities, and questions the previously unquestionable" (p. 448). Significantly, such processes also combat the general concern of communities becoming too normative (Lavié, 2006; Westheimer, 1998; Huberman, 1993). At the same time, the teachers engaged in conflicts and change at Chavez struggled with the additional burdens that entailed: stress, burnout, turnover, and strains on interpersonal relationships between teachers. This is an important reminder that innovation and collaboration is often emotionally charged (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Little, 2003), and that the critical components of reflection must also attend to the affective needs of all individuals within a community.

These empirical findings regarding the potential of generative conflict verify that understanding conflict "is crucial and underexplored" in research on teacher communities (Achinstein, 2002, p.422). Conflicts may foster important changes in individual or community practices, but will also challenge the resources and relations required for sustainable communities. If researchers and reformers commit to the development of teacher communities, they must do so anticipating that there will be conflict, and that both the

"enabling and constraining" elements of teachers' collaborative practices will need to be better understood in order to achieve meaningful changes in schools (Little, 2003, p. 939).

Conclusions

> Until the goals, conditions, and processes for community-building are made more explicit and more is learned about how to nurture such communities, organizational reforms designed to facilitate stronger teacher communities may be misguided, producing further disappointment over improving schools. --Westheimer, 1998, p.29

It is hoped that this critical review of existing knowledge begins to assist in the process of clarifying what is know and unknown, promising and problematic in the development of teacher communities. First, it is incumbent upon researchers, reformers, and practitioners alike to be aware that historically, teaching has been a profession enacted in isolation. The disruption of these norms of isolation and autonomy, as existed in the Lafayette Falls High School English 12 team for over a decade, is itself notable and a worthy object of study. However, as the norms of collegiality may vary significantly from site to site, team to team, and even task to task, I have determined for this study that I will refer to the LFHS English 12 team's work as *collaboration* for the duration of this inquiry. This is a conscious and somewhat conservative choice which allows that while we may have achieved consistent and interdependent joint work as the following chapters will describe, we were constantly struggling with how to live out the tensions inherent in our team, and in collaborative practice generally. How well we fulfilled the commitments of a democratic community is a question which I will take up in the closing chapter.

The second key idea that prior theoretical and empirical work on teacher community has yielded is that the development of sustained teacher collaboration has been encouraged by a diverse range of discourses. To fail to recognize that there are significant epistemological differences between models of communities may result in continued confusion over the fundamental conceptions of community building, and in the propagation of ineffective or inequitable communities. While aspects of each of the discourses presented here offer important and powerful arguments for teacher community development, their promotion of competing models of communities can result in incoherence and conflict over the aims for collaborative work in schools.

Next, power and conflict will always complicate the development of collaborative communities (Gunn & King, 2003; Achinstein, 2002). Collaborations which ignore their conflicts

will not become effective communities. Instead, communities need to utilize generative conflicts as an opening into a critical reflective process by which new understandings of practice may emerge both for the classroom and for the community itself.   As such, I argue that the most promising models for teacher collaborations are democratic. Such visions offer a means for living with the central tensions between individual autonomy and collective responsibility. Democratic communities exhibit concern for individual and minority views, and therefore, beliefs and collaborative practices which encourage distributed leadership, critical reflection oriented to improvement in practices, and dialogue. Models which do not strive for these goals will likely result in communities which are more normative and traditional in their approaches to teaching and learning from those which are innovative and more equitable.

Finally, there is a need for additional research in a number of aspects of the teacher community movement. Despite thirty years of critique, sustained teacher collaborations have remained rare. Teacher collaborations have generally been perceived as ephemeral or brittle, and greater understanding of the roles that conflicts play in both sustaining and constraining joint work would benefit administrators, facilitators, and practitioners alike. Specifically, there is a need for inquiry into long standing collaborations to uncover the means through which such teams manage and mitigate the inherent tensions which exist within their work, and the ongoing challenges groups face in developing and sustaining democratic practices. Furthermore, the links between teacher collaboration and student learning are still tenuous. The extant research suggests that deprivatization of teaching practice indicates the most promising results in student learning, however the process of deprivatization within teacher communities has remained rare and been underexplored in qualitative analysis. Such practices are also likely to be the most conflict laden aspects of collaborations for many teachers who were socialized into norms of professional individualism.

Most concerning, there remains a lack of research from within teacher communities. Only two of the studies located for this review were authored by teacher researchers explicitly investigating their own practices. Understandings of teacher communities need to occur both from within and from without if we hope to understand how better to nurture their growth in our schools. However, ultimately collaborative work has to be sustained from the inside in order to offer a lasting and empowering alternative to the faddish, top-down workshop models of teacher development.   Teachers need to be committed to the benefits of collaboration, at the same time that they are realistic about its costs and complexities. Such understanding will

be best achieved when teachers' inquire into their own practices of collegiality in an effort to improve them. Such work presupposes a research methodology which can accommodate a re-conception of the traditional relationships between the researcher and her object of study. As I will explore in the next chapter, only action research affords such a model.

Chapter 3 :

Going by the Way of Questions:

A Methodology for Action Research in a Teacher Collaboration

In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not.

T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets,* 1943

I first read this poem at age twenty-one in the context of a senior capstone seminar on narrative theory with one of my favorite undergraduate professors. That course was the first time that I felt the intellectual force of theory not as merely a tool for literary analysis, but as a tool for analysis of the world and my self within it. Looking back at my annotations from that time doesn't suggest it, but for some reason this collection of poems stuck with me.

Now I have been teaching for just over a decade, but I no longer know if I can call myself a teacher. I have been researching for slightly less than that decade, but I am not yet comfortable calling myself a researcher either. I do not even know what to call the high school where I spent the majority of this last decade: is it my school? my research site? a pseudonym? The feelings of doubt, loss and displacement I felt after my last graduation, when I left the comfort of my first intellectual home, are beginning to creep in as I prepare for another series of departures. But this poem now suggests to me the implication that such departures have for growth.

In these most recent years of formal study, I have come to believe that teaching and researching are twin processes, not well served by the affixed titles *teacher* or *researcher*. These processes should include ongoing departures into what I do not know: the questions I cannot yet answer. In such questions, arrivals are always already new departures. However, I also have an insatiable desire for coherence; for seeking the continuities that exist between apparently disparate worlds. I hope to live a life where my work educating, researching, mothering, and partnering are not constantly at odds with each other, but that the knowledge and values gained in one process of becoming sustain and provoke me in the others. My family, my colleagues, my students, and my self all warrant as much. These commitments to the people, to the questions, and to the process, have led me to seek a way to research that keep those values coherent.

Thus the task in this chapter is to attempt to make coherent the methodology of my research: to explain the beliefs that lead to the questions that lead to the tools that will lead to more questions. My challenge in this chapter though is not only to delineate a coherent methodology, but also try to find a voice for this writing that honors these values. I have always been comfortable with the distanced voice of academia; synthesizing others' words and voices gives me cover. This has been as true of my writing as my teaching in many respects. If this work is going to push my understanding of myself, my researching, and my teaching forward, this is an attempt I will have to make: to make myself present in the process regardless of the discomfort, and find a way for my voice to coexist with those of the colleagues, theorists and researchers from whose work my own questions are partially derived.

In mid-December in 2007, my adviser, Tim, asked me why I saw my research as action research. What would make my work different from any other interpretivist project? In the context of our meeting, I nodded and agreed, and fumbled for any type of coherent defense. As I reflected over the next few days however, I was frustrated and my confidence was shaken. This seemed like a major flaw with my entire research design, and one I felt ill equipped to address. I did two things simultaneously to attempt to address this question: 1. I focused my reading around it, and 2. I asked other people to talk about it with me, most importantly, my research participants. The process of that exploration has led me to a better understanding of action research, including some of its conflicts and cogencies with interpretive research. It has reaffirmed for me the ethical commitments of action research, and the necessity of studying teacher communities through this type of process. However, it has also required that I re-examine many of the plans and processes I had been employing as the research began.

This chapter will begin by examining action research as a strategy of inquiry. Action research presupposes a need for a revision of the traditional methodology organization; some categories are collapsed, others must take greater prominence. Then, I will turn to a more thorough description of the site, Lafayette Falls High School, and the five English 12 team members who generously allowed me to inquire into our work together. In this way, I hope to foreground the people and the place where this work occurred. Only after an introduction to our team can I turn to a further elucidation of my research questions as they evolved in the context of our collaboration. I will narrate the evolution of my research methods, the tools of inquiry and analysis I brought to trying to understand and improve our work. Finally, I will end

with a discussion of the ethical constraints I encountered, validity criteria for action research, and the limitations that were most relevant to this project.

Why was this Action Research?: Strategies of Inquiry

One of the important realizations I have come to about action research is that it is subject to many of the same critiques and conflicts that problematize the object of this study, teacher communities.   There is a confusing diversity of terminologies and practices that can be grouped under the umbrella of action research: practitioner research, teacher research, participatory action research, self-study, and auto-ethnography; and a wide variety of discourses that have been used to justify and shape the varying processes of conducting such studies (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Zeichner, 2001; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Hollingsworth, 1999; Kemmis, 1999; Anderson, Herr, & Nihin, 1994). Zeichner (2001) points to numerous variations in purpose, motivation, sponsorship, contexts, forms and contents of action research that undoubtedly lead to a lot of the confusion regarding its premises and validity. Prominently, action research models have been described as differing along divisions of Habermasian interests:

- technical models: aim to control, to make existing situations more efficient and effective
- practical models: aim to understand, and frequently promote discourses of teacher professionalism
- emancipatory models: aim for the release of human potential, to develop consciousness of repression through investigation of ideology and power (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Kemmis, 1999)

While this construct resonates with me philosophically, and I acknowledge my own desire to lean toward emancipatory models, I am also not convinced that, when individual practitioners, including myself, delve into research, we would not have conflicting interests, or complementary ones. Many practitioners might simultaneously have interest in all three of these goals, as well as variously directing their change efforts at personal, institutional, or societal levels (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Hollingsworth, 1999; Kemmis, 1999). Productivity, rationality, and justice (Kemmis, 1999) are all understandable goals for action researchers, and they need each other to keep traditional divides between theory and practice in balance: it

would be the neglect of any which might result in pathology. Unfortunately, like the teacher community movement, the burgeoning popularity of action research has lead to co-optations: watered down, over-simplifications of the challenges of such work, which have likely also contributed to critique of it in parts of the academy (Zeichner, 2003; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

The diversity of action research models and the unique circumstances of this project lead to some specific need for clarifications regarding my definition. I deliberately use the term *action research*, for both philosophical and pragmatic reasons. Pragmatically, during this particular year of study, I was not a teacher in my department. I cannot lay claims to the responsibilities that my teaching colleagues had, and do not wish to obfuscate the contexts under which this study was conducted by presuming to call this project "teacher research." The specificity of my focus on the teacher community of which I am a member also precluded calling this type of project "participatory action research." Although I certainly desire to illicit a range of perspectives during the project, the connotations of participatory action research would indicate a focus beyond the immediate context of the school, which is not currently the intention of this work. Finally, action research is the most widely recognized verbalization of this concept, which can admittedly be both a blessing and a curse. Action research narrowly construed as a traditional cycle of "plan-act-observe-reflect," can be overly normative, and underestimate the significance of attitudinal changes for developing practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Nias, 1991). I am sympathetic to those who therefore prefer to use practitioner research, teacher research, or self-study in order to indicate this broader range of possibilities, and strongly considered selecting "practitioner research" myself. But in an academy that is already skeptical of this family of research practices, it seems safest for now to utilize the most familiar name for this work, and focus instead on defining the tenets as I will inhabit them as opposed to inventing a new label for it.

Philosophically, I also intend to highlight the nature of this type of project as *action* research as distinct from either positivist or interpretivist paradigms as they have been applied to the study of teaching and learning. Teaching has traditionally been studied under a process/ product or behaviorist approach which to a large extent objectifies, isolates, and attempts to control both teachers' and learners' behaviors (Erickson, 1986; Lave, 1996). The interpretivist paradigm represents a significant departure from the process-product model of teaching in most respects; it aims to acknowledge and understand the dynamic social processes at work in

teaching and learning, and in particular to investigate the meanings that construct and are constructed by human actions in social settings (Erickson, 1986; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Taft, 1999). However, the immediate goals of interpretivist research seem to rest with understanding the teaching and learning situation, through "thick description" (Geertz, 1973 in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000), and an orientation toward "discovery and verification" (Taft, 1999, p. 119). Although I believe that all of us dedicated to educational research have the ultimate object of improvement and reform for the benefit of students and society, this is not the immediate object of either product-product nor interpretivist work in the moment by moment world of the researcher.

In contrast, the immediacy and responsivity of action research mirrors teaching itself, and may account for some of the resonance this paradigm has with practitioners, myself included. Anderson, Herr, & Nihin (1994), while acknowledging the utility of many interpretivist methods in action research, declared that three specific features distinguish action research from interpretivist research, and thus indicated the emergence of a third paradigm of educational research. They argued that action research differs from interpretivist work in three interrelated ways: 1. it is conducted by insiders in an action-oriented setting; 2. it gives prominence to change in practices or institutions over description of them; and 3. it is primarily, but not exclusively, intended for an audience of practitioners (pp. xx-xxi). While each of these factors shapes action research and will be addressed more completely later in this chapter, I believe that it is the focus on ongoing and emergent change and improvement in the immediate social setting that most sharply contrasts action research with interpretivist work.

Interpretivist research acknowledges that participant observers, as social actors in their sites, do influence their setting, and are influenced by it (Taft, 1999); yet, this is not the primary object of the research, but a confounding factor. In action research, the desires to improve one's own practices and the lives of those working and learning in the immediacy of daily life within a social institution are the main objects, motivations and ethical commitments of the research (Herr & Anderson, 2005). To frame this personally, I consider any knowledge generated by this project to be first for the sake of improving my own collaborations, as well as the collaborations in my own group, in my department, and my school. It is a secondary motivation that this work would be of utility to other practitioners and researchers committed to developing, improving and understanding teacher communities and collaborations in their own local sites. I recognize that this is an uneasy fit with the tradition of the dissertation

process: it is also the reality of the dissertation requirement that drives the motivation to complete a rigorous accounting of our work. But the ethical commitment I must make by framing this as action research requires that the good of the team, and ultimately our students, remains the central focus of the project.

The second aspect of action research that distinguishes it from interpretivist paradigms is the insider status of the researcher. The distinctions here are more nuanced than they have been described by many supporters of action researchers. First, action research and interpretivist research both employ participation observation as one of their primary methods of data collection (Erickson, 1986; Anderson, Herr, & Nihin, 1994). It would be an oversimplification of the demands of both paradigms to suggest that a traditional ethnographer is a detached observer while the action researcher is a full participant (Taft, 1999). In each research situation, the social role of the investigator will vary along the continuum between observer and participant; in each, the role is likely an obtrusive one; and in each, the investigator functions as the primary interpreter (Erickson, 1986; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Taft, 1999).

However, there are also important methodological differences resulting from the relative positionality of studying as an insider versus an outsider. Researching as an insider has consequences that may not resonate as strongly for outsiders. There are additional constraints of propriety and ethics, in negotiating consent, access, and public dissemination of the research (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Taft, 1999). There are also hermeneutical distinctions: while insiders may a have a depth of tacit knowledge about their site that can enrich their interpretations and nuance their actions, the insider researcher must find methods through which to transcend the taken-for- granted aspects of their own experience and practice (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Huberman, 1996; Ravitch & Wirth, 2007; Taft, 1999). Additionally, Huberman (1996) noted the epistemological and ethical dilemmas of insider positioning in research:

> Teacher researchers are close to the situation, and they can actually watch it unravel; they generate hypotheses as they go and then make inferences when they see how things turn out. Most conventional researchers, even fanatics of participant observation, do not enjoy these conditions—being close can mean being too close and losing perspective. Moreover, being close and having real power to define the situation makes it easier to confirm one's hypotheses and make one's inferences far more plausible, without anyone around to see the strings being pulled, consciously or not. (p.132)

The positioning of me as an insider researcher thus demands a more thorough and pervasive reflexivity: an accounting of my positionality, my power, my deliberations and my choices at all stages of the research. Much like the distinctions with purpose and orientation toward immediate and ongoing improvement described above, action research shares with interpretivist research a need to account for the investigator's role, but in action research this need is foregrounded, not backgrounded (Ravitch & Wirth, 2007).

Additionally, while many researchers prefer to label action research as providing an "emic perspective" I am not. In part, I am sensitive to Huberman's (1996) philosophical critique, that an emic perspective becomes a fiction in any attempt to make it public. It also seems that frequently emic perspectives are lauded over etic ones as somehow inherently better. I do not want to be so naïve. I was just one of almost 3400 individuals who worked and studied in my school site, and one of six teachers in my focal group. There was no singular emic truth possible, only a diversity of emic perspectives, which I intended to do my best to honor. Likewise, I agree that there is a use for both insider and outsider perspectives on teaching (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p.53); but mine is not a relativist position. Like parallel movements in feminist methodologies and critical ethnography, I believe that research on teaching has too frequently silenced and objectified teachers, perhaps because of the history of teaching as feminine work (Harding, 1987; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Lave, 1996; Huberman, 1996). "By making problematic the relationships of researcher and researched, knowledge and authority, and subject and object" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p.43), action research and other critical paradigms can begin to address such biases in the knowledge base about teaching. This work can be done by both insiders and outsiders "studying up" rather than "studying down" and continually questioning their own role in shaping the nature of the inquiry (Harding, 1987, p. 8-9). However, action research as a methodology must make this reflexivity central in ways that a more traditional interpretivist approach might not.

Given these philosophical commitments for this project, my working definition of action research thus includes the following components:

- Research conducted by insider(s) into his/ her/ their own social practices and institutions
- Research undertaken in order to improve and understand the practices and situations within that social institution

- Research that requires reflexivity: deliberate and systematic self-reflection by the researcher, particularly with respect to how relationships, power, and ideology shape the research.

This definition borrows heavily from Kemmis (1999; citing Kemmis & McTaggert, 1988) and from Herr & Anderson (2005), but with two important distinctions. First, I am deliberately not including the traditional cycle of action research: plan-act-observe-reflect. Although this cycle undoubtedly plays a role in many projects, including my own, I do not wish to suggest a narrow adherence to this linear model as an overall initial design for this project. Each week's interaction with my co-collaborators enacted these multiple phases, much as I believe it should be present in the everyday life of all teaching. But my experience of action research as a methodology was much less linear than the traditional cycle suggests.

Second, Kemmis (1999 and Kemmis & McTaggert, 1988) particularly emphasized that action research must be collaborative, while others allow for both individual and collaborative action research (Baumann & Duffy, 2001; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Zeichner, 2001). Given that the object of this study was a collaboration of teachers, collaboration was obviously a vital component of multiple aspects of the project. The learning and analysis that I achieved was guided by and tested against the interpretations of my collaborators. However, there is also a need to acknowledge the reality of this project as a dissertation, undertaken with cooperation and support from numerous sources, yet ultimately my personal and individual responsibility to complete. As such, I do not currently feel like I can include collaboration as an exclusive distinguishing criterion of this action research methodology. Collaboration functions here instead as a test of the validity of the project (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 1994), not an *a priori* characteristic.

Setting

I turn next to the exposition of setting and character: an introduction to the context of our department, school, and district, then our team members and our history.

Lafayette Falls High School

First time visitors to Lafayette Falls High School always comment on its enormity. I always warn guests to avoid the halls during passing time—that is unless they want to experience a crush of adolescent humanity.

Located in the outer suburbs of a major Midwestern metropolitan area, in the largest school district in the state, LFHS occupies a sprawling facility nearly a quarter mile long.   Built in the early 1990s, before Columbine and the Gates Foundation prompted serious reconsideration of school size, LFHS has doubled in size since it first opened its doors fifteen years ago. Its immense brick façade houses one of the largest high schools in the state with over 3000 students enrolled and almost 170 faculty on staff during the 2007-2008 school year.

In kind, the surrounding suburban communities have grown rapidly in the last decade, and have experienced demographic changes in socio-economic, racial, ethnic, and language diversity. The communities in this part of the city were traditionally white and working class, although the last ten years have seen a growth of white collar workers.   Per capita income was $23,297 according to 2000 U.S. Census, the lowest in the metropolitan area, and about 25% of the school's students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Approximately 30% of the building's students are of color, many of these students are immigrants or first generation Americans.

The school has had just three head principals during its fifteen year history. Each administration has demonstrated a willingness to embrace new initiatives such as the four term by four period block schedule, Outcome Based Education, International Baccalaureate, the division of the school into five smaller more intimate houses for all student/ administrative relations, and a weekly advisement program for students with the same instructor from 9th grade through graduation. The current principal, Rita Harare-Lee, is both an energetic and circumspect leader. Rita is a thirty-something woman-of-color, who has made a strong public commitment to closing the achievement gap that exists in our school. Her commitments to issues of equity are evidenced by her re- definition of the school's mission as becoming "a collaborative educational community focused on increased achievement for all," and she initiated a professional learning community (PLC) model building-wide (Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, 2002) just one year into her tenure in support of that vision. It has been clear that work in PLCs is one way in which both curriculum and teaching practices might be responsive to the changing demographics of students at LFHS.   However, given the sheer size of the school and faculty, it may have become more difficult to initiate substantial reforms and to achieve staff consensus about the merits of such reforms.

The faculty is organized, as in most traditional high schools, into large subject area departments. Recent statistics report that 67% of the faculty holds a master's degree or higher; just 2% of the faculty are people of color. The entire faculty co-mingles three times each year:

at the beginning, the holidays, and the end. Even monthly staff meetings have to be split into morning and afternoon sessions. In short, unless someone coaches outside of the school day, or joins a building committee, there are few faculty interactions which occur across departments each year. It would be easy enough to spend an entire year in the building, and still not recognize a fellow teacher. Although at the school's founding deliberate assignment of classrooms integrated the sprawling six wings and two floors of the building across departments, today most departments have consolidated their classrooms together. Departments also occupy rows of paired cubicles in several centralized office locations throughout the building. For the most part, the physical proximity of department members makes the department the most salient level of professional and social organization in the building.

There are a few founding members of the original building faculty still on staff, although most are close to retirement. They speak passionately about the energy and community they felt in those first years. They were the first new high school in twenty years in this district, and the original principal hand selected many of them for a willingness to engage in innovation and change; an attitude perhaps symbolically represented in the selection of the school mascot, the Rebels.

District Context

In contrast to the building history of reform, there is strong pressure to conform to tradition across the district: individual schools are not encouraged to deviate too far from the district mainline in terms of standards, curriculum, textbook purchases, and daily schedules. During the 2005-2006 school year, the district curriculum department purchased and attempted to implement a standardized curriculum for Language Arts in grades six through twelve. Teachers rebelled across the district, and ultimately, that curriculum was removed in the spring of 2007. In the fall of 2007, another new curriculum was implemented for grades six through eleven which draws heavily from the updated textbook series utilized prior to the 2005-2006 option. The writing of this new "formal" curriculum (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) was completed over five days in the summer of 2007, utilizing groups of three to four teachers from across the district per grade level. One of the immediate tasks for the English Department's PLCs during the fall of 2007 was to enact the new district mandates for content and assessments in grades nine through eleven.   The English 12 team had lobbied hard across the district to be

excluded from the standardized textbook purchase; arguing that the traditional British Literature or World Literature textbooks did not offer an appropriate curriculum for contemporary twelfth graders. This position allowed the twelfth grade team one extra year of curricular autonomy before district implementation of a "new" curriculum would occur.

The ongoing tensions between building-based reform, district standardization, and the struggles LFHS faces with avoiding the dehumanizing tendencies of its size, shape the context under which the English department, and the twelfth grade English team in particular, attempted to achieve its collaboration during the 2007-2008 school year.

English Department History

When Lafayette Falls High School opened in the early 1990's, the entire district was restructured from a junior high to a middle school model. About half of the original teachers hired to teach English, came from the district junior highs, while the other half had worked together another district high school. Madeline was one of two junior high teachers who came forward to work as founding department leaders. The culture of the department remained largely divided into these two camps for the first decade of the school's history. When I arrived in the department in the fall of 1997 as a student teacher, the tensions between factions were palpable in all departmental decisions. The factions were marked by the symbolism of "The Wall," (termed such by administration, I believe) the physical divider between the two rows of cubicles occupied by the department staff. One of the reasons I choose not to accept my first offer from LFHS was the discomfort I felt within these micropolitics. Despite this history of intra-departmental conflict, Madeline stayed in the position for fourteen years. I eventually realized that all departments have their histories and their politics, and so when Madeline decided to step down as department leader, I volunteered and was selected to serve in this capacity. I began my former department co-leadership in the spring of 2006, in a very different political climate, and just as professional learning communities became a requirement for all staff. In the last five years, many of the original teachers in our department have retired, quelling much of the conflicts of the past. If there are "two" groups now, one might generally suggest that they are referred to as "the young people" and the "oldies" a dynamic which played out in the twelfth grade team during the research year, but also grossly oversimplifies the complicated and frequently overlapping relationships that have begun to evolve through departmental participation in PLCs.

Team History and Individuals

      The "twelfth grade team," as we call ourselves, is the only ongoing collaborative group in the English department, and as far as I know the entire school, that predated the school-wide adoption of the professional learning community model (Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, 2002) during the 2006-2007 school year. This team was firmly in existence when I first entered the Lafayette Falls community as a student teacher in the fall of 1997, although it has varied in its membership over the past decade as new teachers joined and veteran teachers moved into different assignments. The 2007-2008 group consisted of six teachers, three of us with a decade or more experience in the group, Madeline, Lydia, and myself, and three relatively new members: Sam, who taught one semester with the team during the fall of 2006; Natalie, who first joined the team and school part-time in fall of 2007; and Kathy who student taught in Lydia's classroom during the spring semester of 2008. Thus the context of our group membership was evenly divided between early career (one to three years teaching experience) and veteran (ten or more years). In the individual biographies below, the team is introduced in order of duration of experience within the team.

The veterans

      Madeline Jorgensen is the outspoken but politically savvy self-described "historian" (Interview, 6.4.08) of our group.   She has thirty five years of teaching experience, and was a founding department leader when Lafayette Falls High School opened in the early 1990s. She is the daughter of two teachers, and her wealth of knowledge from local connections, district and building history, and institutional subtleties was frequently shared with less experienced teachers, most frequently in narrative form.   Her quick blue eyes rarely miss a detail; and while she loves to laugh, travel, and attend the theater, she is a workaholic who takes teaching literature very seriously.

      Madeline was my cooperating teacher in 1997, and was instrumental in my hiring at LFHS in fall 1999. Her only daughter is just a few years younger than myself, and although our relationship could easily have evolved in a more hierarchical or maternal way, she is the tough, knowledgeable older sister I don't have, but always wanted. Madeline's extensive contacts throughout the larger educational community facilitated my own involvement with the local NCTE affiliate, and encouraged me to begin my graduate studies at the same university she had attended for her own. After a heart attack in 2003, she decided to step down from the stresses

of department leadership, and I stepped in. The transition of leadership was voted on by the department and approved by the principal, but it was a transition that was and is nurtured by Madeline's willingness to mentor me. She has been a friend and role model to me throughout the last decade in many aspects of my personal and professional life. She retired after the 2008-2009 school year, a timing that coincided with my own departure from the LFHS.

Lydia Kramer has been a less conspicuous member of the English department, but has probably been the most instrumental in the recent re-development of our team's curriculum in her role as a consistent agitator for change and improvement. She has fifteen years experience teaching, most of it at LFHS. Her work with both a concurrent college/ high school enrollment called College in the Schools (CIS) and International Baccalaureate (IB) college prep programs has provided outside sources of professional knowledge that she has continually shared with all of us. She is a mom of two school-aged boys, and a stepmom to two more. She is quick to cry and to laugh; both of which frame her relationships with us in the team. Her petite frame and reserved manner with other teachers in the department masks the quiet confidence she carries in the classroom, and the intellectual rigor she brings to our curricular collaborations.

I grew up in this department. The decade I spent in and out of LFHS marked my transition from late adolescence to adulthood. I cried in the parking lot before my first day of student teaching at 22. I turned down their first job offer in a naïve quest for independence over interdependence at 23. I had to write my first very awkwardly political letter to the principal at 24, asking to be reconsidered for a position. I had realized in the year away that the independence I had sought turned out to be a demoralizing isolation, even though I can only name this now. I got married and started graduate school at 25, and spent the next five years feeding my team a steady diet of educational theory and ideas for practice which I was reading about. I remained the baby of the department until I was 28. At 30, I found out I was pregnant just before a hellish district meeting about the pre-packaged curriculum being forced onto our department. When I had to leave the meeting out of frustration and confusion, Madeline came with me, and I cried again as I told her, because I knew now that I had to be a grown-up for real. At 31, a naïve new mom, I also stepped into the role of department co-leader, a role that presented an expanded perspective on the workings of our school as an institution, but also one that overwhelmed me personally and professionally, as I struggled to understand how I might provide meaningful professional development, mentoring, and community building opportunities for our entire department without receiving any additional time during the school

day with which to achieve those goals. Ultimately, that dilemma led to a request for the sabbatical year during which I completed my remaining graduate coursework, supervised student teachers from the university, conducted the "official" data collection for this action research project, and continued to serve as a department co-leader.

Madeline, Lydia and myself have developed close personal and professional relationships over the past decade. We have supported each other personally through births, divorces, and heart attacks. We have a joke that we could step into each others' classes and teach on a moments' notice; during personal and professional emergencies, we have. In the summer of 2002, we traveled together to England on a professional development grant, and spent two weeks seeing Shakespearean plays on stage and driving to literary sites all over the countryside. We created a video introduction to Shakespeare that included photographs and artifacts from our tour, and have used it a as part of our own instruction ever since. This last fall, we traveled to New York to attend a National Council of English Teachers convention, where we attempted to balance our professional interests attending sessions with our love of exploring the sites and tastes of new places together. In the summers and on breaks, we always make time to meet for breakfast and talk shop outside the shop; during the school year, we frequent the local theater scene as energy allows.

Over the last several years, we were able to move ourselves into adjacent classrooms and cubicles in the communal staff offices, which meant we could easily share resources and steal moments to reflect and share between classes. During passing time, we can almost always be found in hallway huddles, usually regarding the instructional successes and failings of the day's lesson. We frequently revise and revamp lesson plans midstream, based on each others' observations and revelations. Our late afternoon planning meetings and debriefings about our classroom discussions were a running joke within the department for years.   We all share a love of media studies as well as literature, an interest that has shaped our twelfth grade curriculum significantly. During a typical 30 minutes lunch, we can be found discussing the latest turn of events on *Lost* or *Project Runway*, or reviewing and recommending recent film releases. I know that all three of us have expressed at various moments over the last decade that we could not have survived the demands of this job without the support of each other. I love the passion and intellect that both Madeline and Lydia bring to their work, and felt the loss of my daily connections to them both as I stepped outside my classroom for my sabbatical year, and anticipate my departure into higher education.

As much as I may not have survived teaching without the professional and personal support of Madeline and Lydia, as I began to imagine my role as a department leader, mentor, and teacher educator, I also began to wonder whether or not we could open our collaboration to others. Were we a private club? An enclave of professional cronies who policed our borders to keep out "the wrong sort of English teachers" (Huberman, 1993; Achinstein, 2002)? As much as I hated the idea, I had to admit, we must have looked like this to the rest of the department.

Although all grade levels typically have had a representative participate in the hiring of new teachers, twelfth grade hires have typically been screened for philosophical compatibility with the existing group, particularly with respect to collaborative orientations. Additionally, as Madeline served as a department leader for the first fourteen years of the school's history, and I currently serve in that role, we have both had a hand in creating schedules that can facilitate or constrain team membership. In past years, when collaboration was not a building requirement, we have facilitated "out" two teachers who chose to remain outside of our norms of collaboration. These were not forced changes, they at least seemed mutually agreed upon; but if someone didn't click philosophically, intellectually, or collaboratively, those teachers haven't stayed in the grade level, and we have a hand in helping people find those other positions. As I look back, these moves seem connected to conflicts over both "unified philosophies" and "unified practices" of collaboration quite intimately (Little, 2003) on one hand; and on the other, are reminiscent of the more normative and coercive aspects of communities on the other (Huberman, 1993; Westheimer, 1998; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Grossman, Wineburg & Woolworth, 2001; Achinstein, 2002; Hargreaves, 2003).

However, beginning in 2006, participation in a professional learning community was required of all teachers in the school. While this new institutional requirement legitimized our elective collaboration, and set aside time in every week within the duty day for this work, it also meant that membership was no longer elective. Could we also collaborate with new teachers effectively? Ultimately, if we valued our work, if the collective knowledge we had generated would live on in any way which might combat the ephemeral realities of teaching (Shulman, 1987), was going to have any longevity or legacy, it depended on this: on finding and nurturing the new teachers who would inevitably replace us. The complexity of these dynamics concerned me at the outset of the research year, and where of particular interest given that our newest team members were all early career teachers, and added diversity to what had been a fairly homogenous group of three white, middle class, heterosexual women.

The early career teachers

Sam Carter is a single, white, male in his mid- twenties, who taught part-time at LFHS for two years, received a full-time position beginning in 2007-2008, and finally earned his tenure at the end of that school year. He is a sharp witted, slightly sarcastic guy, a trait that occasionally has gotten him in trouble with veteran female members of the department, but that frequently garners laughs in our team meetings. He completed an English undergraduate program, and had just finished his post-baccalaureate licensure program before being hired by LFHS. Sam shares a love of media and television with the three veteran women, and over the past years regularly sought us out to discuss our shared tastes, as well as curriculum. Sam floated socially between the veterans and the "young people," although I sometimes worried that his sharp wit and growing association with Madeline, Lydia, and myself have caused some social tensions with some of the younger teachers.

Natalie Steward is a slender African-American woman in her early 30's. She is mom to a toddler son, although she rarely spoke about her family unless explicitly asked in our meetings. She seemed shy, earnest, and stressed during most of the research year, but she has a ready laugh and increasingly asked questions and shared her teaching concerns with the rest of the group. Natalie had one year prior teaching experience in a junior high, and was a last second addition to the twelfth grade team in late August. She was hired by a district alternative program where she taught in the morning, and was assigned to cover one open afternoon section of English 12 grade at LFHS each semester of 2007-2008. Fortunately, her hectic schedule did allow her to participate in our weekly team meetings on Wednesday afternoons. However, the demands of her split teaching schedule, her graduate coursework, and her family responsibilities also meant that she had to do more with less time, and fewer opportunities to work or socialize with the team outside of that time each week.

An additional factor in Natalie's relationship within the group was that she was the only one who did not originally major in English or Communications as an undergraduate, but in Family Science and Social Work. This gave her a perspective on teaching that was arguably more student centered than any of the rest of the team. However, this almost meant that almost all the texts taught in the English 12 course were brand new to her, and this perhaps accounts for what has seemed to me to be a lack of confidence in her own interpretations of texts both in the early team meetings and in her classroom. At the same time, Natalie was clearly committed to the overall design of the twelfth grade course: she designed a master's thesis project that

would investigate the ways that students use the critical theories which structure our course to make sense of their real life experiences.

Natalie's role and positioning in the group is complex given a myriad of other factors, but I am also aware that all of these are also complicated with issues of race. Early in the year, Madeline explicitly articulated her belief that as a new teacher of color, Natalie's mentoring carried additional social and political importance for our department and our students. However, Natalie herself never really talked about herself as a teacher of color within the team. I worried about her quiet and reserved manner in our meetings, and our inability to talk about race. I wondered if her silence was the result of her shyness, or the rest of the team's authority. I worried more about the ethnocentricity of our curriculum. But most of these worries occurred "backstage" (Grossman et al., 2001). In the official team meetings, while race was occasionally discussed in the abstract or with respect to texts and to students' responses to texts, our own racial identities as teachers were rarely mentioned, let alone discussed at length. Natalie's contract was not renewed at the end of the research year. This was in part because her practice did not yet match the principal's vision of effective instruction. This was a decision that was difficult for me to accept, and one about which I still have conflicting opinions and emotions.

Lastly, Kathy O'Neil joined our team officially in late March, although she had been observing Lydia's classes for about two months prior to the beginning of her student teaching experience. Kathy is in her late twenties, and came to teaching after a Journalism major and work experience in sales and public relations. Kathy brought a deadpan sense of humor to her classroom and interactions within the English 12 team, but was also reserved and private about herself and many of her opinions. Nonetheless, she formed a strong connection with all of the veterans during this short period, a strength she also brought to her relationships with students in her classes. She is an avid athlete, outdoor enthusiast, and passionate environmentalist. While she was not hired on at the immediate end of the research year, when a part–time position opened late the following summer, she was offered and accepted this position at LFHS.

As I examined and attempted to offer these brief sketches to frame the group of six of us who worked together throughout the year of this study, it became clear to me that in some ways, we may represent a microcosm of teaching high school English today. Madeline, Lydia, and myself, in many ways match the traditional "Discourse model" (Gee 1999) of the typical English teacher: we are white, middle class, middle aged women, all struggling to balance our paper load and our families. Sam, Natalie, and Kathy brought a diversity of experience and

perspective to our previously homogeneous grouping. The ability for us as veterans to effectively and humanely integrate their ideas and perspectives on teaching English into a new collaboration was ultimately essential to our progress in becoming a more democratic community.

However, I am also aware that there was much at stake in the power dynamics of this team. I am concerned about representing the "veterans" as monolithic and authoritarian, yet it is also necessary to admit that to some extent we were. We represented seniority, tenure, department leadership, advanced degrees, the typical English teacher, and instruction of the uppermost level college prep classes in the department—all which carry symbolic and real power in the world of a large high school. The early career teachers did not have these markers of "power" in the teaching world; and as such, they were vulnerable throughout the year as their employment status at LFHS would undergo review. All three of them faced the reality that they might not return to LFHS to teach the following year, and indeed, when the year ended, only Sam was given a continuing contract for employment at LFHS.

What was I trying to understand and change about our team? :
Evolving articulation of research questions

One of the hallmarks of action research is that the research questions evolve as the daily realities of improvement present themselves (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlin, 1994; Baumann & Duffy, 2001; Herr & Anderson, 2005). This makes particular sense when the subject of the study is a teacher collaborative group which is itself a dynamic social system. Joyce (2004) explicitly advocated studying teacher communities through action research, arguing that teacher collaborative movements would have "more credibility if they had embedded research in their strategies. While asking teachers to study student learning rigorously, they often did not ask themselves to study the dynamics of their own work" (p. 82). This project hopes to address this gap in the previous literature on teacher communities.

As I look back over the early attempts to articulate what I was interested in about teacher communities (Appendix A), the questions were primarily interpretive and exhibited the wide range of interests that many practitioners might have in institutions and practices as they relate to teacher communities (Baumann & Duffy, 2001; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Hollingsworth, 1999). I wanted to understand how the implementation of the professional learning communities model building-wide would impact the institution, its

teachers, and its students. Discussions with committee members and my additional course work in research methods helped me start to narrow my focus, into the teacher groups themselves: the practices, the norms, and the language that teachers use to accomplish their joint work. Throughout, there was been a constant commitment to doing this work with a critical and democratic frame. What was missing in these early iterations however was my acknowledgement that I would also have to be studying myself as a collaborator and a researcher if I hoped to learn about the process of improvement. The questions that framed this project included the following:

- Understanding our practice as collaborators: What happens when our small group of English teachers employs collaborative processes to develop a high school literacy curriculum? Are our collaborative practices productive, professional, and just?

- Improving our practice as collaborators: How do we improve our practices to make them more productive, professional, and just for all members of our team?

- Understanding and improving my practice as a researcher: What do I learn about the processes of collaboration and action research? How do I improve my practices as a collaborator and a researcher?

Each of these questions led in turn to more questions. For example, in the initial data collection and analysis conducted as part of my coursework in Fall 2007, I found that interesting questions arose around the functions narratives played in the group meetings. I explored how the narratives told within our English teachers' professional community mediated and were mediated by the relationships within that group.   This early analysis led me to wonder more about the ways that the group functioned differently for the veteran teachers versus the newcomers.   While the close historied relationships between the three veterans have been a constant professional and personal support for us, I began to acknowledge the barriers that these relationships might present to newcomers to the team. My experience of the team's history, particularly its prior fluctuations in membership, informed by my reading of teacher community studies, raised questions about the micropolitics of group membership (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Achinstein, 2002): What are the "border politics" (Achinstein, 2002) that mediate membership of the twelfth grade team? Who becomes a member of the team? How and why? Are the "entrance requirements" just? Did they need to change? How might that

occur? These questions were of an additional concern because of the heterogeneity within this group in terms of gender, race, and experience teaching.

As I continued this study both during data collection and in the analysis and writing phases that followed, the questions continued to evolve as my interpretations of our work and our goals for improvement did.   Each of the findings chapters explores a different question unearthed during the action research process, that helped me better answer the three overarching questions that guided the general inquiry. I will next turn to the processes I employed to unearth those questions and explore their possible interpretations.

How Did I try to Understand and Improve Our Collaboration?:

 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Erickson (1986) argued that the challenge of data collection is to "bring research questions and data collection into a consistent relationship, albeit an evolving one" (p. 140). Such evolution is even more critical in the context of action research: as the aims of improvement change in action research, the questions and data needed for inquiry will as well. That certainly was my experience of action research. Perhaps as a result, there have been critiques of action research methods as unelaborated, a failing I do not wish to replicate (Gitlin, Peck, Aposhian, Hadley & Porter, 2002; Huberman, 1996). The interwoven strands of data collection and analysis in this project represented my attempt to bring a disciplined attention to both relevance (action) and rigor (research) (Herr& Anderson, 2005; Baumann & Duffy, 2001).

Herr and Anderson (2005) argued that the work of action research is "inherently interdisciplinary" (p. 2). As such, I blended multiple traditions of research and ways of knowing in my attempts to understand and improve the practices of our team. As my questions were framed, I attended to three interwoven strands of data collection and analysis.   Data collection which 1. helped me understand our group's current practices; 2. documented and monitored our attempts and rationales for improvement; and 3. monitored my own practices as a collaborator and researcher.   Data collection for all three strands was closely interrelated and mutually informing, and data analysis was ongoing and iterative throughout the year of research and the year of reflecting and writing which followed it. Like the collaboration itself, action research aims at improvement and refinement, which must include the research methodology itself, and thus I describe the data collection and analysis in three segments below,

foregrounding the practices I used, their attendant rationales, and the changes which took place during the evolution of the inquiry.

Understanding the English 12 team

In order to systematically study the practices the English 12 team used for our collaboration, I employed many traditional interpretative methods: participant observation, individual interviews, audio recordings, researcher journaling, and document analysis. Such interpretive fieldwork is not at odds with action research, but can be seen as a set of available tools used to capture aspects of the social setting under study. As Erickson (1986) explained: "Fieldwork research requires skills of observation, comparison, contrast, and reflection that all humans possess. In order to get through life we must all do interpretive fieldwork" (p. 157). In order to study any social situation, fieldwork is an imperative. Such work is also particularly relevant to teaching, as the role of a teacher could be imagined as "that of an unusually observant participant who deliberates inside the scene of action" (Erickson, 1986, p. 157).

Unfortunately, of the skills Erickson lists, careful observation within the process of action is a constant struggle for teachers and insider researchers, me included. Much like teaching, the demands of participating fully and being "present" in the conversation made it hard to document more than the general flow of the conversation, or key moments within each meeting. During the first semester, I worked to find ways to capture more of the nuances of our actions within meetings, such as Erickson's (1986) suggestion to focus on one aspect of the cultural scene at each observation. But ultimately, I found I had to re-experience each meeting again in order to shift from my role as participant/ facilitator into my role as researcher.

By midyear, I had found that the best method for me to reflect and improve on each meeting was to use the digital audio recordings. As soon as possible after each meeting, I replayed the recording of the meeting, and this time was able to focus on listening as a researcher as opposed to acting and listening as a colleague. I created a summary log of each meeting this way: noting time, speaker, and brief summaries of topic and ideas. I also used the creation of the summary logs as an initial opportunity for my own reflection. I included a running "comments" column that ran the length of each log. I noted needs for immediate action or follow-up as a facilitator, as well as tentative and emerging interpretations, questions, and concerns as a researcher. I also tried to capture the affective elements of each meeting: I noted the emotion tenor of the group, individuals, and especially my personal feelings as an

actor with multiple and conflicting roles in the scene. In this way, I used the data collection procedure and this initial and immediate round of data analysis as the basis for my own actions within the group.

Over time, the recordings of the meetings, the summary logs, and my weekly reflections also afforded broader interpretative possibilities. Several influential prior studies on teacher communities have demonstrated that the recordings and transcripts of teachers in collaborative discussions provided a rich source of data for analysis (Lewis & Ketter, 2004; Little, 2003, 2002; Grossman, Wineberg, & Woolworth, 2001). Little (2002) suggested that researchers "need to uncover the situational relevance of teachers' classroom descriptions, stories, explanations, and problems in the progress of their collaborative work" (p. 932). As such, I used the recordings over time to identify patterns in interaction and return to more thoroughly analyze critical moments in the discussions such as key deliberations, conflicts, disagreements, or breakthroughs.

During the first semester of our collaboration, several of these key events were analyzed using aspects of discourse analysis, and in particular, narrative analysis (Juzwik, 2000; Wortham, 2000; Gee, 1999; Langellier, 1989). As discourse analysis intends to describe and interpret the way language constructs relationships between people, activities, and knowledge it was an appropriate tool for analysis of collaborative small group work   By looking across time at patterns of participation, development or resolution of issues and problems, and ways that the language of our practices shifted or stabilized (Little, 2003), I was able to develop a richer understanding of the norms of our practices, and could begin to offer critical questions for reflection and suggest new possibilities.

While there were aspects of employing discourse analysis as an insider that felt quite awkward, I also agree with Kemmis (1999) that critical analysis should be a central component of action research, as it can "recover how a situation has been socially and historically constructed, as a source of insight into ways in which people might reconstruct it" (p.154). I found that discourse analysis of the team's language functioned like a mirror: "Here's what we each said. Look at it again. What might it mean? How could we do better?" I also think that the use of discourse analysis as a tool within action research has the opportunity to balance some of the critiques each methodology has garnered. One of the biggest challenges for action research is to "make the familiar seem strange" (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 1994, p.5). Discourse analysis allowed me to look at our familiar language of collaboration anew in such a way.   On the other

hand, Little (2002) suggested that despite its value, discourse analysis by an outsider can have difficulty accessing a rich contextual frame and a more complete data record which can lead to misinterpretations of speech fragments. While I certainly battled with my personal biases in all aspects of my analysis, I do believe that my long history within the English 12 team worked in a complementary way with discourse analysis, to provide an alternation of insider and outsider perspectives that enriched my interpretations and supported my reflexivity (Gitlin et al., 2002). Chapter Five most clearly utilizes aspects of discourse and narrative analysis as key tools for interpretation, and a more thorough exploration of these methods of analysis are taken up at that point.

> *Improving our work*

Action research is an ongoing process of promoting change and improvement, with stops along the way to assess the learning and changes that have happened (Gitlin et al., 2002). As I considered questions of how to improve our existing practices, I had to acknowledge that there were many different concepts of what it would mean to improve our collaboration, and practices that benefitted some team members were liabilities to others (Herr & Anderson, 2005). My goals throughout this process were to help make our practices of collaboration more productive, professional, and just; in particular, as facilitator, I hoped to strive for a model of a democratic community as outlined in Chapter Two.

I was encouraged by my readings in teacher community literature to examine possible ways we might become a more democratic community, and how we might achieve a greater deprivatization of practices for the sake of improvement in instruction (Little 2002, 2003; Louis & Marks, 1998). In order to maintain a democratic commitment and a catalytic validity during the research process, interpretations, questions, and concerns generated from ongoing data analysis were offered to the group as the basis of generating reflection on the collaborative process (Herr & Anderson, 2005). In particular, both at the start of second semester, and at the end of the year, our team devoted most of a meeting to discussing my emerging interpretations, and discuss possibilities for change in our collaborative practices.   We focused on improvement in those things that we had control over in our own practice, and encouraged our group to reflect by asking ourselves tough questions, and by experimenting with new routines and protocols (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Eliot, 2007; McDonald, Mohr, Dichter, & McDonald, 2003). As the findings chapters should bear out, some of our experiments

and dialogues helped us achieve more democratic practices, while in other cases, our historical practices and our current context proved difficult challenges to overcome.

In order to accomplish these improvements, I planned our group's agendas each week and facilitated almost all meetings during the year. As my understandings of our practices grew, I became more aware of the need to balance the team's practical needs in terms of curriculum planning, with reflective dialogue and team building elements. I monitored interventions and suggestions that I offered to assess how they were taken up (or not), working (or not), and how they could be refined further (Gitlin et al., 2002). While I agree that the raising of questions itself can offer an intervention (Herr & Anderson, 2005), I also felt firsthand how difficult it can be to change long established patterns of social interaction. In an attempt to make sense of this, even after the "action" phase of this project concluded, my own learning and reflection continued.

Reflexivity: Understanding and improving my own research and collaboration

Given the challenges of sustaining dialogic practices, particularly under circumstances such as our team's goal of mentoring in which there was an implicit inequality between team members, the most important guardian of democratic process is the facilitator's commitment to reflexivity. Fishman (2000) posited that "if a collaborative inquiry is to be fully equitable and reciprocal, there needs to be a mutually informing alteration of outsider and insider positions." In order to achieve this goal, facilitators of teacher collaboration must attend to reflexivity for both pedagogical and methodological validity.   In action research, reflexivity is a central aspect of the entire research design, and must be a main focus of data collection (Gitlin et al., 2002; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Ravitch & Wirth, 2007). A primary rule of action research is "be aware of the choices one is making and their consequences" (Reason & Bradbury, 2001 as cited in Herr & Anderson, 2005). My reflections following each Wednesday afternoon meeting attempted to capture the emergence of my roles, my decisions, and my actions, particularly as they related to the ethical decisions made in the process of research (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlin, 1994).

I began the project interested in what role I could have as a facilitator of change on the inside of this community. Yet the tensions between my desire to provoke change and a deep respect for and understanding of the challenges of teaching and collaborating (Ravitch & Wirth, 2007) remained present with me throughout this work. One of the realizations that I came to during the first semester of the project, as a result of my first attempts to provide feedback to

my team, might sound simple, but it felt invaluable. In order for me to proceed in the research democratically, the ethical dilemmas and questions that I encountered had to be taken up with my team members; to ignore their needs, opinions, suggestions or critique would be to move away from my ideals for this project and for teacher communities in general.

I also tried to remember that I did not have the answers, but my primary role was as someone who could use the additional time I had been given for research to help generate the questions that might improve our work (Ravitch & Wirth, 2007). Even if I knew this "in theory" before, putting it into practice within the research process was revelatory. Every time I brought a question or concern about the research to the group or an individual team mate, their responses enriched my learning, my confidence, and my commitments to them as teachers.

Additionally, reflexive writing must also address the complexity of the multiple roles I had within our school and team. All action researchers have multiple positionalities to which they must attend (Ravitch & Wirth, 2007; Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 44-45) including:

- Positioning along continuum of insider/ outsider to setting
- Positioning of power within setting
- Positioning within society
- Positioning within global/ colonial world (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 44-45).

My reflections documented these tensions explicitly, particularly given the implicit power I had in this situation as a department leader, a university trained researcher and supervisor, a veteran teacher, and the positioning I have in society as a white, middle class woman. Ravitch & Wirth (2007) suggested several methodological adaptations useful for the consideration of power and authority in insider, change oriented research: collaboration and research logs, ongoing journals, and periodic reflective memos which look across time. They recommend asking interrogating questions such as: how did my personal beliefs and professional positionality affect the implementation of the research? Some of this work I accomplished in the emerging context of the collaboration, such as my weekly reflections. In other cases, the extended opportunity to write and reflect after the data collection ended pushed me to acknowledge the shortcomings my own habitus brought to this work in powerful and painful ways. Chapters Six and Seven, in particular, are concerned with evaluating my actions and position within the team.

Ravitch & Wirth (2007) also insisted that eliciting and analyzing the viewpoints and needs of the other teachers in the team, particularly when they challenged or disproved my own guiding theories, would prove a valuable outside catalyst for critical self-reflection. While I tried to gather feedback during the emerging action of each week's meeting, in the day-to-day press of our meetings, there was often little time. However, I used such questions as part of my own reflective writing, and in particular used these questions to frame and analyze the individual teacher's interviews conducted at the end of the school year.

At the same time, I found that reflexivity was best achieved in communication with others. The researchers I was reading and the very smart people with whom I worked and spoke outside the project provided important openings for reflexivity.   Most significantly, the English 12 team as a whole had an essential role with within the research generally and in particular for the sake of reflexivity. Within the context of this project as a dissertation, the brunt of data collection, analysis, and presentation, was my responsibility.   However, most of the important breakthrough moments in my own understanding of our work came in communication with my team members themselves. They dialogued with me throughout the periods of data collection, data analysis, and writing. They read and re-read drafts, allowed me to bring them my questions and concerns, and raised new questions for me to consider . Their insights, analysis, reflections, and critiques formed the foundation of much of my growing understanding of our work and my role within it. Each of these voices, in the data record, and in continuing dialogue, helped me hold my own perspectives up to better scrutiny during this process.

Post-collaboration data analysis

One of the oddities of this particular type of action research is that, when the school year ended, my acting within the scene did as well. Thus, the final phases of data analysis and writing shifted, and in some ways resembled more interpretive research again.

While data collection officially ended with the individual interviews conducted during the last days of the school year, data analysis continued in iterative cycles throughout the following twelve months. First, interviews were transcribed in their entirety and read for general impressions. Then I began by re-reading all of the summary logs in order, and began developing coding categories to help manage the large volume of data. I initially worked with three categories: 1. curriculum planning and pedagogical content knowledge in English; 2.

socialization and mentoring of new teachers and 3. leadership. Then I re-read the summary

logs and the interviews again, and created a meeting summary chart with included a brief

overview of each meeting, as well as data samples from the meetings which were indicative of

the coding phenomena. I also left open a physical and intellectual space for "other" emerging

codes and interpretations. Chapter Four stands as the only chapter directly linked to these early

codes. It examines the official product of our collaboration, the English 12 curriculum, most

specifically. In order to render it for a general audience however, I used elements of narrative

inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Vinz, 1996) and document analysis, to present a story of

how this work evolved over time, what it meant, and then narrate how it changed during the

official research period.

Eventually, I realized that most of the other coding categories were too big. I needed to

get closer in, and make the practices of collaboration that I had participated in for over a decade

"more strange." For much of the next year, I drilled down in the data and my experiences,

trying to make sense of what had happened. When I was in doubt, I went back to the recordings

of individual meetings. I selected some of the most interesting or potent moments for

transcription. I began to really notice the patterns of interaction over time, as well as the places

where we had attempted to disrupt these patterns. I began to think in ethnographic terms:

what were the key traits that an outsider would notice? What would an outsider have to

acquire in order to become an insider in the English 12 team? Thinking ethnographically helped

me determine that there were aspects of our language and work habits that were important to

understanding both the success and struggles of our group.

However, while ethnography could help me make strange some of those familiar traits,

it did not capture the "moving target" that was action research within our collaboration. Thus, I

kept searching out additional analytic tools that would help me understand how to make sense

of the messiness of action research within a teacher collaboration. Presented in Chapters Five

and Six are two different approaches to this work. In Chapter Five, I returned to discourse

analysis and narrative analysis as a means of understanding the language of our collaboration,

as well as changes which took place over the course of the year. In Chapter Six, I use activity

theory (Roth & Lee, 2007; Roth and Tobin, 2004), in particular the issues our team experienced

with time and division of labor, to analyze our typical work patterns, as well as changes in them.

Finally, in Chapter Seven, I looked at our collaboration year through one more lens: that

of teacher learning. We claimed that our team's second purpose for the year was to mentor our

newest teachers. In order to reflect on that aspect of our work, I share some of the present state of knowledge regarding teacher learning, and mentoring specifically. Then I returned to the data to understand if and if so, what, we had learned from each other.

While I have tried to make the general methodology of action research apparent here, some of the nuances of each of the distinct analytic tools used in the interpretations will be taken up within the context of individual chapters as relevant. However, I do wish to emphasize here that in concert with action research, these analyses were interdisciplinary and evolved in response to the needs and patterns I observed in the data. Additionally, while the individual theories do differ, each of the analytic concepts I have used cohere in their sensitivity to the sociocultural aspects of research in naturalistic settings. While each of the analytic tools has strengths and weaknesses individually, it is my intention that through bringing these different tools to bear on our collaborative work, the triangulation of both data and of my interpretations would be more robust. Given the nature of this work as action research, such multiple tools may be my most important safeguards of internal validity.

What were the Ethical Implications that Complicated this Action Research?

The goal of this research was improvement in the conditions of collaboration for all teachers in our team; the goals of the team work were improvement in our curriculum, and mentoring of the early career teachers in our team. Thus these were core ethical imperatives which permeated this entire project from start to finish. Like most naturalistic research, there were affective difficulties of addressing sensitive political and personal issues, and these are magnified by my multiple positionalities as a collaborator, facilitator, insider researcher and department leader. I wondered at numerous moments over the last two years if this type of project was even possible given the hurdles of my own roles negotiations: almost every element of this project presents an ethical dilemma.

While issues of access and consent were readily granted by my group members, I worried and wondered if they would be honest with me about dropping out if they really wanted. The veterans' personal relationships with me would make it difficult for them to complicate my ability to complete the project. However, I also believe that their trust meant that they would offer me critical feedback as it was needed. Likewise, the three untenured teachers may have felt some pressure to participate in order to remain in good standing with me and the other veterans. We addressed these concerns up front in the fall initial consent

process, then clarified expectations during the midyear reflection, and again when Kathy joined in March. We agreed that no information from our collaborations would be used in an administrative critique of the untenured teachers' work. This maintained an important element of confidentiality that not only addressed some of the ethical concerns presented by my multiple roles within the team and department, but also hopefully allowed all of us to feel comfortable expressing both our successes and challenges in the classroom. As an aspiring teacher educator, I was also committed to supporting the growth of these new teachers; while this stance doesn't alleviate the tension between advocacy and critical evaluation (Erickson, 1986), I think it may have helped me stay focused in the face of the multiple roles I was required to play in our team. When in doubt, I erred on the side of being their advocate with administration and tenured colleagues.

At the end of the year, I asked each teacher in their individual interviews about the complications that research added to our work together. Despite my concerns and the challenges that I felt in negotiating my multiple roles, both the veteran teachers and early career teachers seemed to feel that the research component was a helpful addition to our work, and did not articulate any problems with my multiple positionalities.

Data collection, analysis and representation as an insider researcher were also a series of quandaries. I wrestled with what was on the record and what was off the record data (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlin, 1994). As a friend, I was given a tremendous amount of trust and access to some conversations that might not otherwise be made available to an outside researcher. The struggle to balance that trust with honest critique existed around every turn in the remainder of this project. I acknowledge the fact that off record comments did influence my analyses; but ethically I chose not to present such information as data publically.

Audio recordings were the most influential data source in this project. As transcription of language is always already a theory of what is significant in that language (Juzwik, 2006; Mishler, 1991; Ochs, 1979), a note about my transcription choices is in order as part of ethical concern. My interest in our discursive practices was open to multiple layers of significance including: the sociocultural dynamics, the content and the prosodic features of team discourse, and the possibilities and constraints narrativity offered for our individual and group practice. The digital recordings of all meetings were listened to and rough transcripts were made of each meeting. After it became apparent that narration was a common feature of most team meetings, I identified several key individual narratives and story rounds for analysis. I

transcribed just these selected excerpts using the Jefferson method of transcription, which captures prosodic features with greater detail.   However, in a desire to render the transcripts reasonably readable, in this presentation, I have made several editorial decisions. I attempt to capture the phrasing of the original speakers as much as possible by utilizing lines and stanzas, rather than paragraphs. However, the complexities of Jeffersonian symbolic representations of prosody have been simplified. I have used standardized punctuation for falling (.) and rising (?) intonations. I have only retained from Jeffersonian transcription conventions the following which seemed particularly important to representing dialogue between multiple interlocutors and evaluative narration:

(( )) = transcriber's interpretative comments

[ ] = overlapping speech

 Additionally, unless false starts or filler phrases ("you know," umm," etc.) were pertinent to the interpretations being made, I have edited these. This was both an ethical and practical consideration. I believe this choice preserves the speakers' intentions, at the same time it improved readability for the audience. Finally, throughout the text, reconstructed dialogue is embedded within my narrative accounts without dates attached. All other speech directly from interviews or meetings is represented in an indented script form including speaker's name and date of recording.

Finally, preparing this manuscript for public representation also created ethical dilemmas. For example, I committed to use pseudonyms in the writing and transcription, and have limited the personal and identifying information shared about each of my colleagues. This commitment was made as part of my Institutional Review Board application to protect the privacy of all individuals. However, there has also been a nagging feeling that I can't protect my team's anonymity fully. As long as my identity is public, their identities are just a short Google search away. I also feel badly in some ways about masking their identities at all. It seems very bizarre to be representing friends through false names, though I publically receive credit. There is also a very real fear in laying bear our shortcomings to a public audience. On the day of my final examination, I needed to feel confident that every member of my team could be present, and be satisfied that I have represented them fairly while I have also critically interrogated our work. Ultimately, most of these issues were resolved through consultation with my collaborators themselves. We selected pseudonyms in consultation with each other. I offered drafts for review, and solicited their feedback. I came to them with questions or ethical

concerns as needed. I knew that they all trusted me to represent our work fairly and honestly, and I believe I have done my best to live up to their expectations.

What are the Criteria for Validity to which I Aspired?

Polkinghorne (2007) reasoned that "a valid knowledge claim is dependent on the kind of claim that is made" (p.476). Thus action research, like interpretive research, cannot be judged on the same criteria as positivistic approaches to research on teaching. There is not a suggestion that this type of study would be replicable or the knowledge generated would somehow be generalizable across all examples of teacher communities. However, the values of action research also prohibit relativist views of quality: validity for this action research project rests on the transparency of my methodology, and my attention to ethical commitments for both the process and products of this work.

Herr & Anderson (2005; also Anderson, Herr, & Nihlin, 1994) presented a tentative yet widely cited discussion of validity criteria for action research based on the goals of the paradigm. While they urged that individual researchers must match these criteria to their own projects, these propositions represent a fairly comprehensive view of the type of inquiry I hoped to achieve. Their criteria include:

- Outcome validity: Does the researcher skillfully shape the process to move toward successful action outcomes?
- Process validity: Are the problems framed and studied in a manner that permits ongoing learning relevant for the individuals and the community?
- Catalytic validity: Does the research deepen the understanding of the social reality under study and provoke change?
- Democratic validity: To what extent is the research accomplished collaboratively with all stakeholders?
- Dialogic validity: Have insider perspectives been interrogated by processes of reflexivity and peer review? (Herr& Anderson, 2005, p. 55-57)

An additional validity criterion for all research, and a reoccurring critique of action research, concerns knowledge generation for the wider educational research community. (Elliott, 2007; Zeichner, 2007; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Huberman, 1996). In other words, will this study balance the specificity of my own research

context with a desire to build useful new theories regarding teacher collaborations? (Elliott, 2007; Zeichner, 2007; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Researchers have approached this question divergently, but generally the criteria include:

- Is the study clearly situated within existing knowledge in the field (Zeichner, 2007; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Huberman, 1996)
- Is the study situated within theoretical frameworks? (Elliott, 2007; Huberman, 1996)
- Does the study demonstrate methodological robustness? (Elliott, 2007; Huberman, 1996)

Like interpretive projects, part of the knowledge generation for action research may be observed in developing rich cases studies that are then comparable to other similar cases (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Erickson, 1986). Herr and Anderson (2005) also proposed that action research dissertations "may represent the documentation of a successful collaboration and be used as a case study of not only the process but also the product of collaboration" (p. 6), a goal of particular relevance to my study of teacher communities. I return to these validity criteria as part of the closing chapter and reflection on this action research project.

What were the Limitations I Encountered?

Conversely, the limitations of action research study have also been expounded. The first critique is the pragmatic one. Practitioners, regardless of their field of work, may not have the time required to meet the demands of a robust action research study (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Huberman, 1996; Erickson, 1986).   I concur entirely with this critique; given more time within a day, a semester, or a year which ended with the departure of two of our team members, I would have taken my research into our collaborations in additional directions, particularly, more closely into the classroom. Given the nature of this project, exploration of the limitations is embedded throughout each chapter. Chapter Six explores the practical and affective experience of time within our collaboration as a key trait, while all the chapters explored my decisions and reflections on methodological and practical choices made by the team or by myself. Additionally, I must acknowledge that I do not believe I could have embarked on this study with this particular design without the opportunity for study and

reflection that my sabbatical year and the intervening summer offered. What that meant for me was that I used the unique combination of my insider position and the time away from the demands of teaching as well as I could. What this meant for my collaborators, was that I was constantly checking my ideas for our collaboration against their daily realities of teaching.

The most common critique of action research however relates to one of its core tenets: the intimate relationship the researcher has with the research site and its participants, and the ways that this can confound the process and product of action research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Huberman, 1996). The insider researcher must be unusually observant of both herself and her collaborators, and be able to work alternatively between positions of empathy and critical distance (Erickson, 1986; Huberman, 1996). Furthermore, she must understand herself, and be able to transcend that understanding in order to achieve the promise of the paradigm (Huberman, 1996). I do not claim to be a remarkably self-aware person, particularly *in situ*. In fact, I feel like I am often quite oblivious to the micropolitics of a situation when I am in the midst of it. But like my team generally, I carry a commitment to self-improvement that I believe I lived throughout this study; and a tendency toward obsessive reflection and self-doubt afterwards that may (finally) turn out to be an asset rather than a liability. I aspire to teach and to research and to live in better and better accordance with my beliefs. I saw the challenge of this project as a way that those goals could all be nurtured.

I believe the strengths of my methodological design build on my passions and my ethical commitments to understanding and improving teaching through understanding and improving teacher collaborations. I spent most of my graduate career trying to minimize the divide between theory and practice in my own teaching and leadership at my school. Conducting this type of study, despite all of its complexities, was the best way I envisioned to make coherent my ideals and my practice. Thus this work was accomplished through a process that intended to honor democratic principles, such as community, dialogue, dissent, and reflection; and a process that intended to honor the knowledge that teachers carry with them into their classrooms everyday. My ambition to have a robust action research study necessitated that I interrogate my positionality as an insider in this team, and that I sought multiple sources of data and tools of analysis and critique to push my own understandings forward. Huberman (1996) conceded that if these standards for quality action research were actually met, "Few working researchers can compete with it. It makes for a very ambitious agenda" (p.132). I hope the stories, analyses, and new questions found in the following chapters document that these were

challenges that I tried my best to meet with open eyes and mind; and such that I could continue my own process of becoming.

Chapter 4 : Curriculum (Re)Development in Collaboration

Outside Lafayette Falls High School, a thick February snow falls, promising a long commute home. It is 2:47 pm, and the students mostly have abandoned the academic wings of this sprawling suburban high school. They were off to work, home, or extracurricular commitments as soon as the bell released them from classes. Although there are just eight minutes left in the official teacher duty day, we five English teachers commandeer students' desks and huddle together in the front of Lydia's classroom for our Wednesday team meeting.

The classroom space is in comfortable disarray: decorated with stacks of student papers, plastic crates of filed teaching materials, and a mélange of movie posters—*Trekkies, A River Runs Through It,* and *Zeffirelli's Hamlet*—offering an appetizer to the English 12 curriculum we have gathered to discuss. Lattés and chocolate, procured from a few stolen minutes of a prep hour, are passed around like manna as fortification against both fatigue and cold.

For the next thirty-three minutes, each teacher takes a turn sharing about his or her teaching week.   Madeline reports that she is getting along much better with her new group of students and clarifies the upcoming midterm deadlines for Natalie. Natalie shares a report on the two-day workshop she has just attended on classroom management. Lydia laments the enduring silence in her first hour class. Sam vents frustrations with student attendance, and its impact on the current student writing project.

As team facilitator, and the one person without students this semester, I instead share my reflection from last week's meeting. While several team members had openly expressed feeling "crabby" at the outset of the last meeting, by the end "It was like the meeting had a re-calibrating effect. You could see the calming happen." But this is an inquiry for another time. The snow and the clock are pressing on, and our task for this afternoon is to create a new lesson reviewing poetry--for tomorrow's classes.

Poetry had been a neglected corner of the English 12 curriculum for years. As usual, this addition is Lydia's suggestion: her experiences with the introduction of the International Baccalaureate curriculum in our school have made this omission more glaring. In our midlevel English 12 course, a unit on formalist approaches to texts is structured as a short review of literary analysis by genre—moving briskly from a short story to a drama to a film. After Lydia's suggestion two weeks ago, a consensus was quickly reached to add a day or two of poetry

review to provide better balance across the literary genres, and develop prior knowledge prior to starting a verse drama.

In preparation, each teacher has brought two poems—one classic and one contemporary—to share and discuss. For the next fifty-one minutes, the snow blankets the parking lot, and we discuss our purposes for the lesson. We read and discuss the poems. We discuss our purposes again. We discuss our students' likelihood to enjoy the poems we have selected, and our student's likely misunderstandings with poetry. The fact that it is near Valentines' Day prompts a suggestion that love poems might be a logical choice. While Madeline grabs scissors and tape to assemble a handout of selected poems ranging from Andrew Marvell to Tupac Shakur, the rest of us hammer out a more detailed lesson plan. Begin with a review of poetry terms. Read a Billy Collins poem together and apply the poetry terms. Move into small group work with a second poem of the teacher's choice. Students chose a poem to work with independently from the rest on the handout provided. Students write their own love poem or anti-love poem for homework. We know we have more than a day's lesson, but we'll see how it goes tomorrow. Sam agrees to stay and run the copies for everyone so that they are available for the first period classes at 7:45 am, and at 4:11 pm our meeting officially adjourns.

As Madeline, Lydia and I head outside to brush snow and scrape ice off our cars in the late afternoon twilight, Madeline comments that she thought that the meeting felt very productive.

"Really?" I ask. I am not feeling very confident about my facilitation at the meeting, but I'm not sure why. This small amount of feedback matters enormously to me.

"Sure. We created a new lesson from start to finish."

"I am a bit sad I won't get to teach it with you. I love teaching poetry."

Lydia and Madeline laugh in unison: "You are welcome to come in and be a guest teacher anytime." We say goodbyes, and begin the slow drive home—each of us with miles of snow-primed rush hour ahead. [1]

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[1] Throughout this text, I utilize two distinct conventions for speech representation. Participant dialogues recreated from field notes appear embedded in the text in a traditional narrative format without parenthetical citation of date. Language excerpted directly from transcripts of team meetings or interviews includes date of communication in parentheses. Extended dialogues are indented.

As I drove home that evening, and as I look back over mountains of pro-collaboration writings, I can see that this appears to be the stuff that collaborative teams are made of: we meet, we discuss, we create, we reflect. Then we teach, and our students learn.

But, ay, there's the rub. Somewhere between "we teach" and "students learn" it gets a lot more complicated.   Judith Warren Little (2003) called this space the "black box of teacher collaboration," a space research has yet to elucidate much.   Despite a growing consensus that teacher collaboration should be a standard of professional practice, relatively little is known about what happens in teachers' collaborations and why they might result in improvements in teacher knowledge and student learning.

Case in point, the collaboratively designed poetry lesson described above, when taught for the first time, "was a bomb for everybody" (Lydia, interview, 6.3.08).

Ultimately, as much as we desire to achieve dramatic and immediate results with every lesson in the classroom, or policymakers expect such results from every faddish intervention in teacher development, this isn't how learning or teaching work. When human beings are living and working and learning together, improvement must be a constant commitment. However, true learning evolves slowly and haltingly as we push ourselves to inquire into more and more challenging questions. Learning to teach effectively takes time and practice and patience.

As such, one hurried afternoon's collaboration was never likely to result in a brilliantly effective lesson. Instead, it becomes the first in a cycle of lessons and conversations that will be dedicated to trying to provide more balance in our curriculum and to understanding how best to match our instruction to the interests and needs of our students.

Curriculum Revision as Collaborative Purpose

Whether one asked a new teacher, a veteran teacher, or an administrator about the purpose of professional learning communities at Lafayette Falls High School, all would agree that the major goal is improvement of curriculum. After that consensus, the responses to the hows and whys would likely begin to diverge quite rapidly.   From the beginning of the twelfth grade English team's work together in the mid-1990's, that purpose has been clear.   The move from an unofficial collaboration to a required collaboration in 2006 did not change that key function. In all of the iterations of membership over the last dozen years or so, the English 12 team met together to plan curriculum, to discuss student work, and to revise the curriculum based on student work and changing goals for their work. The first meeting of the 2007-2008

school year reaffirmed this commitment to curriculum revision as the primary purpose, and all the conversations in the year's subsequent meetings bear out that primary purpose. Curriculum development and improvement has always been at the center of our collaborative work. The focus of this chapter is then to describe how this team of English teachers accomplished collaborative curriculum development.

This chapter begins an exploration into the overall research question: What happened when our team of English teachers collaborated to develop a high school literacy curriculum? In order to accomplish this task, the chapter specifically addresses:

- What key events in the team's history shaped the English 12 curriculum?
- What was the vision of teaching English constructed in this team?
- What significant curriculum revisions occurred during the research year?

One way to situate this chapter is to see it as an exploration of the purpose for and product of our collaboration. Prior to 2006, the English 12 team had chosen to accomplish curriculum development collaboratively; after 2006, we were required by school administration to do so. Thus, all of the activities and practices of our collaboration during the research year were significantly shaped by this purpose to develop and refine our curriculum.

This chapter begins with brief review of literature relevant to collaborative curriculum development in English today. Then, in order for me to better understand the vision of the English curriculum as constructed by this team, I present and analyze a historical narrative describing the significant tenets of the curriculum, and the key events which shaped the content of English 12 as a course over the decade during which I taught it. Much of the data for the first part of this chapter comes from curriculum documents analysis and my personal teaching records and memories collected over the ten year history of our team. The chapter then continues with an analysis of the course syllabus in use at the start of the research year, as well as thematic trends which were evident to me as I compared the historical and present constructions of the English 12 curriculum. Finally, I explore the team's orientation to curriculum revision during the research year and the focal point of revision during the research year, the improvement of college readiness skills. In the second half of the chapter, I specifically examined the new course documents created during the research year, as well as the digital recordings of meetings at which such documents were created, revised, or discussed.

A word as well, is appropriate here about the limitations of this chapter. Despite the fact that teachers must often plan curriculum with abstractions of students in mind, ultimately, the curriculum also happens at the level of the classroom with the teacher in interaction with the students. I consider it to be a concern that I did not foresee how much my research might have benefitted from more extended focus on the classroom level of enactment. Given the desire of this study to understand and improve the team's collaborative practices, I stayed focused too intently on the "team," and this chapter in particular, would have greatly benefitted from another cycle of data collection through which I could have followed our innovations into the classroom practices of our veteran and early career teachers alike.

The English Curriculum as Inquiry

Although in practice, curriculum development is often enacted as a closed, problem-solving perspective, Elliot and Stenhouse have argued that teachers should be viewed as curriculum researchers (Elliot, 1991). Stenhouse decried the objectives based development of curriculum as overly technical, and argued instead that the curriculum should be viewed as a process for improved understanding through discussion of the controversial issues of life (as cited in Elliot, 1991). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) also present a vision of teacher inquiry as communities developing curriculum together:

> Developing curriculum through analysis of data is radically different from the process of curriculum development typically used by many schools and school districts. . . .When groups of teachers develop curriculum through inquiry, they use data from their own classrooms to pose problems, sort out commonalities and differences in perspectives and values, and build instructional frameworks. (p.54)

Even on the level of daily enacted curriculum, teaching can be seen as curriculum research: "Every lesson should be for the teacher an inquiry, some further discovery, a quiet form of research" (Britton, 1987, as cited in Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 24). As this vision is in opposition to the deskilling of teachers that is implied by traditional top-down models of curriculum development and teacher-proof curriculums, conditions that our district's English teachers have experienced acutely, it also facilitates the learning and empowerment of teachers.

The construction of a literacy curriculum today bears a tremendous need for such an open-ended and inquiry based conception of curriculum development. What constitutes a literacy curriculum today is under constant redefinition. Even the very name of the field is

under question. Over the decade I taught at LFHS, our department garnered three different names, shifting from English, to English/ Language Arts, and finally to Integrate Language Arts. Such outward changes suggest the expansion and redefinition which is rapidly occurring in the discipline.

The curriculum in English is framed by a number of competing traditions, and a constant give and take between tradition and reform seems to frame the curriculum at every turn (Sperling & DiPardo, 2009; Vinz, 1996; Applebee, 1993). Applebee (1993) found that literature instruction dominated the English curriculum, with writing instruction taking a second place, and language instruction and speech taking distant third and fourth priorities; as I sift through the latest district curriculum maps for grades six through twelve, fifteen years later, these proportions look much the same. But even within just the specific and primary domain of literature instruction, there is much contention. Every decision in the literature curriculum is framed by a myriad of competing questions: Should the literature curriculum teach canonical Great Works? Contemporary texts? Texts representing diverse experiences? In what proportions? How influential should New Critical/ formalist perspectives be on instruction? Reader-response based approaches? Critical approaches? What should the curriculum do with media texts? Non-fiction reading?   Or the rapidly expanding use of digital literacies?   While English as a discipline is certainly on the cusp of new expanding definitions of literacy, many of these questions are being lived out in enacted curricula each semester and each day in secondary classrooms. Research has found "varying and sometimes competing conceptions about reading and writing, knowledge and learning, can live side by side as teachers navigate. . . contradictory influences on their teaching and thinking" (Sperling & DiPardo, 2009,p. 85). While curricular conservativism has been observed in teacher collaborations generally (Westheimer, 1998), I believe that in order to teach new literacies through new pedagogies, teachers must have the opportunity to learn and grow into these conceptions themselves before they feel competent in taking them into the classroom. Working in a collaboration may afford teachers the opportunity to support such learning and the requisite dialogue about what constitutes teaching English in the twenty-first century.

A Curriculum History of the LFHS English 12 Team

The following sections explore the question: How have we collaboratively constructed what it means to teach English? I narrate the history of the English 12 Curriculum through two

distinct phases. The first curricular framework utilized was the Archetypes course. This framework was utilized as the district level English 12 curriculum for decades, and predated the opening of the LFHS in 1992. The second phase, initiated via a district mandate in 2005 changed the course focus to critical lenses (Appleman, 2000). In both versions of the course, the English 12 team had almost complete freedom to enact a curriculum that we determined would provide a relevant and meaningful experience for high school seniors. It is also true that both versions of the course were created and continually revised in collaboration with each other.

The Archetypes Course: 1992-2005

When I first encountered this curriculum as a student teacher in the late 1990's, it was known as "The Archetypes." The course had been developed over decades in a number of district buildings utilizing Northrop Frye's (1957) vision of "The Circle of Stories, " a cycle of story patterns he termed Romance, Tragedy, Satire/ Irony, and Comedy. The course was constructed around helping students see the patterns that existed in stories from across times and cultures. Although some versions of archetypal analysis focus more on psychoanalytic perspectives and authorial intent, Frye's theories were largely compatible with the heavily New Critical approach of the district curriculum for grades nine, ten, and eleven while also moving students beyond formalism as well.

However, unlike the three preceding years of English curriculum, one of the notable features of the English 12 curriculum remained the fact that it never used a literature anthology for as long as I was a teacher in the building. While all of the other grade level courses were tied to traditional textbooks, twelfth grade avoided the confines that such materials can add to a curriculum. The absence of a textbook was conscious on our part, and not for lack of options in-stock. Even though LFHS didn't open until the 1990's, upon its opening, large numbers of yellowed, paperback Archetypes textbooks from the 1970's were shipped over from other district high schools. I recall browsing through them as a student teacher and new teacher for ideas, but none of the teachers I have worked with actually used them in class. In addition, sometime prior to my arrival at LFHS, the district had added a slim anthology called *Multicultural Perspectives* (1993) which was organized thematically. These books were used for a few selections toward the end of the course, but students rarely had it checked out for more than a week.

When I began my work with the twelfth grade course as a student teacher, there was an overt acknowledgement that the majority of our students were working class, white males. At that time, the school included about 10% students of color, and often "regular" English 12 classes where about two-thirds male students. Many of our students did not see themselves as readers. Therefore, our main goal for the literature curriculum was to demonstrate to them that even if they did not see themselves as readers, they actually knew a great deal about archetypal narrative patterns from their experiences with media texts.

As such, the course texts included a *bricolage* of fiction, non-fiction, and film: some American, British, and World literature classics, as well as contemporary readings, and film.   All units focused on students gaining in depth knowledge about the archetypal pattern in question. Most units were constructed to scaffold students' understanding from more familiar and contemporary examples, often from film or television, and move them back to classical texts. For example, the Satire unit began with an episode of *The Simpsons* and ended up with excerpts from Jonathan Swift; we used Shakespeare on film to anchor three of the five patterns of study, but also included the anime film *Princess Mononoke* as a key text. The literature curriculum had no required novels, but instead students selected choice books from a list of approximately ten options per terms. In my first years, these were independent projects, and then in later years we experimented and researched a literature circles model (Lloyd, 2006b).   These novel choices ranged from modern classics such as *Fahrenheit 451* and *Catcher in the Rye*, to contemporary selections such as *The Things They Carried, Kindred*, and *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places*. Ultimately, the focus of this literature curriculum was to encourage students who insisted that they did not like English or reading that they in fact were quite knowledgeable readers of many types of text.

Writing was embedded throughout the semester long course. In the Romance unit, students wrote a personal essay about a wise teacher who had mentored them. In the Tragedy, they wrote a literary analysis essay on one of the texts studied during the course.   In Satire, we dabbled briefly with creative writing. Toward the end of the course they completed a research project about the critical reception of a film of their own choosing.   Each writing assignment was scaffolded using a process approach, and we workshopped and conferenced with students at most stages of the writing process. Students ended the course with two writing assignments: one a final exam exploring the blending of archetypes in a contemporary film; and the other a

personal reflection about their philosophy of life and how that connected to their preferences as a reader.

As a former Advanced Placement literature student in high school, and an English major obsessed with racking up the classics on my bookshelves in college, during my student teaching this course had seemed not as rigorous as I would have liked.   Like many naïve new teachers, I had imagined teaching English meant I would be in a classroom with students discussing and writing about great works of literature past and present. However, the more I worked with real students, the more I began to see that college English and even high school English needed something more than great works of literature. There were a number of best practices at play in the success of this early version of the English 12 course.   In end of course evaluations, we would hear over and over again that we were reaching our students. The unifying focus developed around the archetypes meant that at the end of each class, students would report changes made in their interpretive skills. Even for students who didn't like "English," this course helped them understand that they did like *stories*. They understood more about themselves as readers for having considered which type of stories they preferred. Inevitably, they would conclude their end of course evaluations by either blaming us or thanking us, because they could no longer watch a movie without identifying the archetypal pattern to which it belonged. For our students who did not consider themselves readers, we wanted to be a respite from traditional literature study: some students really appreciated the use of film as text; others preferred the non-fiction selections included. Most appreciated that we utilized more short excerpts than long novels, as well as the element of student choice that were part of all writing and many reading assignments.

As teachers, we appreciated the fluidity of the English 12 curriculum. New texts were added easily in the context of literature circles, or short excerpts which exemplified a particular pattern. As the district office for the most part left twelfth grade alone, our only limits were the compression of time in a one semester course, and our own ability to keep up with popular culture and new book or film releases.

The only threat to our autonomy in those years was the state's Profile of Learning. This iteration of the state graduation standards in the early 1990's was developed as a series of performance assessments.   Under this version of the standards, the district assigned English Ten, Eleven, and Twelve, each one major language arts skill to evaluate through a performance assessment in Reading Non-Fiction, Reading Fiction, and Academic Writing respectively. I came

into teaching English 12 as the Profile was in the last stage of implementation. As twelfth grade was assigned the standard in Academic Writing, we were expected to provide opportunities for students to write in multiple genres: narrative, analysis, evaluation, and research. While many other English teachers in our building and our department found their assigned performance assessments cumbersome, English 12 had already embedded most of these types of writing into our course. As a result of the district implementation of the Profile of Learning, our team was provided time and money to collaborate. The English 12 team developed common rubrics, gathered exemplars, and sat down for the first time to actually read student writing and discuss it together. Although imposed from above at the state and district level, the "Profile" years provided a signpost for us: it offered outside verification that we had developed a fairly balanced and appropriate writing sequence for our students. It was an opportunity for us to improve that work in meaningful ways through more formal task-oriented collaboration on student writing assessment. However, just two years after full implementation, a new governor was elected, new standards were written, and with the new political wind, the Profile of Learning disappeared. Although I was just in my third year on faculty at LFHS, I experienced for the first time the tenuous relationship between curriculum and politics. But I also had learned that the good work we had done together and with our students wasn't going to disappear like a one-hit wonder. We survived and thrived during the implementation of the Profile of Learning, because we were able to mold it to fit our work, not vice versa. We could weather the next fads in curriculum reform the same way.

The SpringBoard *Saga*

The end of a school year often has a sort of bacchanalian feel to it. Perhaps this is exacerbated in the Upper Midwest, where native rocker Prince laments "sometimes it snows in April," and we really don't need Shakespearean sonnets to remind us that "summer's lease hath all too short a date." There is a heady breathing in and cleansing out after a long winter and the relentless pace of the school year. There are graduation parties, with and without students, especially for twelfth grade teachers. Our department traditionally celebrates with a martini lunch the afternoon after school closes, and many years, with teachers scattering to travel, study, or head "up north to the cabin," we do not see little each other again as a whole department until August.

But in June, 2005, as No Child Left Behind began to wind its way into our teaching consciousness, our district curriculum staff requested that English teachers from across the district convene for a last minute workshop. The workshop was scheduled for two days the week after school got out, and featured a team of folks from the College Board, the corporation behind the SAT, and the Advanced Placement exams. In other words, our presenters were employed by a company with a growing business model in the era of accountability, and "no child left untested." We were asked to participate in a two day introduction to the program they called *SpringBoard*; a fairly scripted day-by -day curriculum for grades six through twelve. The buzz from district officials was that the purchase of this pre-fabricated curriculum could save the district a bundle in curriculum writing. The College Board had already completed a scope and sequence for the entire secondary level. The students would end up being prepared (drum roll please) for AP courses as seniors if they had been through the program.

Normally, I would have been happy for an extra day's pay in the early summer. My summers had been relatively uncomplicated until then, with no children, no cabin. But that morning, I had taken a pregnancy test. It was positive, and I was suddenly flooded with fear for the changes to come. When I arrived at the *SpringBoard* presentation an hour later, I was a wreck. Madeline was there too. We quickly found each other in the crowd of anxious teachers from across the district. I was unsure whether to tell her my news.

Soon after my arrival, a venerated teacher from another building approached Madeline and me. She asked, "Have you had a chance to look at this curriculum? What do you think?"

"I think parts sound reasonable," I diplomatically replied, "I like the thematic unity for each course, and the study skills scaffolding. However, I am suspicious of any curriculum which suggests that it could be followed day-by-day by all teachers for all students in all schools."

The venerable teacher disagreed: "I think this is exactly what we need to keep weaker teachers and new teachers in line. This is the best way to insure that all teachers teach the same curriculum."

I couldn't speak. I burst into tears, and fled the room. Madeline followed me that morning, knowing I was more prone to debate than cry in public. I confessed my pregnancy and some of my wild range of feelings. While a pregnancy and a curriculum adoption should bear no connection beyond the coincidence of timing, I think for me on that June morning, the tears were for an impending loss of autonomy that I had enjoyed in both my personal and professional lives.

Madeline and I returned to the *SpringBoard* session after our talk. As we prepared to explore the twelfth grade curriculum, we found the workbook containing this course was still only in draft form, emailed as an attachment to the workshop coordinators. We browsed through what we could of laser-printed draft pages. We could discern that this curriculum, entitled *Perspective is Everything*, was developed around the study of multiple literary theories. It sounded okay at first blush, and we certainly had been trying to incorporate more diverse perspectives into the Archetypes class. We went home for the summer thinking it might yield some useful activities, but that we weren't ready to jettison the course we had been crafting together for the five previous school years.

In August, it was Lydia who cried. Lydia attended a district summer workshop as a mentor to Ellen, a new teacher to our team. They were told that all new English teachers would be required to teach the *SpringBoard* curriculum beginning immediately. Veteran teachers would have the option of piloting that year, but all teachers would be required to utilize this curriculum by the following fall. Teachers whispered the district had signed a one million dollar multi-year contract with the College Board to purchase *SpringBoard* sans any teacher input. Lydia called Madeline in tears. Madeline called me.

"What should we do? Leave a new teacher alone and sacrifice the unity of our team? Or pitch the curriculum we had been working on collaboratively for five years?"

We picked the team.

The pallets of paperback student work books began arriving in late August.

Our new curriculum had arrived.

Our Perspectives Course

In the Fall of 2005, the English 12 team used the *SpringBoard* curriculum largely as written for about three weeks. That was it.

Although the district had purchased the curriculum under the auspices that it was a day-by-day complete curriculum, we began to diagnose the cracks and the lack of quality in it right away. After a few useful introductory lessons, including a "gallery walk" introduction to literary theories we still use today, it became apparent that the lessons were poorly designed and the texts selections ill suited to what we knew about our students. The first reading in the workbook was Orwell's "Killing an Elephant," a text depicting British colonialism in Burma. After trying it, we all felt discomfort. It seemed illogical that we would open our course readings with

a text that none of our student could relate to. Neither did it feel wise to open the course with a text that included an author indulging in disquieting racial stereotypes. We maintained that it was problematic to ask students to delve into such conversations without the development of a classroom community first. We kept trying some of the workbook activities in those first weeks. But it became apparent that while the larger framework of critical lenses and a skills based approach to the curriculum overall were helpful structures for us, the actual lessons and activities were illogical and too disconnected to our actual teaching context. So, we abandoned the workbooks and with it, the *SpringBoard* assessments and activities. We quietly rebelled, and prepared to fight this implementation publically as needed.

Thus the English 12 curriculum that semester became a week-by-week, and day-by-day improvisation. Improvisation by definition draws on the materials and experiences that are readily available and on-hand; as such, Madeline, Lydia and myself all drew heavily on what we already knew to contribute to the evolving new curriculum. We borrowed from ourselves, from our other courses, and from our own experiences as students of literary theory. This tendency to improvisation and recycling of prior knowledge under duress, perhaps suggests one context for the observed conservative nature of the English curriculum (Applebee, 1996). I have to wonder how much of that conservatism is *conservation*; due less to beliefs about what we *should* teach, and more to the incredible pressures of time which limits our ability to re-imagine what we *will* teach. In order to survive, in order to have the morning lesson plan in hand under less than ideal teaching and thinking contexts, too many teachers must improvise. And thus, we may too often teach what we already know and are comfortable with.

But even as we may have been conservative with our text selections, we were changing how we taught quite dramatically. I would also argue during this period of rapid improvisation, we became very explicit in our objectives. Teaching literature was secondary to teaching the critical reading skills which were the new primary focus of our course. Our text selections were subservient to the needs of the course. Thus while many of the texts from the Archetypes course were retained in the Perspectives course overall—the rationale and skills that we focused on in most texts changed dramatically.

Fortunately, our improvisations were collaborative ones. We all had extensive experiences with literary theory ourselves, which made shifting to a critical framework for the courses less daunting. Our ongoing relationships with Professor Deborah Appleman, and her research on using critical theory with adolescents (2000) figured strongly in our understanding

of how to teach theory in high school classrooms. The course evolved to center around the concept of re-reading through multiple theories. We attempted to demystify what teachers had been constructing for our students as "English" in previous classes, by explicitly naming for them various conceptions of reading, text, and meaning making.

Rigor in the Perspectives course increased as both a function of district requests, and of our collective experiences in other teaching and learning situations. Madeline had been teaching the Honors English 12 course for years, from her experiences we decided to utilize two plays to which we already had access: *Oedipus Rex* and *A Doll's House*.   From the multiple courses I had taken on literary theory, I suggested we structure our reading assessments of students' evolving understanding of literary theories by asking students to return repeatedly to the same text for analysis. In alignment with our focus on media studies, we asked each student to select one film which he or she would write about for each of their lenses assignments.

In composition, we also realigned the writing assignments to better connect to particular critical lenses. Drawing on our previous formal writing assessments, and from Lydia's experiences teaching first year college composition, we re-crafted a series of four formal papers to represent a balance of genres of writing. Students wrote one personal narrative, one research paper utilizing secondary sources, and one literary analysis, as they had done in the Archetypes course. We added an ethnography project, adapted from Lydia's college composition course, which asked students to observe and analyze a micro-culture in our local community.   It became the common writing assessment for the sociocultural perspectives unit in the second term of the course.

As the first semester continued, and despite a hectic pace in which we were often just a few days ahead of the students in terms of planning, we were energized. We knew that what had seemed emotionally devastating in August, the loss of the course we had collaboratively created over years of hard work, had taken a new and better shape.   We knew that despite the fact that this change had been mandated from the top, and that the *SpringBoard* form in which it had been mandated was untenable, this first semester of improvisation had pushed our knowledge of curriculum design in important directions. And by recycling texts and some writing assignments that we knew we could make work for our students, we were able to do so in a way that made the changes livable and workable for us all.

In January, we started the course over from the beginning with a new set of students, and began the process of refining our new baby. But by June, a district-wide revolt against

SpringBoard had grown so contentious that the mandated implementation was rescinded. While the district officially spent the next year in curriculum limbo, then the following two years rewriting curriculum in order to realign with the purchase of the new edition of its old textbook series, the English 12 team forged ahead. We were still without a textbook, and thus largely enfranchised to continue to design what we thought was best for our students. It was during this relative autonomy to create and re-create a meaningful curriculum that the research year occurred.

Current English 12 Curriculum

Syllabus Analysis

A document analysis of the Fall 2007 English 12 course syllabus elucidated details of the curriculum change narrated above. A syllabus stands as the brief but public description of the objectives, values, texts, and assignments which make up this course. As a collaboratively constructed document, and one revised at the start of each semester, it presents the English 12 team vision of English as consisting of two primary skill sets: reading and writing. There are no explicit expectations of vocabulary, grammar, speech, or digital literacies.   In such a manner, the syllabus could be seen to present a fairly narrow and traditional conception of English. As a twelfth grade course, it may be that we have more willingly allowed ourselves to structure this English class like the classes of our own training as English majors. However the focal point of the syllabus breaks with traditional formalist approaches to literature study. Rather than treat reading as mere decoding skills, or New Critical analysis, reading in this course is defined by the ability to utilize multiple critical perspectives to "consider carefully the concept of truth as it is presented in texts" (English 12 Syllabus, 2007). This evaluative and critical view of reading as a thinking skill diverges from a strict decoding, and from the New Critical/ formalist perspective which has dominated high school English for much of the last fifty years (Applebee, 1996; Appleman, 2000).

Analysis of the texts listed in the syllabus also revealed an eclectic mix of texts (Table Table 4.1). During the research year, the syllabus named twenty-two texts from a variety of mediums and genres including drama, short stories, informational non-fiction, films, documentaries, and literary criticism. Although several canonical authors and texts appeared in the syllabus, a majority of the texts were modern or contemporary. Media texts represented a third of the listed titles (not including the three Shakespearean films taught in combination with

selected written passages).   Examining author and protagonists for all listed texts suggested that a majority of texts (59%) represented a dominant white, male, middle/ upper class point of view. However, there were texts representing non-dominant perspectives (either by race, class, and/ or gender) integrated into most of the lenses units.

Table 4.1: Analysis of English 12 Syllabus Fall 2007

Syllabus Feature	Number of texts	Percentage of texts
Total number of texts listed	22	100%
Texts retained from 1997	13	59%
Texts added since 1997	9	41%
Texts retained from Archetypes course	17	77%
Texts new to Perspectives course	5	23%
Non-fiction Texts (including documentary)	8	36%
Literary texts (fiction, poetry, drama, fiction film)	14	64%
Classics (written prior to 1940)	7	32%
Modern / Contemporary (written after 1940)	15	68%
Written	12	54%
Media Texts (primarily film)	7	32%
Texts studied in both written and media forms	3	14%
Author and/ or protagonist : Dominant culture (white, middle/ upper class, male) 13 =59%	13	59%
Author and/ or protagonist : Diverse perspectives (race, class, gender)	9	41%
Titles of new texts added in 2007	"Eleven", *Oedipus , A Doll's House, Trekkies, Tuesdays with Morrie* (excerpt)	

The syllabus also describes the types of writing students are expected to complete, as well as the instructional approach. Writing instruction privileges a process approach. Like the reading units developed around each lens, each paper represents a different genre of writing skills. Students are asked to complete papers in four different modes of academic writing: including narrative, literary analysis, secondary research, and primary research. Grammar instruction is unofficial, and expected to be embedded as part writing instruction. Likewise, explicit vocabulary instruction is not a part of this course. Although both Lydia and I have used digital writing assignments as part of other courses we teach, the twelfth grade course has not yet added a digital assignment to the course.

As I consider this syllabus, and reviewed the additions that were made over the decade I have been a part of the team, I think that there have been two guiding principles which have shaped the changes made. First was a desire to achieve a balanced curriculum. There was a desire to provide a balance in terms of genres, mediums, cultures and time periods in reading as well as writing. While none of the "balances" was ever perfect, additions or deletions to the curriculum were often considered in light of what they might add to this ideal of balance. The decision to add the poetry lessons described in the chapter introduction exemplified this principle of balance. This desire for balance may also suggest our semi-conscious awareness that we are constantly negotiating between the competing discourses of what it means to "teach English."

Perhaps coterminous with this desire for balance, is an increase in rigor over the last decade. Students in English 12 read more and write more than they did a decade ago. More important than quantity however, was that the expectations for higher level thinking increased. While the Archetypes course seemed to remain lower on Bloome's taxonomy, often at the level of application of patterns to new texts, the new focus on critical lenses has pushed students' written and oral work increasingly toward more analysis, synthesis, and evaluation   While NCLB added pressure with regard to rigor at other grade levels, English 12 does not have the burden of a state exam for which to prepare students. Instead, we see our "test" as students' college preparedness. The discourse of "college readiness" was a central feature of the building level discourse about PLCs, including in the school's vision statement which states that all students should be able to attend the post-secondary institution of their choice without remediation.

Trends in English 12 Curriculum Development

Curriculum development has been the main purpose of our twelfth grade team for our entire decade long history. The fact that there has never been a traditional textbook has meant that we have been much freer in our ability to adopt new and contemporary texts from a wide varieties of genres.   We could add or subtract texts and assignments, as we felt they better suited the needs of our students. However, there is certainly a trend in our selections toward conservation.   Even in the change from the Archetypes curriculum to the Perspectives curriculum, only five new texts were added to the syllabus since that time. There has been a slow but steady pace of change evident in the syllabus, and average rate of about one new text per year.   The changes which occurred in the transition to the Perspectives course include the addition of two more canonical texts, one media text, and two contemporary excerpts. However, the shifting text lists are only one measure of the changes in the course which occurred during this time. More importantly, the shift from the Archetypes course to the Perspectives course solidified our commitment to the vision of an English class as a skills based curriculum. No longer were we teaching a text list or a pattern list—we were teaching critical reading skills utilizing the texts listed on the syllabus.   Texts were retained or added on the text list to the extent that seemed appropriate to a particular critical perspective and our changing student demographics.   However, that does not necessarily mean that we have achieved a finished course. For example, as our student populations have shifted from 10% students of color to 30% student of color over the last decade, we need to keep asking ourselves if our text choices are those best suited to present a diversity of views and perspectives to an increasingly diverse population of students in our community.

I also believe that this curriculum is strongly affected by the role that prior reading and teaching experiences play, particularly in times of necessity. It is unlikely that under duress, teachers would select wholly unfamiliar texts to add to their curriculum. The economics of time and materials in most public schools add to this tendency toward conservation.   It is not just the apprenticeship of observation, but the political economies of K-12 reality which encourages English teachers to conserve their text choices and instructional practices. And I am not convinced that a slower pace of change does not also have some benefits for students. Rather than change for the sake of change, or retention for the sake of retention, I believe our team has done its best to utilize texts that are at once high interest and rigorous, traditional and contemporary. Our students benefit from the experiences veteran teachers have had with the

texts in the past, even if they have been in different contexts. For example, when we realized that *SpringBoard* would not serve our students, we pulled texts, assessments, and instructional methods from our existing repertoire and reworked them to better fit into our overall vision for the course.   Even though we were teaching a new curriculum, students were not the unwilling guinea pigs of endless experimentation. The team selected texts that we had successful experience teaching in other contexts. The gains made in the curriculum as re-constructed during the *SpringBoard* year were only possible through our collaboration, which represented the reintegration of our individual experiences and knowledge into collective knowledge.

Another historical trend evident in the team's curriculum history suggests that when faced with top-down mandated changes like the state Profile of Learning, or the district's adoption of *Springboard*, the English 12 team proceeded with caution. We are all people who generally follow the rules, provided they are reasonable: and we have used such mandates as guidelines. However, ultimately we chose to teach what we felt was best for our students and ourselves. While there have been times when we have quietly subverted top-down mandates, more often than not we would work through the established channels of change. Madeline, Lydia, or myself publicly would present and argue needed changes when given the opportunity as members of district level curriculum teams. We invited district curriculum specialists to visit with us and hear about the work we were achieving. This was not always met with enthusiasm by colleagues in other district departments or at the central office. When we shared our successful revision of *SpringBoard*, our team was labeled "arrogant" by a colleague in a different building. However, three years later, a significant portion of those revisions became the foundation for the "new" district curriculum. Meanwhile, our devotion to our team unity, and our penchant for meeting on Friday afternoons, over lunch, or during passing time to discuss lessons and debrief classroom discussions, was made fun of in our department. That is, until first our building, then most of the district, began to require all teachers to participate in professional learning communities in the fall of 2006.

Finally, it is important to note the content of this course as it is a representation of the values to which we have aspired during its creation. At the core of this course, it is a skills based approach to developing students' ability to write through a variety of genres, and to read the world through a variety of perspectives. This was true to a lesser degree in the original Archetypes courses, and has become more explicit and evident in the content of the Perspectives course in the last three years. However, this curriculum represents multiplicities of

values and tensions between those values. The inclusion of three Shakespearean texts in the Archetypes and initial version of the Perspectives courses bears witness to our love of classic literature and a desire for students to be culturally literate; but we strive to develop instructional approaches to Shakespeare in the classroom which are populist and critical. We use three different film versions of *Hamlet* in addition to excerpts from the texts to help our students evaluate the complexities of dramatic and cinematic performances.   Our main goals for students when teaching these canonical works remained enjoyment, appreciation, and evaluation, not formalist analysis. And ultimately, when we reached the point where we realized we could not "do it all," we cut those three plays down to one.

Most importantly, the central focus on critical perspectives stands as a representation of our desire to improve the lives of our students and the world. We understand this commitment to teaching as a type of social activism. When Lydia and I explained our goal for the Perspectives course in our first team meeting of the research year with Natalie, we merged the language of critical theory which was our current curricular focus, with the vision of Joseph Campbell's work which inspired much of the Archetypes course:

> RACHEL: The theories are tools,
> constructs we use to help make sense of the world.
> They are not good or bad, just useful or less useful.
> We know students arrive with one set of theories,
> and we hope that when they leave we have expanded their thinking.
> I mean, that is our ultimate goal.
> And for all of us that is a passion, and a political act.

> LYDIA: It is how we save the world.

> RACHEL: It is how we save the world. (Team meeting, 9.12.07)

This brief exchange encapsulated and encoded much of what our team's curricular goals are. We acknowledge that the curriculum is always inherently a politicized one. We acknowledge that our purposes as teachers are not merely about teaching vocabulary or grammar, not the discrete content of our texts, but in developing our students' critical thinking, skills which we believe are vital to their lives as individuals and citizens in a democracy. We were also communicating something about our vision of ourselves as teachers.   We have high expectations for ourselves. We approach this task as our life's work with "passion" and with a desire to act in accordance with the heroic virtues such as social justice and selflessness. We accomplish this work together.

But even while we were explaining to Natalie the basis of the English 12 curriculum, we did so in the language that was inherently part of our "insider" knowledge. Thus, while we intended to be explicit in our values orientation for Natalie, there is already in this brief exchange a tension. We could not yet know if Natalie shared our vision for teaching. Taken together, the prior curriculum history, the prior practice of making individual knowledge collective practice, and the established values of team unity and a critical literacy orientation, represent a dilemma for the integration of a new team member as a partner in curricular collaboration. These tensions suggested that our adherence to team unity might put the three of us veteran team members in a position to be the top-down curriculum dictators which we had worked hard to subvert in our earlier history together.

Collaborative Curriculum (Re) Development during Our Research Year

The major elements of the English 12 curriculum were already in place prior to the start of my research year. This included an articulated scope and sequence for the course, four writing assessments, four critical lenses assessments, and two embedded assessments of specific literary texts, *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet*. Given that these major pieces of the curriculum were largely in place at the start of the research year, what were the changes that were made in 2007-2008? How did they come to be enacted changes? What role did new teachers play in recreating this curriculum?

In the first team meeting of the year, Sam asked directly about the team's intentions for curriculum revision:

> SAM: What is the goal of this PLC? . . .
> I mean the curriculum is pretty set.
> There's a little shifting around.
> But do we have time to enter into discussions of further revisions specifically?
> I mean last year we thought we'd add this,
> and we did insert a few texts,
> but it didn't seem like we did change anything.
> If things are set,
> do we want to take some time
> to pick it apart a little bit more? (Team meeting, 9.12.07)

Sam's assessment of the previous year suggested that he viewed the curriculum as fairly complete. What was less clear from his statement was how much revision he was proposing to accomplish or deemed needed. Additionally, Sam's question twice established the major

constraint that all of our collaboration faced: the limited amount of time resources available to accomplish this work.

This key theme regarding "time" was also apparent in Madeline's response to Sam's questions, as she addressed the constraints felt over time, and specifically noted that time constraints limited the amount of revision that could be undertaken. However, Madeline also structured her reply to address what seemed an inherent critique in Sam's initial question—intended or not—that the team had not made many revisions the prior year. Madeline emphasized an important team norm of constant improvement, but noted that it was often incremental, and that even such small changes took time:

> MADELINE: I think we are always in revision mode.
> That is one thing I have observed about this group.
> Nothing is ever totally carved in stone.
> I mean we have a couple of our assignments that we are happy with,
> and we aren't all that invested in changing.
> But we are always working on something,
> and that stuff takes time. . .
> So I would envision something similar to last year,
> when there is a big assessment coming up
> we're looking at tweaking it.
>
> LYDIA: I think we are more in editing mode.
>
> MADELINE: But significant revision, no. (Team meeting, 9.12.07)

Lydia seconded Madeline's assessment of the state of the curriculum: while improvement would occur, it would be "editing" more than full scale "revision." And thus the curriculum tasks for the year seemed to have been generally established: there might not be any large scale changes planned now, but that small improvements would happen throughout the year. "Tweaking" might be expected to bring an assessment into better alignment with the goals of the lens or unit, or to restructure an assessment students struggled with the previous year to make it more clear or manageable. In part, perhaps having been through a major revision just a few years prior, the veteran team members seemed more inclined to rework than to engage in whole scale revision.

 Conversely, as new teachers on the team, I have to wonder did either Sam or Natalie hold the curriculum as complete as the veterans? Like the explanation of our teaching philosophy for Natalie discussed at the same meeting, this was a moment of potential tensions and multiple interpretations. Study after study by outside researchers has intended to achieve

"revision" in curriculum and teachers' instructional practices, only to be frustrated by the unendingly slow pace of such change. Was this a moment when the potential for change was shut down by the conservatism of more veteran, and thus more powerful, members of the team? Or is this a moment of mentorship: a suggestion to a new teacher that the process by which curricular improvements occur is slow, arduous but should be continual?

I believe that both these interpretations are valid, and that both these interpretations get to the heart of why collaborative curriculum development will not achieve quick fixes in any discipline. Change and improvement must be core principles of any collaboration: all collaborations must constantly inquire of themselves, "How can we make our teaching more beneficial to our students' learning?" In other words, it was essential that Sam's question here and Lydia's requests for poetry lessons which framed this chapter's opening narrative were asked. Our team was committed to keep pushing ourselves for improvements, in part to avoid the curriculum becoming irrelevant to the changing needs of our students. But we also needed to learn to be attuned to the voices of our newest colleagues, and early in the year we were not yet as conscious of how our prior collaborative practices might impact the participation of our new teachers.

Yet Madeline was also correct in her response to Sam. There would be innovation and improvements made throughout the year. However, for any change in curriculum to be collaborative, it required extensive time: to dialogue and deliberate; to gather the resources and information that might actually benefit our students learning. Unfortunately, time is undoubtedly the scarcest of the English teacher's resources.

Changes in Curriculum

However, despite just that one hour per week, and despite the discussion during the first meeting that there would be little "new" happening in the English 12 curriculum during year, there were two new elements of the curriculum which evolved during the school year.

The first was the addition of more explicit work with poetry partially described above. This was conceived of as a one to two day lesson. Although the lesson was considered unsuccessful in its first iteration, it was continually reworked each semester to try to achieve greater success with our students.

The second curriculum revision I consider a critical issue during the research year: the deliberate attempt to become more explicit about the college readiness skills our seniors would

require for success in post-secondary classrooms. This instance of "new curriculum" serves to illustrate some of the contours and constraints of the curriculum development process as it occurred in the context of collaboration.

College Readiness Skills: Outing a Hidden Curriculum

The development of a more explicit focus on college readiness skills in the English 12 curriculum originated from multiple sources, internal and external to the group itself. As I prepared for my role as researcher on the team, I felt committed to an action research design as the main emphasis of my methodology. In the summer months as I prepared and revised my research proposal from the perspective of action research, I reflected extensively on our dialogues from the previous year, and particularly, what had been the frustrations and puzzles we had been trying to work out together (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Most of our frustrations the previous spring were regarding students' not meeting our expectations for academic behavior: arriving at class without materials, or without completing assignments. Based on these reflections on the previous year, I began to wonder if we wanted to begin to explicitly emphasize the academic and behavioral skills that would be required of them as college students. During the first meeting, I raised this as a possible focus for the team generally, and my role as researcher specifically:

> RACHEL: As I did some thinking this summer,
> there was a thematic thread which kept emerging over and over with twelfth grade.
> And that had to do with the college transition.
> We felt like we have a lot of students,
> who in addition to developing their academic reading, writing and speaking skills with us,
> we felt like they needed work on
> what does it mean to be a student,
> and what does it mean to be an independent college student. . . .

> MADELINE: It might increase their ability to survive in college, to actually stick it out.

> RACHEL: Yeah. So there is a dual purpose.
> A lot of times it came out in our conversations
> as we were irritated with students behaving in ways
> that we thought were ridiculous.
> But the flip side of that is that they need those skills
> if they are going to survive in college classrooms. . .

> If we were interested in pursuing it further,

> those are the kind of things I can help do.
> If there is some focused inquiry or research
> we wanted to do on this issue,
> that is something I would feel confident and comfortable trying to support,
> in whatever way we felt would be appropriate.
> I mean collecting student data, classroom observations, etc.
>
> (Team meeting, 9.12.07)

Although I knew that theoretically, I was proposing a hidden curriculum become part of the explicit curriculum, I had not yet imagined what enacting this type of work would look like in our classes or curriculum. Additionally, as the only non-teaching member of the team this year, I was wary of asking too much of my colleagues' time for what I was concerned might be my own "pet projects" motivated more by dissertation demands than their own perceived needs of the classroom.

However, immediately after I made this proposal, Lydia shared how she has already been making some of the hidden curriculum connected to academic behavioral expectations explicit in her class. In the letter of introduction assigned on their first day of class, Lydia asked each student to explain their post-secondary educational plans. She tabulated the data for each class, which revealed that almost 100% of her students expected to begin some post secondary education the following year. She then shared the results with each class. As she explained to the team, "I put that data up for them to see, and said 'I am going to teach this as though you are all going to college. This is what you said, and what I need to do as part of my job'" (Team meeting, 9.12.07). Lydia's modeling for us all immediately became a tangible way in which we could begin to frame the discussion about the college transition for all of our students.

Two weeks later, as midterm approached, Lydia came to our team meeting with a draft of a student self-assessment of behavioral expectations. She asked for feedback from the team, and once approved, it became part of a midterm reflection. Lydia described how she would use it as a concrete opportunity to discuss some of the behavioral expectations we had for them as students. While the expectations appear in some ways mundane, anecdotally Lydia reported that they seemed to be working to decrease frustrations and improve the academic tone in her English 12 courses. In fact, she expressed more frustration with her advanced level students this fall than her "regular" English 12 students. In both instances, these small additions to the opening week and midterm week of the course became helpful instructional tools for making the assumed behaviors expected of independent college students more apparent to our high school seniors.

The initial impetus for this part of our work on college readiness skills work had come from inside the team. First through our dialogues the prior year, then later through my reflections on those dialogues, and Lydia's translation of those discusses into practical activities which all teachers could embed in the opening weeks of the course. However, there were also external forces which pushed the development of these goals in unexpected directions as the year continued.

Of Acronyms and Progress in Our College Readiness Curriculum: Part One

From early on in the research year, our school's administrative team pushed the idea of SMART goals as a way to make explicit the purpose each professional learning community had for the year.   The SMART goal was, of course, an acronym: a paean to the accountability movement of which our team and our department generally has been skeptical. It stands for:

- S = Specific
- M = Measurable
- A = Achievable
- R = Relevant
- T = Time-bound

Almost immediately upon receipt of the worksheet instructing each team to write and implement their SMART goals for the year, the English Department started to gripe. Most of our teachers' biggest concern was over the concept of "measurable," quickly translated as "test scores."   Many of English teachers chafed at the idea of measuring our students' learning about reading or writing through standardized test scores. As a department leader, I was stuck in the middle: knowing that explicit goals and purposes may aid our collaborations, while also recognizing that test scores are not the only or best way to measure student learning. So at our department wide meeting held in September, I collected and presented a number of models that might include data informed, but not data driven, SMART goals, as well as more diverse ways to think about "data" than simply standardized test results we were used to seeing at staff meetings.

As the English 12 team did not have any state standardized tests, it was difficult to imagine a SMART goal which seemed to answer the principal's request. But at a meeting in October, I proposed a goal which seemed in line with our curricular focus. Although it was perfunctory to some extent, the team accepted and "turned in" our PLC assignment on SMART

goals. Our goal for the year read: "75% of senior English students will self-assess their writing skills as proficient."   (SMART Goal Planning sheet, 10.07). We agreed that I would design a writing self-assessment to administer during the last week of the semester. With that required task seemingly out of the way, we tabled the discussion until late January when the self-assessment would be actually needed in class.

At our first January meeting, I asked about the self-assessment briefly in terms of formatting and purpose. Taking this feedback from the team, my knowledge of our curricular goals, as well as using two outside resources, the *College Board's Standards for College Readiness* (2006) and *College Knowledge* (Conley, 2005), I developed a first draft of the self-assessment. Rather than focus exclusively on writing, as I wrote I decided to expand to include the core reading, writing and research skills that were important to our curriculum and those tasks which are typically required of first year college students.

At our next weekly meeting, and in line with regular team practice for composing course documents, I presented a rough draft for team editing. Almost immediately, what had begun as a rather perfunctory task to fulfill an administrative requirement became something more. Lydia noted, "This has good language that would help them talk about their progress." Madeline agreed, suggesting that this would provide "thoughtful" self-reflection for students on the last day of class, as well as feedback to us on their own sense of mastery of these core skills. After some minor group wordsmithing (a potentially cumbersome task for English teachers), each of the teachers used the self-assessment in the last days of the course (Appendix B). We then retained the student questionnaire responses for a simple statistical analysis and discussion to occur in the upcoming weeks.

Of Acronyms and Progress in Our College Readiness Curriculum: Part Two

Having met the administrative requirement that each team collect and utilize some data in our planning, the use of the College Readiness Self-Assessment might have ended there. However, the purpose and usage of the self-assessment took an unexpected turn the very next week. At the start of a new semester with all new students, Sam and Natalie were unexpectedly observed by the building principal on the first day of their new classes. Although the principal's critiques varied, for both untenured teachers there was a new core message and focus: they needed to be more explicit in their presentation of the ELOs—another acronym for Essential Learning Outcomes—of the course, and each lesson. The concept of the ELO certainly is not a new one: Madeline Hunter called them "objectives;"; Wiggens and McTighe (2006) called them

Enduring Understandings. However, the fact that neither of these untenured teachers had presented course ELOs on the first day was interpreted as a problem in their practice, and thus also a problem for the English 12 team.

Our weekly team meeting began with a long debriefing on the observations and critiques provided by the principal. In particular, Sam had been unfavorably compared with another untenured teacher who was regularly using ELOs in her lesson design. After some general grumbling about standardization, we grudgingly dug out the ELOs assignment sheet from the principal. If our new teachers were going to be judged on this criteria, we better all take a look at it together.   After a few minutes of grumbling discussion interpreting the language of the document, Sam had a break through realization: "These are the college readiness statements—from the self-assessment" (Team meeting, 1.30.08).

This was an example of what Sam later termed an "accidental eureka" (Team meeting, 3.26.08). In a flash, we were with him, and excitedly reimagining the use of the document and the concept of the ELO. Ideas started to percolate, and we rapidly got to work.   Lydia mentioned she had used the self-assessment already in her opening day of her CIS class as a discussion starter.   Sam described it as becoming a "living" portfolio document. Madeline reminded us that this wasn't actually going to *change* our assessments, but it would explain the rationale for our choice in assessments. We began to re-imagine the two week-old document, and the uses it could have in the course not just as a final self-reflection, but as a guiding document for the students to utilize through the semester as we worked to improve their literacy skills.   We agreed that we would share this with the new classes as part of the opening activities, return to it periodically to refocus students on our goals, as well as tabulate some student data on it at the end of the semester.

As a team new to working with quantitative data, it took us a number of weeks to organize and tabulate the results from the first semester administration of the College readiness Self-Assessment. In preparation for a meeting in March, I put the first semester data into a table which highlighted skills where less than 70% of the students self-reported being able to accomplish the task "always" or "usually" (Table 4.2). Based on the conversation, we wondered how much of the students' reported lack of confidence might have actually been more about lack of familiarity with the discourses of literacy utilized in the self-assessment. Admittedly, if one does not know what the statement of a skill actually means, it would be difficult to know if one were actually able to do so.

The revisions in instruction that took place between semester one and two as a result of this work with college readiness included a commitment to improving our ongoing communication of course goals, and making more explicit the relationship between daily activities and the long term goal of college readiness. These changes are ironic in two ways. First, it forced us to admit that even the enacted curriculum may not always be that explicit to students. While we set off to address some aspects of the hidden curriculum, it became apparent that the enacted curriculum as we teachers saw it may have been hidden from students. Second, despite our grumblings, we had in fact begun to address the annual PLC goals that our building administrators had assigned us.

Table 4.2: Results of College Readiness Self-Assessment
Percent= English 12 students stating personal confidence "always" or "usually" in skill.

Literacy Skill Area	Semester One n=174 students	Semester Two n=116 students	Difference Semester One to Two
Main idea	85%	89%	+ 4%
Evaluating language in a text	67%	83%	+16%
Literary conventions	85%	87%	+2%
Critical lenses	69%	80%	+11%
Analyze influence of culture/ history	48%	56%	+8%
Slow down on difficult passages	79%	84%	+5%
Take notes	47%	60%	+13%
Vocab strategies	66%	74%	+8%
Reader response/ multiple perspectives	73%	77%	+4%
Prewriting	82%	75%	-7%
Paragraphing	79%	84%	+5%
Thesis	70%	78%	+8%
Organizing ideas	73%	80%	+7%
Evidence	81%	84%	+3%
Style matched to audience and purpose	60%	72%	+12%
Revision	62%	72%	+10%
Editing	68%	76%	+8%
Source evaluation	81%	84%	+3%
Plagiarism	85%	89%	+4%
Documentation of sources	82%	86%	+4%

Results of and Reflection on College Readiness Curriculum Year One

By the end of the year, the percentages of students' self-reported confidence in these skills areas increased or remained the same in all but one category (Table 4.2). Although obviously we were working with different students, given that there were not any other significant changes in the content of the curriculum of the course for this semester, the team analysis of the data suggested that students' improved self-confidence could be related to more explicit classroom discourse used around these skills. Each time the teachers collaboratively or individually discussed the college readiness self-assessment, the conversation turned to the importance of it as part of classroom discourse: our articulation of these twenty course goals gave us a common classroom language through which teachers and students could discuss these skills. The team continued to re-edit the self-assessment document itself to utilize more student friendly languages, as well as more closely align with the daily language of our classrooms.

Conversely, the language of the self-assessment also began to inform classroom instruction and developed into a narrative about the role that these skills would play in their future studies as college students. While this work may be seen as parallel to our "explicit" curriculum on critical lenses, there was a coherence between the two. Both the work with critical lenses and the work on self-assessment and college readiness were acknowledgements that in order to become successful college students, our students needed to be taught discourses about what it means to be a student. Both sets of ideas empower students to become a part of a discourse community. The critical lenses name specific theories from literature and the social sciences that might be used to demystify the constructed nature of knowledge. The college readiness self-assessment likewise gave students a powerful language through which they could participate in dialogue with their instructors about their strengths and challenges as students; it attempted to demystify what the English 12 teachers (and their future college instructors) expected of them as students.

By the end of the year, the veteran teachers generally agreed that the College Readiness focus was the most important revision made in the English 12 curriculum during this school year. However, they also felt that its impact was subtle. As Lydia explained, the purpose of this curriculum revision was about being explicit with students and teaching them the language of academic literacies:

> LYDIA: I think the ELOs/ college readiness survey has been probably the biggest change that we made this year.

Not even that we did that much with it.
But me as a teacher, thinking about that, looking at that list.
[The students] are articulating it so well
and they're using the language.
I just think it's been really helpful. (Interview 6.3.08)

Although Lydia's evaluation that the curriculum change was minimal in terms of time commitment ("we didn't even do that much with it"), the power in this change was in giving a common language to our goals as teachers such that we could share them with our students. Although we knew tacitly what our overarching goals were, this written articulation helped make it explicit and open to public discussion. Thus, the written articulation and presentation of the ELOs also facilitated communication with our students. Like the belief in critical theory which lies at the foundation of the course, part of the power in the development of our college readiness goals was in naming what we were doing for ourselves and our students, and in framing the classroom discourse around literacy skills in terms of the relevance for academic and practical applications in their future lives.

Another critical context under which this revision in curriculum occurred was a fusion of top-down pressure and bottom-up motivation. Aspects of this work originated in the discussions and frustrations from previous years of teaching experiences. The veteran teachers observed that there were all too common mismatches between our expectations of students and their actions. We were invested in making college readiness skills more explicit because we felt it was important to their motivation in our classrooms, as well as their success in future studies.

However, the nature of the instructional uses and level of detail expressed in the college readiness self-assessment document certainly are also a result of the administrative mandates. The principals first required some type of "measurable" SMART goal in order to provide justification for our work in PLCs. Our team responded reluctantly, by planning a student self-assessment of writing skills. Through our collaboration, the task evolved to become a more comprehensive look at all the core literacy skills in the course, envisioned as an end-of-course reflection. As a result of an additional mandate from the principals to create a list of student-friendly ELOs, we realized that what we had generated for our SMART goal, also fulfilled administration's desire for a more explicitly articulated sets of course, unit, and lesson objectives.

What morals are there in this story for us, for other PLCs, and for principals desirous to utilize PLCs? I believe that we are not unlike most teachers, nor most students: we chafe at being required to complete a task that feels like busy work, or offends our beliefs in some way. In this case, the principal's mandate suggested to us a diminishment of our own professionalism; the handouts on which the tasks were communicated looked like busy work; and both the SMART goals and ELOs suggested to us a statistical and standardized view of our classrooms. Even the fact that each had an acronym was a part of the problem: the mystification of language—that additional barrier to comprehension—and the recommended quick fixes that we had all experienced at the hands of acronyms, caused us to resist. The top-down mandate, and the critique of our new teachers' lessons, also made explicit the power that administration had over us all: by insisting untenured staff follow these requirements under the constant threat of losing their positions, there was added discomfort, but ultimately compliance with the two tasks.   These perceptions were barriers in getting our team to "buy-in" to the use of the ELOs and SMART goals.

However, once we re-envisioned the work in such a way that it was relevant to our immediate classroom needs and concerns, we became invested in the task. We were able to generate a change in classroom discourse in which we believed.   These feelings of self-efficacy suggest a key component of the power within a PLC. As Lydia succinctly explained:

> LYIDA: Okay we've got to do these ELOs.
>   What are we going to do?
>   We'll make them our own.
>   And now they're affecting the students in great ways. (Interview, 6.3.08)

 In the English 12 team, in part because it was always "we" responding to the requirements, we repeatedly were able to reframe the implied anti-professionalism suggested in such tasks, and turn them into exemplars of our professional beliefs and practices. However, it is only through the collaboration that such improvements and re-imaginings occur.

Chapter 5 : The Language of Our Collaboration

The practices of the Lafayette Falls High School English 12 team are intimately tied to language. Language was the medium of exchange through the weekly collaborative meetings, and the myriad of daily interactions between teachers. Language was the subject matter of our talk as well. As high school English teachers, our passion for literature, writing, and media, and our desire to frame classroom conversations effectively for our students were primary goals for our team.

As such, language was also the primary focus of data collection for this study. The audio recordings made of our weekly meetings served as a means of preserving the detail of what was said, and how it was said. Most importantly, as a researcher with multiple roles in this setting, it allowed me the opportunity to return multiple times to the meeting and for various purposes. Initial summary logs were created for each meeting. As I improved my data collection and facilitation strategies throughout the year, by second semester these logs were used as much as a means of reflecting, organizing my follow-up actions, and preparing an agenda for the next meetings, and thus served the action research aspects of this design well. After the data collection officially ended, the audio recordings allowed me to return to the meetings, and to reconsider the multiple ways in which a conversation might be interpreted by our different team members. It is through our shared language that the problems of learning and teaching and our tentative solutions also emerge. Thus our language-in-use structured the collaboration, as well as the inquiry into our collaboration, in multiple and reflexive ways (Gee 1999).

Dialogue was the primary means of interaction and learning within the group meeting times. Although we often would bring documents created for classroom use, we only occasionally brought our actual texts or student work into group meetings. As such, the language of our interactions served as the most important data source throughout this research. Gee (1999) argued that language serves two main purposes: 1. It supports the performance of social activities and identities and 2. It supports human affiliation within cultures, groups, and institutions (p.1). Language-in-use is also always political—that is it offers a perspective on reality that suggests what is valued within the social group it shapes (Gee, 1999, p. 2). Part of the importance of examining our language in use was to allow us the opportunity to determine if our values and our language matched. By recording and reflecting on our language, it allowed us the opportunity to notice and then disrupt the routines of our interactions as means for change, supporting our group in the active (re)building process (Gee, 1999, p.10).

Thus this chapter examines the language of our collaboration to investigate the ways we were learning to be "English 12 teachers" together. As will be demonstrated, our weekly conversations were both to talk about practice, and to practice talking together for the sake of our own learning, and ultimately, our students' learning. This chapter will explore two of the most prominent features of our language in use during collaboration, intertextuality and narrativity. Each of these discourse phenomena will be explored for the implications they have for building democratic learning communities generally, and for mentoring early careers teachers in heterogeneous collaborations specifically.

Intertextuality: The Border Politics of Language

One of the key features of the discourse of our group was the density of intertextual references evident in most group meetings. Intertextuality is an important feature of the social dimensions of speech. Intertextuality is defined as incorporating or "borrowing" the words from another; it contains an assumption of, or allusion to, shared history, knowledge, philosophies, purposes, texts (Fairclough 2001; Gee 1999). Broadly construed, to speak at all is to utilize intertextuality. Bakhtin (1981) argued the hybridity of all speech acts: as social beings, we can only communicate with another through utilization of the words and language which preceded us and the speech act, and which always already assumes an audience and that audience's response. Thus as we speak, our use of intertextuality constructs ourselves as speakers, as well as our relationship to our audiences.

While all speech acts contain some level of intertextuality, more narrowly defined, intertextual references require that listeners must decide "which inference is relevant?" As relevance is tied to previous experiences, to "context, point of view, and culture" (Gee, 1999, p.46-47), such references to things, ideas, or people outside the immediate context create barriers to communication when such specialized knowledge is presupposed or normalized (Gee, 1999; Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto & Shuart-Faris, 2005). Thus while intertextuality may enhance collaboration for those with similar contextual knowledge, it could inhibit collaboration within more heterogeneous groups. It positions a newcomer as "outsider," and its power of exclusion comes by hailing those who know the history, reference, text, or discourse, and ignoring those who do not. Intertextuality thus is one feature of a discourse community which defines the "borders politics" of group membership (Achinstein, 2002). As such, intertextuality constructs the positionality of both insider and outsider: it reminds an outsider of

his/her status, as it simultaneously announces the insider's affiliations. Paradoxically, through the power of exclusion, intertextuality creates community inclusion.

A teaching dilemma I have wrestled with might serve to bring the theory of intertextuality into the realm of classroom practice. For me, attempting to read, view, or teach the satire archetype pattern illustrates these dual insider/ outsider elements of intertextuality most potently. Whether it is an episode of *The Simpsons*, a political cartoon, or Swift's "A Modest Proposal," satirists frequently use intertextuality to critique the popular or political culture of the time. While *The Simpsons* or *The Family Guy* might use an intertextual reference to Hollywood celebrities accessible by many, but importantly, not all, students, Jonathan Swift's allusions from the eighteenth century play out as virtually indecipherable for most high school classes today. To read Swift's essay the typical high school student must either: a) research eighteenth century European history, b) have a copiously footnoted student edition, c) let an English teacher interpret for him or her, or d) ignore all such references. None of these options are likely to be very appealing or gratifying to the teen reader. So the teacher must decide how much prior knowledge is needed to make the reading experience enjoyable and comprehensible and how to present that information effectively. Under such circumstances, the instructor must decide if the enterprise of reading Swift simply places too many barriers to "speak" to her classroom audience.

However, regardless of the type of expertise demanded by such intertextuality, claiming such expertise will make one feel gratified, "in the know" and "in on the joke."   In other words, the speaker/ narrator/ author/ teacher hails the audience and defines a more intimate relationship through creation of insider knowledge. Accordingly, an audience who is not "hailed" as having that special knowledge embedded in the intertextual references, will sense the "otherness" of being outside the communication, and likely dismiss it as either irrelevant or condescending.

The implications of intertextuality are significant for learning in classrooms, as well as in teacher collaborations. Intertextuality provides cues to the status and relationships of the members of a learning community. The assumptions a teacher makes about student prior knowledge can have obvious consequences both for learning of content and for the development of relationships. If I assume that all of my students know that Swift was an Anglo-Irish clergyman, or even assume that all of my students get my references to *The Simpsons*, I have articulated a differentiation in status based upon prior knowledge.

It is no different if the learning and relationships are among teachers as learners. The jargon of education is a barrier for students, parents, and new teachers alike in learning to communicate and collaborate within the culture of schooling. Regardless of the subject discipline, schooling as an institution also is riddled with intertextual references. Whether they are the nationalized acronyms favored by educational pundits, or adopted locally by building or department administration, this "mystification" of language (Freire, 1973) creates specific barriers for new teachers entering a school, a building, and a learning community. New teachers typically enter the profession younger, with less life experience, less prior knowledge of the subject, their teaching context, and their pedagogical content knowledge than their veteran peers. They are usually assigned to teach equal or greater numbers of preps, without prior knowledge of the culture of the community, school, department, or curriculum. They are treated as equals, often spoken to as equals, yet this may paradoxically position new faculty at every meeting as unequals. Creating a democratic learning community does not suggest treating everyone "the same," but in identifying the differentiated learning needs of each individual.

Of course, it would have been better if I had had a more concrete understanding and approach to this problem of intertextuality before I began the inquiry work with our team in the Fall of 2007.

Intertextuality in teaching English and the English 12 team

The problems of intertextuality may have been particularly exaggerated in the context of our group. First, the nature of our subject discipline, teaching English, traditionally has meant teaching literary, and often canonical, texts. Regardless of the revisions and expansions made in re-defining secondary literacy over the last decade, many secondary language arts instructors see themselves as experts on literary texts. To perform the discourse of an "English teacher" in most circles I have observed includes being well versed in both classics and "meritorious" contemporary literature and film. I cringe now even as I realize that writing about teaching English becomes impossible to do without embedding the textual references that make our stories recognizable to each other. We were lauded by undergraduate English literature professors for the well placed allusion or pithy quote in our own writing and speech, as well as in the analysis of the texts we admire. High school teachers often instruct and reward their

students for the same. We may well pre-judge our English teaching colleagues along similar criteria for the ability to speak the highly specific and intertextual language of "English teacher."

Additionally, the configuration of our particular group with three new members and three veterans with almost a decade of collaborative history meant that intertextuality was again given added weight.   Although we had equal numbers of new and veteran team members during the research year, which should have provided the impetus to carefully construct the discourse to address the newest teachers, each of the newest members started at a different time, with different background knowledge, and in a very different teaching context. Sam had taught just one semester of English 12 the previous year, but was in his third year teaching at LFHS. Natalie began in the fall. She was new to English as a discipline, new to the building, and had just one prior year experience in a middle school. To complicate matters more, in order to reach a full time position in the district, Natalie spent her mornings at another district school, drove to LFHS, and arrived after the departmental lunch time to teach one afternoon class. Finally, Kathy joined the team in March. Although she was a student teacher, she came from the same university program where Madeline, Sam and I had all done graduate work. As a student teacher, she had been observing in Lydia's classroom for three months before she actually began her teaching, and thus had a more gradual introduction to the language of the department and the course than Natalie did. The complications of three very different relationships to the subject discipline, the school, and the department, coupled with the staggered starting date of collaboration within the team meant that intertextuality exerted a significant influence on the team's discourse, which reflexively shaped the group during the study year.   Thus, for our group, the dimensions of having three teachers new to the team, and two new to the school as well, meant that to some extent in order to open the borders of our group and welcome new members, we would all have to learn how to speak the same language.

Intertextuality in use: A language of love

During the first official meeting of the school year we engaged in a discussion of group norms.   Madeline expressed awareness immediately that the language she and Lydia used in more casual team communication was "a secret code" (Team meeting, 9.12.07). Like any existing group, our "social language" (Gee, 1999) included shared knowledge, shared ways of speaking and knowing, and philosophical as well as technical knowledge of teaching. The three veterans have joked that we speak in a discourse as familiar and comfortable as that of home or

a marriage; and indeed this team was our primary intellectual and professional home for all the prior decade we worked together. We could complete each other's thoughts and sentences; interrupt, overlap, and there is almost never a breakdown in communication, unless someone has been away for an extended period of time. Unlike most families though, I can't remember a time when we have ever fought. We've deliberated, debated, discussed: but professional compromises were never about "giving up" or "giving in," they always were about learning a new way to see or accomplish a task.

The most obvious examples of intertextuality at play in our "veteran English 12 teacher" discourse are the explicit references to literary or scholarly works, particularly those commonly taught in the curriculum. Such references have a special status among the veterans: the literary geeks that we are, the words and titles and characters of our texts do become part of the language of love for us. Literally. When I named my daughter Beatrice, it was after our favorite Shakespearean heroine (fortunately, my husband and I also shared this allusion). When Madeline retired, the only way to express our love for her was in a rewriting of passages from *The Things They Carried*. Carol Bly (1990) argued to be wary of war metaphors, but O'Brien is explicit: these are first and foremost stories about love, not war. We took such enjoinders to heart. Collectively, we love literature, especially the literature we have chosen to teach. To speak these words to each other are to also speak of our shared love for subject and for each other.

Our use of intertextuality also speaks our shared philosophies. As an example, I return here to the exchange in our first team meeting regarding our vision of teaching English 12, as we explained our underlying purposes for course to Natalie. The perspective of intertextuality locates the tension evident within our language. Lydia used a quote from Joseph Campbell's *The Power of Myth,* an excerpt of which has been in the course as long as I remember.

> RACHEL: The theories are tools,
>   constructs we use to help make sense of the world.
>   They are not good or bad, just useful or less useful.
>   We know students arrive with one set of theories,
>   and we hope that when they leave we have expanded their thinking.
>   I mean, that is our ultimate goal.
>   And for all of us that is a passion, and a political act.

> LYDIA: It is how we save the world.

RACHEL: It is how we save the world. (Team meeting, 9.12.07)

This was a powerful statement of the veterans' vision for the course, for us as teachers, and the philosophy which unites the veteran team members as "English 12 teachers." In this text, Campbell interpreted the mythical journey of the hero as a metaphor for the nobility of everyday life: that in becoming vital human beings ourselves, we thus also "save the world." We were communicating something about the vision that sustains us as teachers: that we are part of a small everyday heroic attempt to improve the lives of those around us. We also blazon that this is "all of us," a team, for it is "how *we* save the world," not the solo teacher in her own classroom, but that *we* accomplish this work together.

While we intended that this opening "norms meeting" would provide Natalie with an explicit introduction to our values, a tension already emerged. The allusion shared and the repeated use of first person plural pronouns inscribed Natalie as an outsider, one uninitiated into the shared texts and practices of our team. Even while we were explaining to Natalie the basis of the English 12 curriculum, we did so in the language that was inherently part of our "insider" knowledge. So while the intertextuality here and the curriculum generally, represented "our" values and beliefs about teaching, we could not yet know if this was representative of Natalie's values. And although she mentioned that she was designing a research project around critical literacies, she said little about what this meant to her in this first meeting. Thus, at this official initiation of our new collaboration, we could not yet know if she shared our passion, our politics, and could not assume she would be familiar with the texts being referenced, and that make up much of the discourse of our team.

Thus, intertextuality speaks to the veterans as a language of intimacy and shared beliefs—two hallmarks of a democratic community (Westheimer, 1998). But conversely, and simultaneously, intertextuality can function as a currency of exchange, of knowledge, or status, and thus likewise, a badge of membership. When Little (1990) claimed the nature of teachers' talk was too "densely coded" to be of much sense to newcomers, I would have to agree. While listening to our recordings now, I wondered frequently what sense a newcomer or outsider could make of our conversations. And I know on some level the veterans all felt this shift. Madeline's spontaneous public naming of our English 12 language as "a secret code" suggested as much. Meanwhile, in the casual conversations outside of our official meetings, Madeline and Lydia commented to me several times first semester that our meetings felt more challenging

this year.   I would speculate now that we were semi-conscious that our shifting membership in the group required a shift away from our familial discourses, and the dense intertextuality that accompanied it.

Intertextuality as performance and prop: Agency in curricular decisions

Another strand of conversation from early in the first semester of the year provided a good example of the problem of intertextuality our three new English teacher encountered. One of the tasks that arose spontaneously in this meeting included a discussion about possible titles for a film analysis assignment. In this deliberation, Natalie was effectively, although not intentionally, excluded from the discussion as a result of the heavily intertextual nature of the discourse used.

Sam initiated the discussion. Sam's first experience with teaching the film the three veterans used, *A River Runs Through It*, had not been positive. He had already broached the subject of substituting texts with Lydia before the meeting, yet the question *in situ* began an impromptu debate about the merits of three different film choices.

The intertextual references included the three film titles being debated, *A River Runs Through It, The Graduate,* and *Big Fish,* one additional film title referenced as a joke, plus references to five curricular texts including *Oedipus Rex, Hamlet, Roger and Me, The Things They Carried.* Only one of these texts (*Oedipus*) had Natalie experienced teaching at this point in the semester.   For one thirteen minute segment of the meeting while several film titles were debated, Natalie was almost silent. She took no formal turns in the conversation, although she laughed three times at jokes which referenced popular culture or generalizable classroom situations.

In such a case as this, Sam had an enormous relational advantage in this conversation, for even though he had only taught the course once, his knowledge of these texts and their curricular significance gave him authorization to recommend a change in titles, as well as insider status throughout the discussion. Gee (1999) suggested that in this way discourses generally, and intertextuality specifically, become props that aid in recognition and authorization of the speaker as "insider" (p. 22, 27). As such, even though Sam was also relatively new to the team, his ability to deploy his knowledge of the texts under debate through the intertextual references he made to them, gave him an editorial power to suggest an alternative curriculum in a way in which Natalie did not at this moment.

After thirteen minutes of conversation, Natalie's first conversational turn revealed a possible reason for her silence:

> Natalie: I've gotta get that movie ((*A River Runs Through It*))
> Rachel: Have you ever seen it?
> Natalie: No ((laugh)) I was thinking that I've gotta put that on my to do list
>   (Team meeting, 9.26.07)

Natalie's comment could be read as an explanation, or apology for her silence, but it was also marked by several additional marginalizing elements. First, it highlights that she was not yet familiar with the text that had been under debate. Thus, much of the previous conversation positioned her as an outsider, without the intertextual "props" the rest of the team shared. Her marginalized positioning is further substantiated through the density of intertextual references throughout the conversation: the nine texts referenced, and all speech turns for this period of conversation revolve around text analysis, deliberation, or instructional decisions regarding the specific texts. As a brand new teacher to the team, and the only one of the six of us who had not majored in English or Communications, Natalie was forced to acquire a new subject matter discourse as she learned about her two new schools. Furthermore, given that Natalie was also the only African-American member of the team, and all of the titles referenced in this conversation represented white male perspectives, there also may be an unintended, but racialized dynamic embedded within this discourse. As the veteran teachers relied so heavily on intertextuality derived from our culturally specific and shared texts as part of our normal discourse, we were unknowingly maintaining a border between ourselves, and our new teachers.

While intertextuality clearly operated as a socio-linguistic border for Natalie's membership in these early meeting, some of its force dissipated over the hours, days, weeks and months the group spent together, as she, Sam, and Kathy gained experienced teaching with the team.   For example, by the very next meeting, Natalie had seen *A River Runs Through It*, was in the midst of teaching it in her class, and asked questions for some help structuring her students' post-viewing discussions and practice analysis with her students. Madeline, Lydia, and myself shared some of the most useful scenes for analysis, and provided samples of our own analysis and micro-narratives of students' conversation in order to help Natalie predict the type of conversation to expect and help Natalie plan the discussion she would have in her class.

Certainly, this does not erase the marginalization which occurred as a result of intertextuality, but experience and the duration of collaboration mitigates some of the barriers it presents.

However, simply waiting for experience to run its course isn't the answer to effective mentoring of new teachers. It could take years and years for a novice to catch up on the accepted discourse in a particular community. We were reminded of this toward the end of the second discussion of teaching *A River Runs Through It*. Lydia suggested that her knowledge of a particular scene and its significance is based on her experience with the film: "I only know that because I have seen the film fifty times" (Team meeting, 10.03.07). Lydia appeared to be apologizing to Natalie for her knowledge of the film's minutiae; but the problem for Sam, Natalie, Kathy, or any new teacher is that Lydia is not exaggerating. Given the four by four block schedule at LFHS, Lydia's typical teaching schedule teaching four sections of English 12 per year, and her tenure on this team, Lydia really had seen the film about fifty times by this mid-point in her teaching history. New teachers or students could feel condescended to or overwhelmed by the detailed knowledge the veterans teachers had of the texts we were discussing. Veterans detailed knowledge of a text, their knowledge of students' potential responses to that text, and their materials for instruction, can be shared with a new teacher. But it was very difficult to know at this early point in the semester how helpful this sharing was for Natalie.

Here's what I wish I had realized earlier in the year: we veterans, and me specifically as facilitator, needed to find more concrete ways to break through our own intertextuality, and the knowledge of the curriculum it represented, to attempt to see and speak more frequently from the perspective of an early career teacher. After a decade in the same course, the same school, it was a perspective that I began to realize that I no longer inhabited well. If I was to become a better colleague, department leader, and teacher educator, I had better inhabit it more richly than I did during the first semester of our inquiry.

Additionally, I can see how access to the perspective of the newest teachers might also help my own instruction of my high school students. The experiences, opinions, and questions that Natalie, Sam, and Kathy carried into our team might have at times more closely anticipated those of our students: like our students, the new teachers had not seen or read most of the curriculum's texts before, let alone fifty times. A new teacher's questions or confusions about a text might serve as important reminders for veteran teachers. Even more importantly, as I look at this first semester again in retrospect, I wish we had asked Natalie two important questions at the outset of the formalist film unit, and all subsequent instructional units: "If you could teach

any text for this critical perspective, what would it be? Why?" While we felt that we were assisting Natalie by sharing our maps through each unit, and she generally did chose to follow these directions, we should have also been more forthright with offering her clear moments where she could have editorial control of the curriculum. While Sam's choice ultimately was to teach *Big Fish* parallel to the group, none of us thought to express to Natalie that she could make the same choice, and teach a different text for the same curricular purpose. By explicitly extending that invitation, not only could it have eased the pressure on Natalie of constantly teaching all new texts, but the team might well have gained a new text option to deliberate, and possibly to teach, from a new and enriching perspective on our collaborative work.

An attempt to mitigate intertextuality

The density of intertextual references became apparent late in the first semester of our work together, after I had completed an initial analysis of the fall data.   It also became clear that in order to mentor Natalie more effectively, and make better use of the one hour each week in official PLC time, it might be useful to become more conscious of the use of intertextual references and structure meetings in ways to minimize the impact of such references. My hope was that the more structured the meetings were in topic and tasks, the more Natalie could be included as a participant in discussions and deliberations, rather than a passive recipient of veteran knowledge.

The first intervention was consciousness-raising for all three of the veterans. I discussed the difficulty I had seen in the previous meetings with Madeline and Lydia, and wondered if we might disseminate agendas more in advance, so that Natalie could have time to prepare for the specific texts we would discuss at meetings. Madeline and Lydia felt like they had been doing this informally in the discussions outside of the official PLC time. They were worried because they felt like Natalie was preparing inadequately in advance for these meetings, and questions were beginning to surface within the department about Natalie's subject matter preparation, her organizational abilities, and most significantly her work ethic. Given that I was not participating in the informal, daily collaboration, I was less frustrated. I felt that we might provide a better structure and organizational support if we explicitly set an agenda at the end of each meeting, and then I emailed a written version of the agenda and required tasks a few days in advance of each meeting. For example, over the holiday break toward the end of first semester, we made it clear that our first meeting back would focus on *The Things They Carried*.

We made sure at our last meeting before the break that Natalie had all of the student assignments, so as she read she could follow along with these focal tasks. When we met in January before starting the novel in class, it was to explicitly have a book discussion for Natalie's sake, as much as a teaching discussion.

The assignments with *The Things They Carried* have been developed as an extended final project which asks students to review the critical lenses previously studied in the course, and develop a literary analysis topic for their own final essay. As a review of all the lenses studied in the course, this capstone project builds in a predetermined intertextuality for students: it asks them to revisit the discourses of each literary theory studied, and now to choose which lenses they would employ for their own writing.

 However, despite the best of intentions, Natalie was clearly still a peripheral participant in this preplanned conversation in January. If Lydia has seen the films used in this course fifty times, the veterans also have read and discussed aspects of the novel at least that many times. Sam and the three veterans clearly dominated the conversation, much of which focused on a fast-paced debate of instructional strategies and practice literary analysis using those multiple strategies. Between the four of us, the prevalence of overlapping speech, moments of generative conflict over interpretations or teaching strategies, and a density of references to other course texts throughout the conversation, suggested Sam's almost full integration into the discourse of the "English 12 team" by the end of his second semester through the course. However, in a book discussion that lasted about forty-five minutes, although Natalie added enjoinders throughout the conversation, she held the floor for only four short turns.

On the other hand, there were indications of change in Natalie's participation. Natalie's turns, albeit few, did indicate that she had begun to "talk the talk" typical of this team. Sam shared a teaching tool—a conception he was finding useful to discuss the theory as the difference between truth and fact. Then Natalie jumped in with her first turn, a teaching narrative, describing an instructional change from her English 12 class at her other school, in which she asked students to research the book's author, Tim O'Brien. She clearly was integrated into the thematic thread of the discussion regarding the tension between non-fiction and fiction in the story. Later Natalie jumped in with several teaching questions utilizing references to the literary theories and key stories from the text at play in this conversation:

> Natalie: I know you had spent another day on the chapter "Rainy River."
>   Two days right?

> Madeline: Right. I did.
> Natalie: Alright, so tomorrow, day two on it.
> > I am going to do archetypal, and loss of innocence.
> > Should I go through the whole heroic journey with them? (Team meeting,
> > 1.9.08)

These lines are brief, terse, what Little (1990) referred to as "densely coded." But these few words serve as an indicator of the force of intertextuality Natalie employed to speak herself as one in the process of becoming a member of the English 12 team.

How were we learning to deal with the dual nature of intertextuality?   To some extent, like the learning of any language, we had to give new teachers time and experience with the curriculum. By second semester, and the end of the year, Natalie, like Sam, and later Kathy, was clearly gaining confidence, voice and knowledge of the intertextual references we so frequently utilized in our meetings. As veterans though, despite our love for each other, our texts, and our language of intimacy derived largely from those texts, we had already acknowledged that our group meetings served dual purposes: collaboration for both curriculum and mentorship. It was a difficult balance. As the year evolved, we pre-structured meetings more tightly to allow preparation for text-based discussions prior to meetings. We also began to structure specific time or activities into our meetings when we would give each person the floor to share about their week, or ask each person to bring in texts to share (like the poetry meeting in Chapter Four).   The veterans tried to find ways to keep the official PLC time on Wednesday from 2:45 to 3:45 pm "official." We opted for coffee or a cocktail after meetings to re-connect as family. As Madeline noted, we realized we needed to be "divorcing the kind of the social interaction that we've been blessed with and the professional aspect. Keeping those more separate" (Interview, 6.4.08). As the year progressed, while structuring "professional" meetings mitigated some of the tensions of intertextuality, it would exacerbate other challenges we faced. Meanwhile, narrativity as a second primary feature of our team's language-in-use functioned to help build our relationships. That process is a key part of this story too.

Narrativity: Narrating as an English teacher in Collaboration

This is a true story.

Once upon a time there was a shy twenty-two year old girl. She wanted to be an English teacher because she loved stories, and believed that through teaching about stories she could make the world a better place for her students. She was given the best education student loans

could buy. But when she arrived at her first day as a teacher, she froze. She sat in the car, in the parking lot of a huge suburban high school on a beautiful August morning, and she cried.

She didn't know anyone inside the school. She was not sure that the self inside her was ready to teach. And so filled with fear and self-doubt, the only thing she could do was cry.

Then, because she usually followed the rules, was stubborn and a bit ambitious, she steeled herself. She walked inside the building.

Inside was a cacophony of voices—students, parents, principals, district curriculum specialists and the others who were adventuring to be teachers like her. All had a different story to tell. Each carried a moral lesson about the kind of teacher she should be. Some told her to be more strict. Others told her to lighten up. One told her to get a coach's whistle to manage her classroom. Some told her to teach to the standards, others said to teach from her heart.

She listened to their stories, and began to try to piece together the narrative of her own life as a teacher. It is a happy story; she stayed and taught at the school for many years. She learned to love the noise and discord that the diversity of stories brought. But this is not an ending, for in teaching, as in learning, there really isn't any such thing.

Judith Warren Little (1990) observed that storytelling is an almost ubiquitous feature of teachers' discourse. And indeed, almost every meeting of the Lafayette Falls High School English 12 team included discourse in a narrative mode. While Little was critical of teachers' stories ability to advance teaching practice, she also admitted that "we know little of the contribution that teachers' stories make when embedded in a wider pattern of professional interaction" (p. 7). This exploration of the English 12 team's narratives intends to correct a small piece of that gap, by describing some of the meaning narrativity carried for our team.

As the English 12 teachers also necessarily teach narrative, it is additionally a key feature of our purpose and our belief system. Like one of our favorite teaching texts, Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, argues, we believe stories have the power to save lives. Stories preserve the past, and contain it. A story fixes itself on a past moment, makes it present for evaluation, and then allows an opportunity to re-imagine the future. I know that we also believed that a major goal of this course from the beginning was to help students recognize the diversity of stories around them, and the importance of narrative to their own lives. Additionally, the team's work became conscious that sharing our own stories as teachers was an integral part of our building our community. We told and retold our teaching lives in the context of each

meeting; those telling were a constituent part of the community, and of our individual practices. I credit this team with saving my teaching life through their stories, and by allowing me to tell and analyze my own.

If intertextuality as one key feature of our team's language-in-use marked a border between insiders and outsiders, I believe that narrativity functioned in the opposite manner. Narrating was our attempt to sustain and enrich knowledge and relationships across separate classrooms, as well as to integrate new members by inducting them into the past, present, and future of the English 12 team. I argue that the stories told within our team, while sometimes only presented in condensed and minimal fragments, afforded a complex variety of relational and representational functions. In this section, I present an analysis of two types of narratives present in the discourse of our team meetings, what I call here *contextualization narratives* and *classrooms narratives*. Finally, I explore the changes we made to our narrative practices as the school year evolved, and the shortcomings that our narrative practices still held for the integration of all teachers into a democratic learning community.

Review of existing knowledge on narrative in teachers' practices

The significance of narratives in teachers' practice generally and in professional communities specifically has been debated. Little's (1990) overview of the types of professional relations common in schools found that stories were an "omnipresent feature of teacher's work lives" (p. 7). However, Little found that these densely coded stories were often "incomplete accounts of complex and subtle performance" which she hypothesized might perpetuate a present-oriented, and thus conservative perspective on practice (p. 7). Furthermore, Little doubted that these stories could significantly impact changes in practice. Although Little's later work (2002, 2003) included close analyses of the discourse in teachers' professional communities, she did not specifically address narrative as a feature of those discourses. However, her observations on other elements of teacher community have still much informed this study. Little (2002) found that problems of "unified philosophy" and "uniform practice 'down to the details'" presented a major conflict for a group of English teachers. Additionally, her admonition to focus critical discourse analysis of teacher communities on moments of conflict, improvisation and invention provides an important frame for this study. Little (2003) argued "the particularities of language are fundamental and constitutive features of any community of practice" and presented challenges to newcomers and researchers alike; as such,

teacher's talk should be examined to understand the resources teachers use to construct their practice (p. 939). However, although narratives could be included as under the general umbrella of "teacher talk," Little did not choose to use teachers' narratives as a focus of analysis in either of these studies.

Conversely, several researchers have suggested that narrative inquiry is a key to understanding the professional knowledge and practices of teachers. Connelly & Clandinin (1990) promoted greater interest in narratives as an important phenomenon in education and a method of inquiry relevant to educational research. They specifically encouraged narrative inquiry as a way to give practitioners greater voice in the research process. Their suggestions have been taken up by various researchers. Vinz (1996) applied narrative forms of inquiry to the discourse of English teachers at various career stages: student teacher, early career teachers, and veterans. Vinz argued that narrative could be utilized to develop the language of reflective inquiry. Teachers' narratives carried the possibility for three strategies of reflective inquiry, "open[ing] a space where the tension among what was (retrospective) and the meaning of what was (introspective), and what can be (prospective) is negotiated" (Vinz, 1996, p. 28). Additionally narrative inquiry may hold consequence for the building of community: Juzwik (2006) argued that sociocultural perspectives on narrative offer a perspective of narrative as a "link between individual and community practice" (p.14).

Narrative analysis has been an important tool for studying the induction of new teachers. Craig (1999) found narrative a useful tool to uncover new teachers' personal practical knowledge, and that narratives carried ways for teachers to use, share, and create knowledge. Rust's (1999) study of new teachers' narratives found that narrating was a form of meaning-making through which teachers make sense of the complexities of teaching. The teachers in this study were likely to narrate typical classroom events, but also provided cautionary tales. Their stories contained their theories in action, their "discovery, learning, and sense-making about themselves and their profession" (p. 370). As such, Rust encouraged teacher educators to make a space for storytelling in teacher development projects, while also considering what is not talked about.

In addition to representations of new teachers' knowledge making about their practice, Doecke, Brown, & Loughran (2000) examined beginning teachers' development of professional identity, and found that new teachers must learn to narrate their classroom experiences in order to become members of teacher discourse communities. They described new teachers'

narratives as a mix of concrete and general knowledge, while also often being provisional, fragmentary and lacking resolution. However, they felt the significance of narrative in teachers' professional conversations was that it "subverts claims made by theory to comprehend the complexities of teaching and learning" (p. 344). Similarly, Kooy (2006) also found that new teachers' narration "exposes tacit knowledge, challenges existing knowledge, reveals alternative ways of knowing, understanding, or being that leads to new understanding of teaching and learning" (p. 671). Novices' "stories help to structure and make sense of complex teaching worlds as they help to understand what it means to enter the profession" (p. 672).

As vital as narrating may be to early career teachers, veteran teachers' narratives have also garnered attention. Swindler (2000) argued that much research on teachers' narratives had previously under-theorized the power of the context to shape those narratives. His study of one teacher's personal narrative, told in a support group for "critical-democratic" educators, found that the contextual norms for conversation both constrained narrative, but also created compelling re-interpretations of personal experiences through critical and democratic perspectives. Shank (2006) found that teachers' narratives served a variety of purposes within high school teachers' professional communities. The stories told created the collaborative learning space and shaped collective norms of practice within the group; they served as cases that operated as both mirrors of practice and windows into new possibilities for practice; and finally, their stories proved a link between the personal/ practical aspects of teaching and the collective, theoretical and conceptual.

Thus some prior research has indicated that both early career and veteran teachers' narratives are significant tools used to understand and reflect on practice and create theories of their practice. While a number of researchers have addressed aspects of discourse within teacher communities, and others have examined narrative specifically as a type of teacher discourse, this review of literature did not locate research which used discourse analysis to interpret the building tasks (Gee, 1999) accomplished by the narratives told in a teacher community.

Interpretive frame for narrative analysis

While narrative inquiry has been gaining in popularity in educational research, the conception of what narrative inquiry entails differs widely, and thus my usage of several key concepts from multiple traditions requires a transparent explanation (Juzwik, 2006; Langellier,

1989). My understanding of narrative inquiry is informed by several strands of research interested in narrative. I have utilized several structural concepts from Labovian narrative analysis (1967, 1997) to define what was and was not narrative in our team discourse. However, as helpful as these structure features might have been in narrowing the data field, rather than an investigation of isolated, stand-alone narratives, this inquiry looks at patterns of narration throughout our team's year together. Thus, Gee's (1999) articulation of the sociocultural "building tasks" of language generally, and narrative specifically, are central to this section of my research. Finally, as a teacher and aspiring teacher educator, my work is also inspired by the narrative inquiry tradition encouraged by Connelly & Clandinin (1990), and embodied in English teachers such as in Vinz (1996) and Fecho (1999), who have encouraged and modeled teachers' inquiry into their own storied lives as educators, as a way to promote critical reflection on teaching practices, and to give practitioners greater voice in the research process.

Although there is debate over what constitutes a narrative, the conception of narrative in this analysis originates from Labov's (1967, 1997) definition. Following Labov, I consider a minimal narrative to contain at least one *temporal juncture* (two independent clauses temporally ordered) which describes events of personal experience and some element of evaluation of those events (Labov, 1997). However, I disagree with Labov's conception of temporality restricted to past events: while most of the teacher narratives presented here do situate events in the past, there is also a recurring need for teachers to narrate future actions in an *irrealis mode* as they plan curriculum together (Ochs & Capps, 2001). Thus the definition of a minimal narrative used here indicates at least one evaluated temporal juncture which describes a past event or a hypothetical future event.

However, Labovian narrative analysis tends to decontextualize narrative and view it as a textual "relation between clauses rather than an interaction among participants" (Langellier, 1989, p. 248). While Labov's framework can identify narrative as a unit of analysis, my research questions are most concerned with the social process of collaboration, and how narrating functions within the discourse of a speech community (Gee, 1999; Wortham, 2000; Langellier, 1989). Thus context and relationships among the participants are vital elements of my analysis.

Gee's (1999) version of discourse analysis situated relationship building as one of the seven primary building tasks of language. As Gee argued, all situations involve social relationships that are enacted and/ or constructed in the situation: relationships that may be stabilized or transformed through the situation (p.111). Thus the act of narrating can enact or

construct aspects of the relationships between the narrator and her interlocutors. Similarly, Wortham (2000) maintained that narratives, as a particular type of social event, have both interactional and representational functions.   He proposed that evaluation within the narrative cues the positioning of the narrator in relation to the storytelling event and her interlocutors, a positioning both mediated by and emergent through the narrative activity. In other words, narrators, as producers of narrative texts, presuppose the "common ground" they share with their audience (Fairclough, 2001, p. 127).   As such, formal features of the narratives should provide cues to the community norms that are assumed to be held by all interlocutors.

Thus rather than a heuristic for analysis of single narratives as texts, I contend Labov's structural delineation of narrative features can be utilized together with Wortham's (2000) concept of narrative evaluation as interactional, and Gee's (1999) consideration of relationship building as a primary building task of language, to interpret how relationships within this group were being constructed during the talk itself. Most central to this particular research however, I contend that the act of narrating was reflexively related to the relationships within the group (Gee, 1999, p. 57): the narratives told were afforded by the relationships within the group, at the same time the narratives constructed and transformed those relationships. Finally, as one of our key purposes in our collaboration was in mentoring, it seemed important to connect language and teacher learning.   Vinz (1996) argued that "The bulk of teacher knowledge is socially derived and hybrid. . . .The act of teaching engenders a continual contestation beyond teachers' present and future knowledge—challenging, mixing, testing, and ultimately transgressing what the teacher knows 'how to do' or has ever done before" (p.168). The narratives of our group are one way in which those pasts and presents were made accessible for our future work together and with our students.

Data analysis for narrativity consisted of several reoccurring macro and micro level cycles during and after the research year. During the first semester of our collaboration, I closely examined several complete individual narratives, and analyzed those narratives utilizing tools of Labovian analysis. While such analyses permitted me close textual interpretation, they did not seem afford a view of the complexities of the collaborative dynamic within the conversation. I then decided to pull back from a strict attention to just narrative segments. I turned to discourse analysis for a tool to examine the language throughout these two early conversations. I found that this perspective allowed more access to important elements of the way that knowledge was constructed within the group. Ultimately, the density of narrative

discourse in these early meetings suggested to me that both discourse analysis and narrative analysis were required in order to make some sense of narrativity and what it might mean within the context of our team.

I coded each narrative within these early conversations according to narrator, significance for knowledge co-construction (Gee, 1999), and the relational stance of the narrative to other members of the group. I then began to look for patterns of narration that appeared significant to understanding a conversation as a whole speech event.   I asked myself questions such as: Who narrated most? Least? How did the evaluation or moral stance in one narrative relate to the narratives before and after it? I then returned to individual narratives for a more detailed analysis of representational, linguistic, and prosodic features that also cued elements of positioning of each narrator to the rest of the team. This iterative process of analysis helped me to identify ways that narrative frequently mediated relationships and knowledge generation in our team.

Typography of narrativity in our English 12 Team

My analysis of our narrativity explores three patterns I noted in our team meetings.

- Contextualizing narratives: stories which present the history of the multiple layers of the institution and team.
- Classroom narratives: stories from the classroom and for classroom practice.
- Story Rounds: for democratic deliberation and relationship building.

In the final section, I explore some of the changes that we made to our narrative practices based on the observations made during the research year, and address the important areas where our narrations patterns may have impeded some of our team's growth.

Contextualizing Narratives

One category of narratives common to this team, and those most likely to be fully developed (Labov, 1997), included narratives whose primary purpose was to provide contextualization for the newest teachers on this team. Such narratives were primarily the province of the veteran teachers. *Contextualization narratives* included multilayered information from district, school, department, and team history and provided both implicit and explicit information about team norms and values. Given Madeline's history as a founding

department leader at LFHS, and long time district teacher, it is not surprising that she was the most common narrator of contextualizing stories. She could speak to the evolution (or devolution) of almost any district or building policy, from field trips to purchasing textbooks. She could make us feel better (or worse) about the current status of teaching in our district by sharing the history of district restructuring, staffing cuts, staff development fads, and curriculum adoptions past. Eventually, our awareness of this role led her and us to name her role in the team explicitly. Madeline introduced her team role directly and simply using this language at Kathy's first meeting: "My role is the history keeper" (team meeting 3.26.08). Later, Lydia elaborated:

> LYDIA: Madeline clearly has the most history here
> so she's sort of the keeper of that history.
> What's worked
> what hasn't worked
> what have we've done before.   (Interview, 6.3.08)

However, while Madeline was clearly the most common narrator on the team, during the earliest meetings all three of the veterans narrated aspects of contextual history. My own contextualizing narratives were primarily about the history of the English 12 team, and my own experiences as a new teacher and member of that team. As such, they provided a way to explain the rationale behind my action research project, as well as a way to try to connect with the new teachers coming in, and offer them a vision of a possible career trajectory. As a new department leader, with opportunities to participate in building and district level administrative meetings, I also frequently narrated recent policy changes or reported on administrative announcements. Lydia offered contextual narration less frequently than either Madeline or me; however, Lydia accomplished the most elaborated contextualization narrative, a cautionary tale about text choices and teaching in the Lafayette Falls community analyzed below in more detail.

Such stories were most common first semester, and given Sam's prior experience in the district and department, most stories appeared intended for Natalie as the primary audience. During Kathy's induction period in March, however, there was not a noticeable return of contextualizing narratives during the official meeting times.   After a focused and highly narrative introductory meeting in which each teacher was asked to share his or her personal professional history, contextualizing narratives were few. Perhaps Kathy's induction, coming under the role of student teacher, and the affordances of additional collaborative time with

Lydia provided there, meant that contextual narratives were shared outside the official PLC time.

A contextualization narrative: Lydia's "Film Horror Story"

Given their connection to institution histories, contextualizing narratives may be an important way to build team norms and attend to relationship building within a professional learning community. Unlike intertextuality which assumes prior knowledge, the occasions of contextualizing narratives assumed an audience of "new teachers" in most instances in our team meetings. The co-narration of "Lydia's Film Horror Story" allowed access to part of the shared history of the existing team, an important part of the knowledge new members could use to understand group norms (Mischler, 1995). As this telling developed themes about teaching in relationship to texts, parents, and discourses of professionalism, it also is an important socialization tool in terms of the construction of shared meanings of what is means to be an English teacher.

Lydia's narration of a key event from her first year at LFHS came at the end of the debate over film titles, with its extreme density of intertextual references (Team meeting, 9.26.07 referenced above). Natalie had been silent and silenced in this conversation so far. Although Lydia's storytelling would not require Natalie to speak, by addressing Natalie's "newcomer" status, it invited her into the group in a way in which the immediately preceding dialogue could not. The narrative also provided an understanding of the team's prior history; it functioned as an explanation for one of the key values undergirding the preceding debate, that English teachers in our community must take a cautious approach to the selection of film titles for whole class viewing. As such, the final segment of the conversation, comprising the year's most complete and elaborated narrative, appeared to open up a needed space for integration with Natalie. Although space limitations preclude me from analyzing the entire eight minute segment here, some of the key features of this narrative, which I titled "Lydia's Film Horror Story," can serve as examples of how this occurred (see Appendix C for complete transcript).

The narrated events had already been alluded to in Lydia's comments about her "paranoia" and "history" with film selections. Like the marginalizing intertextuality based on classroom texts, Lydia's unspoken references to her own teaching history could have maintained this distancing from Natalie. However, I explicitly asked Sam and Natalie if they knew this story, encouraging Lydia to launch her narrative. I was conscious at the time that this was a great opening for storytelling. It was an important "key event" in the group history that had been

alluded to, and Natalie and Sam should be included in this collective memory. Sam made it clear that he already had heard this story. Thus, this narration was primarily intended for Natalie from its launch, a position which ironically would marginalize her momentarily, while integrating her into this team history generally.

Lydia told her story in which an angry and influential parent protested a film his daughter had selected for a class project. Although Lydia did not allow the student to view the film, the parent "just didn't let it go" (Lydia, Team meeting, 9.26.08). Eventually the story made the local media, and in the backlash, the school board initiated a highly restrictive policy on classroom use of film. Lydia's story was a cautionary tale (Rust, 1999) about selecting films, the relations between teachers and this community, a teacher getting in trouble in a very public manner, and a school board policy change linked to this event.

For Madeline and Lydia this was a key event, not only for its high reportability. These events occurred during Lydia's first year in the building, and marked the beginning of her professional relationship with Madeline. Madeline's contributions were clear evidence of a co-telling that aligned her with Lydia; her integrating stance throughout the narrative was best evidenced by her first three comments (Table 5.1):

Table 5.1: Madeline's contributions to "Lydia's Film Horror Story"

MADLELINE: she wasn't even showing it to the whole class
it got such a-it got so built out of
then it just went nuts

Each of these evaluative comments clearly minimized Lydia's responsibility for the event: Lydia was narrated as a responsible professional, not someone who would show objectionable content to a whole class. Meanwhile the outcry against the film was "nuts." Madeline also narrated her own part of the story, during which she had to call and speak to this irate father. Her co-telling illustrated how to deal with an angry parent, and how to act like a professional, even when you are being treated unprofessionally.

The integrating potential of this narrative is twofold. First, it has the potential to develop intimacy through sharing personal history as interlocutors can "show sympathy and otherwise align with another's point of view," (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p. 176). Natalie's comments during the narration (Table 5.2) indicated her involvement in the story. Although I would not

consider Natalie a high involvement co-teller in comparison to Madeline, the quantity and qualities of her contributions were markedly different from the earlier portions of this meeting where she was almost silent. She asked a clarifying question about the antagonist (turn A) and then made four comments that indicated her sympathy or alignment with Lydia and/ or Madeline (turn B, D, E). The only comment that was potentially polarizing to Lydia was Natalie's response to the fact that the film the parent complained about, *The Piano*, contained male nudity (turn C). But Natalie's energetic response and laughter within this turn was marked more by enjoyment and comprehension of the story's significance than an implied critique of Lydia.

Table 5.2: Natalie's contributions to "Lydia's Film Horror Story"

NATALIE:	A:	[was it a parent?
	B:	Oh yeah
	C:	WOOH ((laughter))
		That's the kicker okay
	D.	[ooooh
	E:	really? you got in the news?
	F:	oh yeah that's all it takes

Natalie's sympathetic involvement within "Lydia's Film Horror Story" stands in contrast to her silence and isolation in the prior segments of the discussion dominated by intertextuality. While this example focuses on Natalie, the significance of this telling for building rapport among all the team members was also observable through frequent co-telling, latching, and affirmative back-channeling much like that presented by Natalie.

Evaluations of Lydia's "Film Horror Story":

The building of integrated professional relationships through contextualizing narratives here may also stem from the fact that "Lydia's Film Horror Story" was not just a key past event, but that it also contained "implications for current and future life worlds" (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p. 183) for the five English teachers in the group. Mischler (1995) specifically argued that stories can lead to the development of a professional's clinical judgment, and are important aspects of socializing new professionals into practice. The three codas to this story, one provided by each of the three veterans, attempted to make some of this significance explicit for the past, present, and future teaching lives of the team members. The fact that the codas were provided only by

the veteran teachers, suggests to me that this was a moment of socialization of the newer teachers into our team's professional practice; in each coda, we attempted to make clear the various ways this story might be of use to their teaching practice.

Lydia had launched this story to explain her reluctance to use a risky text, but by the time she arrived at this coda, the significance of the story had become more complex. It became a story about socialization into teaching in the LFHS building and the English department. It became a story about the place and the people who defined the context in which Lydia began her tenure at LFHS:

> LYDIA: You know what
> if anything
> it just gave me confidence about
> that this is a place I wanted to work.
> That was it.
> Everyone backed me.
>
> MADELINE: Mm hm
>
> LYDIA: No one leaked my name.
>
> MADELINE: No no
>
> LYDIA: Everyone supported me.
>
> MADELINE: That's right
>
> LYDIA: I mean
> this was-it was my first year

Madeline's rhythmic and consistent affirmative backchanneling throughout this coda reinforced Lydia's interpretation: these events gave Lydia "confidence about that this is a place I wanted to work." For Sam and Natalie, Lydia's story might have served as an explanation for the somewhat conservative team norm about text selections, but it also offered reassurance that the school and department they found themselves in will be supportive of them even in their "first year[s]" of teaching. It was thus a coda which helped contextualize Lydia's history in the department, but also implicitly offered vision of the present and future protection that the department would intend to provide our early career teachers.

My brief coda explicitly connected the story back to the present work we were undertaking, debating a number of film titles for viewing. This served as a moment in which I was encouraging a "task oriented" view of Lydia's narrative.

> RACHEL: Alright
> so be careful on the film choices. ((laughs))
>
> LYDIA: Yep
>
> RACHEL: But "Big Fish" sounds like a good option

 By reemphasizing the theme of Lydia's story, I was reminding us all to be careful about choosing film. At the same time, I also offered a public authorization, that Sam's proposed alternative film choice *Big Fish* was "a good option." My codas made it clear that the time we had just spent narrating together was relevant to the tasks at hand: carefully deliberating a text selection together is part of collaborative practice. However, within the uniformity typical of our collective practice, there was space for diversity and innovation as well.

Madeline offered the final coda, and moved into a hypothetical *irrealis* mode (Ochs & Capps, 2001), foregrounding the present and future implications of Lydia's narrative by recombining the values which Lydia's coda and my coda expressed:

> MADELINE: I mean that's why we work as a team
> because if somebody said,
> "I'm going to show something"
> the rest of them would say,
> "Nooo don't do that" ((anxious voicing)).
> We are gonna take care of each other.

Madeline's coda is a final integrating statement, emphasizing the importance of the team collaboration and its relationship to a discourse of professionalism in teaching practice. The members of the team will "take care of each other," by upholding norms of professional practice that are monitored internally (Shulman, 1998).

Contextualizing narratives seemed to be one key way in which the tension between the subjectivities of veteran and new teachers was alleviated. All five of us share the subject position of English teacher. Thus regardless of years of experience, or proximity to the actual events, we recognized the situation narrated by Lydia and Madeline as containing discourses about teaching which unite us all (Gee, 1999, p. 29). We all have made and will make choices

about the texts we select for classroom use. We all have dealt or will deal with angry parents. We all have felt or will feel the sting of our professional status being called into question. While these narratives explicitly hail "new teachers" as such, by acknowledging their subjectivities as a particular and specialized audience, contextualizing narratives also demonstrated how vital it was for our team to provide these "back stories" about team history and beliefs, and the attending practices. Consciously making space for these contextualized narratives might provide a way to manage the critical tensions and differentiated needs between veteran and early career teachers in supportive, integrating relationships with others.

Classroom Narratives: Replaying and Rehearsing Teaching Practice

Contextualizing narratives seemed to be almost exclusively performed for the benefit of integrating new team members, and thus the frequency of contextualizing narratives in the discourse of team meetings was most prevalent during Natalie's first months as an English 12 teacher, and waned as the year continued. However, the other major type of narrativity in the English 12 team I termed simply *classroom narratives*. These stories about and for classroom practice remained a regular and stable feature of team dialogue throughout the research year. However, as our awareness of their role in our meetings grew, classroom narratives moved from a spontaneous to a more deliberately structured feature of our weekly agenda.

Multiple researchers have argued that narration can function as a type of "rehearsal" (Gee, 1999; Vinz, 1996; Langellier, 1989). While certainly narrating classroom events can function literally as a rehearsal or preparation for instruction, narration can function also as a "strategic rehearsal of meaning" (Vinz, 1996, p.28) as teachers struggle to make sense of the complexities of classroom practice (Kooy, 2006; Shank, 2006).   I argue that these classroom narratives were important tools through which the problems of practice were rendered public and evaluated collectively as they emerged in the context of the English 12 team meetings, and that they functioned as one of the key reflective and community building features of team discourse. For continuity, in this section most of the narrative examples come from the team meeting one week following the film choice discussion and Lydia's film horror story. During this meeting, Madeline, Lydia and Sam each spontaneously provided classroom narrations of their individual practices with teaching the film analysis unit.

Features of Classroom Narratives

The classroom narratives told within the English 12 team contained several common features. Occasionally "rehearsal" narratives in preparation for an upcoming class might be presented in a hypothetical or *irrealis* mode (Ochs and Capps, 2001). However, most classroom narratives described recent past events from the classroom, what I called *replays*. This typical pattern of narrating replays from the classroom, and the fact that I was on sabbatical from my teaching position during the research year, might explain why my contribution of classroom narratives remained low in comparison to all other team members throughout the research year. Other than my anomalous classroom narration pattern, the frequency of narration was proportional to the amount of time spent in the team. Even though most stories were about current classroom teaching episodes, the teachers with the most classroom experience took the floor to narrate their experiences most often. This seemed to suggest that classroom narratives also had a mentoring function. During a midyear reflection, Madeline stated this intention directly: "[Narrating] reminds me of the way that you work with student teachers" (Team meeting 1.9.08). This and the higher frequency of narration among the veterans may suggest that one purpose of classroom narrations for the veteran teachers paralleled the contextualizing narratives, as a form of mentorship to the early career teachers.

However, Sam, Natalie, and Kathy also grew in their narrative participation as their tenure with the team continued, suggesting that classroom narratives were also a hallmark of membership in the English 12 team. For example, while Natalie did not narrate often in the fall meetings, by May her classroom narratives were more frequent and more elaborated. In general, it has been suggested that launching narration requires a high degree of contextualization to determine reportability: thus "only a person intimately acquainted with the audience and the recent history of the social situation can be sure of not making a misstep in introducing a narrative" (Labov, 1997, p. 406). This implies that while the veterans may have narrated in part to provide a window into their classroom practices (Shank, 2006) for the early career teachers as a form of mentorship, the new teachers narrated their relative success at achieving an "English 12 teacher" identity (Gee, 1999) by offering similar narratives in return. This may also account for the fact that few narratives offered by the new teachers offered troublesome cases from their own classrooms. When stories about individual students were told by new teachers, they were more likely to be success stories, while veterans shared both successes and struggles with individual students. In these ways, the tensions between

mentorship and membership seemed to play out in the classroom narration patterns of each teacher on the team, myself included.

Students in classroom narratives. Classroom narrations were the primary way in which students were made present in the discourse of team meetings. The portrayal of students varied by narrator and purpose of the particular telling. While occasional stories focused on "outliers"—the extreme successes or struggles of individual students—most commonly, students in our team's classroom narratives were presented generically using plural pronouns. Student names were rarely utilized in stories, suggesting that individual student identities were not significant to team discourse. Given that English 12 team membership was defined by all teachers teaching the same course at the same time, teachers would not normally have cause to know each others' students individually. In terms of instructional design, this wide-angled, generic view of students might have diminished our capacity as a group to address differentiation in our planning meetings. However, while most students are generically presented, I also believe that this feature of our classroom narratives was more a function of the contextual reality of our large school and department, than a philosophy that all students were transposable.

Despite the pluralization of students in most of our classroom narratives, there were marked differences in the plural pronouns utilized by narrating teachers to describe our students. In most classroom stories, Madeline and Lydia primarily utilized the first person pronoun "we" in their narrations.

> MADELINE: And we've only seen about forty-five minutes of the movie
> but we've already talked about setting and characters and plot
> and we've discussed the fact that we couldn't really deal with theme yet.
> We have no idea what this film is going to say
> we're not that far into it. (Team meeting 10.3.07)

This pattern suggested a view of the classroom that included teacher and student engaged together in collective learning. Sam and Natalie, although less frequent narrators, were much more likely to employ a third person "they" when giving voice to their classroom practices. In the same conversation, Sam's narrative in response to Madeline, gave greater distance between himself and his students:

> SAM: I was doing *Big Fish* with them
> and they're liking it.
> They're having fun and they're getting-

> same thing as you like
> I built first-did literary terms (team meeting 10.3.07)

Even in May, this pattern persisted as Natalie offered her own classroom narrative about setting up *The Things They Carried* unit.

> NATALIE: That's what I have them do.
> I have them do a little research on Tim O'Brien. . .
> "Why do you think he didn't put himself in there?"
> Because he's mentioning all these names
> he's not in there
> and they're like,
> "He could be in there
> he could be one of his characters you know
> he used another name."
> And I was like, "Well yeah he could be"
>
> And so we were just talking about truth and you know well
> even though it says fiction
> like you said,
> even though it said fiction
> do you some accounts are true?
> And they're like, "yes." (Team meeting, 5.21.08)

Although in one instance in the third stanza, Natalie utilized "we" to indicate a more dialogic moment in her classroom, both she and Sam generally presented students through a more distanced stance. This more distanced stance from the early career teachers was surprising to observe. I might have assumed that the newest teachers in the team would see themselves as more aligned with the positionality of their students (in terms of age, interests, popular culture), and thus utilized "we" as a pronoun indicating identification with their students. Instead, this distancing may denote the tentativeness of the early career teachers to share authority in the classroom, or to be perceived as "not in control" by their more veteran interlocutors.

  Reported speech: An improvisation of deprivatized practice. Similar to the presentation of students in our team's narratives generally, the voices of English 12 students and ourselves their classroom teachers were often made present in the classroom narratives by the use of both direct and indirect reported speech (Berkenkotter & Hanganu-Bresch, 2005). It is in these episodes of reported speech that the planning and practice of instruction is brought into the public realm of the team meetings most clearly. I argue that this feature of classroom narratives represented an improvisation created under the limitations of the institutional reality of our

school and our team. Our classroom narratives were an attempt to deprivatize individual practice, a component of teacher communities regarded to hold the most promised for improving student learning (Little, 2003; Supovitz, 2002; Louis & Marks, 1998), but untenable under the current lived reality of time and schedule in most schools, including our own.

Team discussions and individual interviews both suggested individual team members would welcome the opportunity for more deprivatization of individual practice, and had appreciated such opportunities in the past. Madeline and I have co-taught during my student teaching and occasionally since. Most of the team expressed a willingness and an interest to observe in each others' classrooms. We engaged in group evaluation of student work samples several times before, during, and after the research year. However, despite this expressed desire to be able to accomplish more deprivatization of our practices, most of us also expressed concern over the scarcity of time already permitted to accomplish our daily and weekly responsibilities as English teachers. The eighty-five minutes per day set aside for individual planning, evaluation, and the multiple layers of communication with department, building, district, parents, and students was never enough as it was, and most of us spent considerable time outside of the official duty day in order to accomplish these necessary daily and weekly responsibilities. As much as we all wished we had more time to work in each other's classrooms in richer and more direct ways, trading in prep time to regularly observe in another teacher's classroom, or to co-teach, meant giving up more of the personal and family time we already knew was compromised by our daily responsibilities of teaching.

In the meantime, I believe that our team's classroom narratives, and particularly the common feature of reported speech within such tellings, substituted for a more traditional type of classroom observation. In these classroom narratives, the voices of students and teacher represent three characteristics of preparation for instruction Vinz (1996) commonly found in veteran English teachers practices:

- Clarifying: especially relating purpose to choices in practice
- Predicting: student response, behavior, and speech based on prior experiences,
- Implementing: sorting through available practices, evaluating practices for viability (p.111)

The "double voicing" (Bakhtin, 1981) of the teacher through reported speech in many of these classroom narratives provided an opportunity to explore the clarifying and implementing

elements of instructional planning.   While the reported speech of students, again often in generic, plural form, offered an opportunity to report student responses to discussions and other activities, to evaluate the success of a particular lesson component, and to predict future student responses and behaviors.

Examples of classroom narratives: Teaching film analysis

To illustrate and extend the features of classroom narratives described above, I selected a meeting from the fall. The October 3, 2007 team meeting included a *story round* (Tannen, 1985) or a related series of stories Ochs and Capps (2001) called *parallel story episodes*. In such events, often little contextualization is required as interlocutors assumed a shared context, in this case, an English 12 classroom during the film analysis unit.   The narrations here were framed by a previous reflective conversation regarding this unit. The team was concerned that past students were not achieving a depth of film analysis we had hoped.   Thus, the team revised instruction and assessment designs to improve the scaffolding in the film unit. In the revised assessment, students would analyze one key scene from their lens portfolio film using three categories of film analysis: the literary, dramatic and cinematic elements of film (Teasely & Wilder, 1997).

In this particular story round, there was the implied purpose to evaluate the most recent curricular revisions made to the unit. Lydia began with a minimal narrative which proposed a change in the instructional planning for the film analysis unit. This minimal narrative bridged the replay of how she began the film analysis activities with a rehearsal of where she planned to go next. Lydia's telling did not utilize reported speech, but did establish a thematic strand present in both Madeline's and Sam's narratives that followed, regarding anxiety over a change in practice that had not yet been deliberated with the whole team present. In other words, a second purpose in addition to evaluating the recent curricular changes seemed to be proposing and approving of related changes in instruction to better match the new assessment plan.

> LYDIA: And we're just doing-
> I'm just doing the whole-
> I guess (hhh)
> I'm doing it differently.
> I'm doing the whole film
> the viewing just with the literary elements
> and then on Friday

> I'll go back and just look at key scenes
> and that's when I'll introduce and pass out the film terms
> cuz I haven't done that yet. (Team meeting, 10.3.07)

Lydia's hedges, false starts and minimalization of this narrative, suggested that she had some anxiety over presenting a narrative about another change in practice, especially one that had not been discussed with the team.   However, she presented a new structure for teaching this unit that might mitigate some of the early concerns the teachers had about student achievement in this assessment previous semesters. Thus rather than asking students to analyze all three elements of film at once, Lydia's narrative established that she changed her practice to focus on just one category of film analysis at a time, and that also like the revised assessment, she would re-focus attention after the initial viewing, by reviewing "key scenes."

Lydia's minimal narrative was followed by more elaborated narratives from Madeline and Sam which reaffirmed a uniformity of practice. Madeline shared her introduction to the film analysis unit mostly through reporting her own speech. She opened the narration with an admission that she had forgotten that she had suggested this instructional change herself, thus she had already handed out the film terms to her classes. However, she also provided two evaluative statements which framed her narrative. First, after her confession about forgetting to wait to introduce the film terms, Madeline did "as any good teacher" and "changed gears between" classes (Team meeting, 10.3.07). However, despite the mix up, Madeline reported that the change in instructional practice "actually has worked beautifully." After she handed out the list of film analysis terms to her students, she explained her instruction utilizing a significant amount of reported speech:

> MADELINE: So I said
> "There'll be a few things you're going to learn
> and as we're watching this film
> we're going to be using some of these terms,
> but you don't need to-I'm not going to give you a quiz yet   5
> I just want you to start to look these over
> and start to get comfortable with it.
> We're going to focus on what we already know really well
> the literary terms."
> And so:: then that's what we did   10
> and we've only seen about forty-five minutes of the movie
> but we've already talked about setting and characters and plot
> and we've discussed the fact that we couldn't really deal with theme yet
> we have no idea what this film is going to say

we're not that far into it. (Team meeting, 10.3.07)   15

 Madeline narrated her instructional choices. She explained how she partially clarified the

purpose for the terms list "start to get comfortable" (line 7) and a focus on prior knowledge of

literary elements (lines 8-9).   She narrated what activities were accomplished and how the

lesson was structured (the introduction, and discussion of initial literary elements setting,

character, and plot). Additionally, through indirectly reported classroom dialogue (lines 13-15)

she shares a potential student misunderstanding about analysis of theme. Madeline's self

reported "teacher speech" also provided what our group eventually came to call a *script*, a

rehearsal strategy for all of us that would allow us to practice framing explicit classroom

discourse about our purposes, our structures, and our examples for our students.

Madeline continued her narrative replay of her introduction to film analysis by

demonstrating how she used prediction to head off potential students misunderstanding about

the framework of three categories of film analysis (literary, dramatic, and cinematic) utilized in

our unit.

MADELINE: But I also said
"We-it's not that we won't talk about the dramatic and cinematic elements
if you notice something.
Like we all noticed that there were lots of establishing shots to get the setting
across.   20
Well of course we're going to talk about that.
But you don't have to take notes on it
because we're going to go back at the end.
And this is what you'll do with your own film."

So this is how I tied it into the modeling   25
"Because in your own film you've already seen the film
you could do the literary elements right now.
Sit down.
 Think about who the characters are
You could analyze those literary elements.   30
You wouldn't probably have to go back and watch your film
. . . . but to do the dramatic and cinematic elements   36
you'd want to go back.
You might have some sense that 'oh Brad Pitt was fabulous'
but you wouldn't probably have anything specific in mind
[because you weren't looking for that okay?"   40

In this segment, Madeline demonstrated the three aspects of instructional planning clarifying,

predicting, and implementing (Vinz, 1996). As Madeline stepped out of reporting her own

speech, she goes behind the curtain for both her students and us her colleagues to clarify the connection between her classroom speech and the assessment plan for this unit: "so this is how I tied it into the modeling" (line 25). She elaborated on the future activities for both student and teacher benefit, clarifying both purposes and implementing activities and structures. First, the whole class will practice with scenes from the common film. Next, "we're going to go back in the end" (line 23) and finally students will complete the same analytic tasks with their own film choices (line 24). Madeline's extensive use of reported speech provided a script or rehearsal opportunity of how other teachers might implement the lesson and approach predicted student misunderstandings.

Finally, in Sam's retelling of his teaching film narrative, he adds a final layer of direct reported speech from his students to the narrativizing strategies at work in this story round. Such recreation of student voices in classroom narratives often provided an entertaining function in storytelling (sometimes admittedly at student expense), but also afforded opportunities to evaluate lessons through making public the student questions asked for clarification, as well as the conversational directions students took up in response to the teacher designed activities. In this case, because Sam was reporting on a deviation from uniform text selection, the success of his change from the film *A River Runs through It* to *Big Fish* was also important to substantiating his claim to initiating the change in the first place.

> *Sam's "Teaching Big Fish" classroom narrative*
>
> SAM: I was doing *Big Fish* with them and they're liking it.
>   They're having fun and they're getting-
>   same thing as you like
>   I built first-did literary terms
>   and I said ((shift to teacherly voice))   5
>   "If you're seeing any symbols mention it or whatever."
>
>   It's interesting because they're reader responding into
>   ((student voice, slower))"Well I think the fish is symbolic of something"
>   ((teacher voice, quicker)) "Well a symbol for what?"
>   ((student voice again)) ["I don't know.   10
>   But I know it's a symbol for something."
>
> [LYDIA: ((laughs)) yeah
>
> SAM: And they're like "I know I've seen this before in movies.
>   When they bring up something like that
>   I know it's a symbol   15
>   but I don't know about why.

Get back to me."
So we have down
like a list of [symbols
and they're still decoding what they are.   20

Sam's opening overall evaluation that students were "liking it," "having fun," and "getting" it (lines 1-2) served to evaluate the success of this change in text. However, in conjunction with this positive evaluation of his change, it was equally significant that Sam verified the uniformity of his practice: "same thing as you" (line 3) addressed both Madeline and Lydia's choice to scaffold or "built first—did literary terms" (line 4).

The continuation of this classroom narrative then utilized several features also found in Madeline's narrative that immediately preceded Sam's. Like Madeline, Sam presented a student confusion or difficulty with completing the more abstract analyses of themes and symbols early in a film's viewing. Also like Madeline, Sam utilized extensive reported speech from himself, although Sam's performance offered a much clearer distinction between Sam's voice in the team, Sam's teacher voice, and the students' voices.   Such shifts were demarcated by audible shifts in pace and intonation. The direct reporting of student speech differed most from Madeline's preceding narration. Certainly, Sam might have utilized these student voices to be funny and entertaining: his wit and sarcasm were frequent and valued tension breakers in the group all year. At the same time, Sam's positionality as an early career teacher meant that his performance of a classroom narrative has greater implications for the attainment of full membership on the team. Sam narrated himself as a competent English teacher. He asked a follow-up question to elicit student elaboration (line 9). He acknowledged the same pedagogical content knowledge as Madeline: that abstract symbolic interpretations might not be possible until later in the film viewing. By clearly delineating these three voices of teacher, collaborator, and students, Sam's story functions in part as a hallmark of his team membership.

Sam's success in this narration of his teaching film, and his integration as a member of the English 12 team, was evident from Madeline and Lydia's immediate responses. They become co-tellers with Sam. They added to his narrative with more elaboration of teaching scripts, a high volume of affirmative backchanneling, and a repetition of key terms and concepts.

Madeline and Lydia Evaluate Sam's Narrative
MADELINE: [Symbols]

LYDIA: [Yeah]
      What is the river?
      What is fishing?

MADELINE: Right that's what we just came up with too.   25
      I said
      "You can put something down in your images.
      What have you seen a lot of?
      What keeps appearing?"
      And they came up with the river, fishing, church, religion, and family   30

LYDIA: [yeah yep yep yep right right that's good]

MADELINE:I said "we don't know what these things are going to add up to yet
      its too early.
      But you've got 'em in your head
      now watch for them.   35
      You already know they're important."

SAM: Yeah
      but I think they're liking it
      they're getting it

Given Sam's positionality as an early career teacher, teaching just his second semester of English 12, Lydia and Madeline's enthusiastic responses to his classroom narrative functioned as an evaluation of his teaching. In an administrative system where even a new teacher is likely to only be observed three to six times per year, and a veteran perhaps only is observed every three to five years, narrating was one way all team members could get weekly feedback about their teaching performance. As Sam would later say as part of Kathy's induction into the group, "Always share—the others in the group will make you seem smarter than you are. You get feedback from the veterans, and then find out it was best practice" (Team meeting, 3.26.08).

Classroom narratives became shared events in the team and shared texts for teaching. While the structuring of schools as institutions too often undermine the opportunity for internal peer review of practice, the predilection for narrating in our team seemed to be a way to alleviate the isolation of our separate classrooms. In fact, the classroom narratives practice was so popular with the team, that before, during and after the research year, we would frequently find a huddle to check in over lunch, or in the hallways between classes. Asking "How did it go?" was the normal invitation to launch into a replay of today's class. Lesson plans might be tweaked, or changed wholesale, based on the narrative one heard in return.

These classroom narratives occurred at almost every meeting, and clearly accomplished multiple "building tasks" (Gee, 1999) within the meetings. They provided insight into the values, beliefs, and practices of teaching English in this team. As further evidence that the instructional planning accomplished in collaborative settings contains tensions over the degree of uniformity in practice (Little, 2002), these classroom narratives seemed to have a recurring thematic pattern which emphasized "uniformity of practice." In these examples, the classroom narratives mitigate the tensions between individual and collective practice. Thus, while Lydia's narrative began with some apparent anxiety over her break with prior practices, Madeline and Sam both emphasize that they were also "doing the same thing." This uniformity might help all teachers, and especially, early career teachers, feel confident that they are "on the right track" with their instructional design. In other instances, a break with uniform practice can be seen as a moment where the narrations of difference in practices also can offer opportunities for evaluation, growth and change. As Sam's coda to the story round on teaching the film unit indicated:

> SAM: Yeah
>   but I think they're liking it
>   they're getting it.
>
> LYDIA: Good   40
>   I think any movie really can work.
>
> SAM: Yeah I might try *River* next semester too
>   just to see how that [works in comparison
>
> MADELINE: [Well then you'd have a good comparison]
>
> SAM: And I only have one senior class   45
>   so next term I can kind of play a bit and see
>   "Well, how's it going?"

By narrating the experiences Sam had teaching *Big Fish*, alongside those that Madeline and Lydia had teaching *A River Runs through It*, he emphasized the uniformity of practice, even within an independent choice in text. Sam's coda expressed confidence that he might well choose either text. Lydia confirmed that the focus on film analysis was paramount to the curriculum, not the text.   Thus this story round kept open a flexibility of practice: a willingness to experiment and "play." These informal inquiries, explored through narrative, became opportunities for us all to search out better texts and better practices.

These classroom narratives were resources for all teachers to gain additional knowledge and experiences for our own practice. Likewise, replays of teaching episodes might assist all teachers, and especially the newest teachers, in developing the predictive aspects required for instructional design, as we gain additional vicarious experiences with classrooms and students to which we would not otherwise have access.

Shifting narrative practices: Silence and story rounds

Both classroom narratives and contextualizing narratives seemed to have significant implications for the mentorship, learning, and relationship building that existed within our team during the research year. While another LFHS English department PLC had declared a ban on storytelling during meeting time, our group was adamant that our narrations were a key component of our learning together. During a midyear reflection (1.9.08), we discussed the rehearsing component of our stories explicitly:

LYDIA: Madeline, and everyone too,
    I have to say that
    I find these narratives of what everyone said in class really helpful.
    I am like
    "Madeline said that, I am going to say that too."   5
    It is just a way of phrasing it.
    The rule of not telling stories in PLCs doesn't make sense.

RACHEL: It is like rehearsing. . . .

SAM: But it is filtered.
    This is what I did that worked   10

MADELINE: It reminds me of the way that you work with student teachers

LYDIA: It is so hard with my new IB class
    because I do not have the script
    and no one to practice my script on.
    That is the hardest part.   15

RACHEL: Because it is transitions
    organizing for flow, etc.
    that's what we were talking about.
    There are a hundred decisions you make for every lesson plan.

MADELINE: Same way with my AP class.   20
    It is like teaching in a vacuum.
    And I hate it.

I can do it.
But I like being able to say
"Here's what I did"   25
and you can say
"here's what I did."
I agree—it is powerful stuff

NATALIE: Yeah.

All of us had experiences in which we taught without the support of a learning community. The opportunity to discuss and rehearse our lessons collectively, gave us all greater confidence in our ability to effectively deliver instruction to our classes.

However, despite our enthusiasm for narrating our practices collectively, my observations about narrativity in our group are not without complications. While narrative modes of discourse were present in almost every meeting, there was a clear tendency early on in the first semester for the veteran teachers to dominate the narrative episodes. In the fall semester spontaneous story rounds around particular lessons or issues occurred frequently, averaging at least one per meeting. However, it was clear that Natalie was not participating in such story rounds very often as a narrator herself.

Given that providing classroom narratives seemed to be an implicit component of group discourse, Natalie's relative silence was disconcerting. Natalie's lack of narration was potentially symptomatic of a lack of self-confidence, as well as a lack of trust in the group: in order to feel comfortable narrating, she had to trust us and herself. Natalie's lack of narration may also have been part of her personality. Both at Kathy's introductory meeting, and in her interview, Natalie characterized herself as "quieter," "more of a observer" who would share "when I get to know a little bit more;" and she suggested later that it was important for the team to allow a quieter type of membership (Interview 6.3.08).   But likewise, Natalie's lack of narration meant that the other team members were not getting to know her or her practice: and this had implications for our ability to be effective mentors to her, and to develop relationships with her. These concerns were exacerbated by the fact that she was not able to be present for lunch, the primary socialization time in the department, nor could she participate in the informal and casual "PLC time" that occurred before school or in the halls between classes.

Natalie's silence suggested to me that explicitly naming a space within the weekly meetings for all teachers to narrate their stories of teaching practice might be an important tool for both teacher development and team building. Thus, after our midyear reflection, I began to

consciously structure a focused story round as an opening ritual for each meeting. The goal was to help build rapport and refocus the group on the shift from individual to collective practice at the start of each meeting. Stories rounds had been used for democratic deliberation, relationship building, and mentoring: thus I also was confident that adding this practice would help improve our opportunity to hear from the early career teachers practice, make collective decisions regarding instruction, and get to know each other better as professionals. I also assumed that like in the classroom, the most reluctant speakers often have a hard time getting the floor from those more confident and experienced. By explicitly naming the opening activity and ritualizing it, we were able to insure that everyone got the floor.

Some weeks the story round was focused on reflecting on a new lesson, or on a current building or department issue; many weeks it was simply: "Everyone share a highlight or puzzle from the preceding week" (Personal journal, 1.23.08). During particularly trying or stressful weeks—the invitation was narrowed to require that everyone share a good moment from the past week. As crabby as a meeting might start, once we had completed a story round, the tone of most meetings was recalibrated as we all seemed to reconnect with each other and acknowledge the demands and joys of teaching English to adolescents. Through these rounds, we were able to learn more about Natalie's teaching practice. She shared a favorite teaching book title, *Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli, an adolescent novel which none of us had read. Natalie described why this was her favorite book to teach, "It touches on those issues like racism, having no home, not knowing where to fit in, crossing the lines" (Team meeting, 4.2.08). Natalie's reflections on her classroom and the curriculum revealed how dedicated she was to her students, and to expanding their understanding of race, class, and gender. She shared some of the more successful experiments she tried with her twelfth graders—most of which came toward the end of the course as the curriculum moved into post-colonial, gender, and Marxist views on texts. Through some combination of the additional structure to our meetings, Natalie's growing comfort with the course texts, and the growing relationships between the team members, Natalie broke her silence. By May, her voice had joined the noisy, fast-paced narrative and intertextual conversations that were hallmarks of English 12 discourse.

Another notable structured story round was at Kathy's first meeting (3.26.08). At that time, each teacher narrated his or her individual teaching history, as a way to contextualize what experiences and beliefs each of us brought to the group. Natalie later acknowledged how helpful she thought this was: "I like what you did the time that Kathy was on board and we had

that introductory activity.   I think it's good to do that every now and then just to get to know your new members" (Interview, 6.3.08). The neglect of this type of personal story telling at the beginning of our first September meetings seems glaringly embarrassing to me now; but in the press of the opening of the year, trying to launch the curriculum, and the administrative requirements, I had overlooked the importance of making this conversation official.

As I look back on the research year now, I believe this lack of time and space and validity for more personal narration and explicit personal reflection was perhaps the biggest shortcoming in our narrative practices.   I have argued that the contextualizing and classroom narratives were important tools through which the problems of practice were rendered public and evaluated collectively as they emerged in the context of the English 12 team, and that they functioned as key community building and mentoring features of team discourse. However, there were many other types of narratives which we could have told, but did not.

Rust (1999) suggested that narrative inquiry should also ask "What was not spoken about?" Most notably, our stories told in team meetings were rarely personal narratives about our lives outside of school. There might be casual conversation before meetings, but talking about our personal lives outside of teaching in our meetings was rare to non-existent. Although many folks might say this was a sign of being "on task," I do feel this was a shortcoming of the team that was my responsibility. As the team facilitator for the research year, the increasingly "professional" nature of our team discourse was a symptom of my own task oriented perspective. It may have mitigated some of the problems of intertextuality, but simultaneously, it was a detriment to the personal and affective needs that are also a key component in any social world.

In order to build trust among team members, and to understand the unique beliefs, perspectives, and contributions each team member had to offer, we needed to understand more completely who each of us was outside and inside of teaching. Vinz (1996) theorized, "Becoming a teacher is a continuous process and one through which a teaching identity is produced and reproduced through particular social interactions and ideologies that inform us" (p. 6). This suggested that teachers should necessarily inquire into their own biography, and "the ghosts" of the formal and informal teachers they carry with them into their practice. In particular, with so little biographical narration, we inhibited the establishment of a more personal and professional trust. And most significantly, it pre-empted self-inquiry into the gender and racial dynamics within our team or our classrooms. It was difficult for me, Madeline,

and Lydia, as white teachers desirous of an anti-racist pedagogy, not to be aware of the implications of Natalie's silence as a young black teacher and our struggles to mentor her effectively. Lisa Delpit's (1993) image and critique of the silenced black teacher has lingered in my mind, and disquieted me throughout this inquiry. Similar concerns arose for me with Sam and Kathy. And yet, no matter how many times I wanted to, or even did put a question regarding race or gender or sexual orientation on the agenda, I could not figure out how to actually ask my questions in the group or in the interviews.

Part of it was certainly fear of the unknown. How does a straight, white, middle class woman in a position of authority begin an inquiry into issues that touch the lives of the newest and most vulnerable members of the group most powerfully? But I believe now, that that fear lingered longer than it should have in part because of what our narration was and was not during the research year. My devotion to the professional and intellectual narratives of teaching left me and our team without much perspective on the personal and affective lives of our team mates. Had I preserved more time in our meetings for personal storytellings, or perhaps even more importantly, arranged more casual, extra-professional time and space, we might have gotten to know each other as people first, and as people who teach second. I believe that the time we might have dedicated to honoring the personal, eventually may have allowed the most challenging questions of our professional lives to be explored more fully as well.

Chapter 6 : The Resources of Time and Labor in Our Collaboration

An Ending

It is a blazingly bright June afternoon, the last Wednesday of the school year. Six cars caravan a mile down a four-lane pseudo highway toward the newest drinking establishment in this booming suburb. Seniors have been out of school for almost a week already. But as everyone else is still teaching, the twelfth grade English team exits the building somewhat clandestinely. We don't want to advertise where we are going: in part, it would be inconsiderate, but we also want to be together, alone.

We park in front of a sports bar named the Victory, an irony this group of English teachers can't help but comment on as we enter. Within the last twenty four hours, Natalie and Kathy, our two newest team members, were informed by building administration that they had not been hired for positions for the following school year. Natalie, in her second year of teaching, had been part time with us all year; Kathy has just completed student teaching in Lydia's classroom this second semester. We are all hurting from this news, albeit for different reasons. Natalie and Kathy are facing the reality that their best chances for employment for the next year didn't materialize. Sam, the only male on our team, has finally achieved tenure after a hard fought battle the previous three years; he knows what this feels like for both young women, as he has been there twice before. Madeline and I, both potentially short timers in this building and team, recognize that we have lost two people who could have stepped up into our places in the long term. Lydia, Kathy's mentor, and a mid-career veteran anticipating another decade on this team, is devastated by the news that her growing partnership with these young women didn't seem to count in the staffing process at all.

But this is our last team meeting of the year, and we can't start here with our impending separation; it is too raw and too beyond our control. Instead, we order a round of beers and nachos to share. We chat about summer plans and our favorite music groups. We are reminded in a myriad of ways how diverse we are; most obviously in terms of age and teaching experience, but gender, class, race, sexual orientation, and family responsibilities, all shape us as teachers and our relationships to one another as colleagues. It is hard not to wonder about what another year with this eclectic group of six could have resulted in. What opportunities might just have been lost?

At some point toward the end of the first round of drinks, Natalie makes a brilliant suggestion: "At my last school, we would close meetings by going around and thanking everyone for something they had contributed to the meeting. Should we do something like that today?"

My head reels. Why hadn't Natalie made this recommendation earlier in the year? Why didn't I think of that? Should I grab my recorder? I decide no. It would signal a shift away from the personal work that needs tending now.

When I get over myself, and my most predictable failure to be an omniscient university researcher, I can see Natalie's recommendation is exactly what is needed now. I am thankful for the diverse experiences, wisdoms, and insights that exist across this team, and which teach me something new through each conversation, right through to the end. The implicit agenda for this meeting is to celebrate our year together and to start saying good-byes, and Natalie is right: "thank you" is the best possible way to begin both processes.

To acknowledge my enthusiasm for this idea, I start. I thank Natalie for her grace and professionalism throughout a very challenging year and a painful spring. As usual, I do not feel very articulate. I start to cry.

I feel this same way when my students leave at the end of the year. And to confess, these are the tears of guilt. There is a lot more that I could have done for Natalie this past year, and I am feeling guilty that I haven't done more. I often feel this way as the school year draws to an end. There is always something more needed, a student you feel you didn't reach, a parent you know you could have worked with more effectively. As a school year ends, I feel the terrible pull of that guilt on one hand and a secret relief to be able to breathe for a few weeks, which is recycled into more guilt.

In this case, we were explicit throughout the year that mentoring to help Sam, Natalie and Kathy improve their classroom practices was one of our central purposes as a team. Despite struggling all year to understand how to best assist these three early career teachers, here in the end, just as we finally start to feel like a team of six instead of two teams of three, we have been told it wasn't enough. The fact that only Sam has been rehired suggests that on an official and public level, we failed to accomplish our mentoring work effectively.

And so, even in the midst of a relatively luxurious sabbatical year from my own classroom, my end-of-the-year-teacher's-guilt response has been triggered. I continue to cry, and I stop speaking.

Madeline, always much more poised and articulate on the spot than I am, jumps in.

"My friend Beth always says, 'Things always turn out okay in the end.' We may not see it now, but things have a funny way of working themselves out. When Rachel left, we didn't think she'd come back, but here she is. If we want to work together again, we will." Madeline tells the story of my beginning, at this particular end, as a way to offer hope to these two new teachers who do not know where and with whom they will teach.

Lydia starts to cry too, "But what if it doesn't?" Quietly, I see Kathy wipe her eyes.

Madeline insists, "It will."

Sam tells his story of survival to try to offer some hope to the two youngest women.

Natalie says she isn't even job hunting.

Kathy says little.

We continue with the round of thanksgivings. Then Lydia turns the subject a bit, and asks about themes across the individual research interviews I have just completed with the team members.

"To be honest, I have been most startled by the affective power of the last few days. All the women cried at some point in the interviews. Here we are crying again. I wasn't really expecting that."

We all are wondering what this powerful emotional response means. We lapse into critique of the system which neglects this dynamic of teachers' work. We consider ways to make the process of hiring teachers and teaching itself better—more human, more professional, more accurate in its portrayal of teaching life. I pledge that I will take the essence of this conversation to administration, so that we can try to make some improvements before we find ourselves in this position again next spring.

We begin to trickle out: Natalie to pick up her toddler son; Kathy to recover privately by taking a few days away from the high school. We are left as a group of four who will work together again next year. We continue to reflect, to complain, and to compliment. Finally, we realize that as usual we have talked long past the time when our partners and children would have expected us home, and we walk out together.

Chapter Overview

Officially, this was the last meeting of the Lafayette Falls High School English 12 professional learning community for the 2007-2008 school year. It may seem an odd choice to

start a chapter in the middle here at the end, but I have relied on the relevance of Eliot's words from *Four Quartets* since I first started to recognize narrative as a central aspect of my life: "In my beginning is my end. . . .in my end is my beginning." On one level, this suggests that in the telling of any story, the end of the telling presupposes the beginning as much as a beginning might foretell an end. It also intimates the interrelation between the personal experiential and the personal theoretical which must always already be recognized to have shaped the teller and audiences of any story, including the one I am telling here. My telling of this story of one year as an action researcher investigating the practices of our team's collaboration brings with it all the other stories that have shaped me: stories of being a precocious reader, the eldest of six siblings, a lower middle class student at a prestigious private college, a 23 year old new teacher who wanted to feel autonomous in my own classroom. All of those beginnings shape this story—and lead me to begin this part of the story at one particular end.

The ending of my official data collection came as a surprise. Although I was intent throughout this process at trying to understand and improve our community of English teachers, it is only here in the end that I began to suspect that we were beginning to achieve something close to community—a beginning again in an end. Ultimately, by arriving at this end point of data collection, of a school year, of one particular recombination of this team of English 12 teachers, it led me to wonder, how did we get here? What might this ending mean for our futures as teachers together and separately? And how could we do it better next time?

More broadly, If American teaching has historically been a profession of itinerants, first of one room school houses and later one classroom principalities, what are the practices which might sustain collaboration? Elliot (1991) argued: "Achieving excellence in a social practice is not just a matter of improving specific technical skills. It also involves having regard for the ends and values which define the practice and developing those powers which are necessary if they are to be realized" (p.139). Prior research has observed conflicts in teacher collaborations over three main aspects of joint work: a) purpose b) leadership and c) interpersonal relationships (Joyce,2004; Grossman et al., 2001; Bezzina, 2006; Giles & Hargreaves, 2006; Achinstein, 2002; Hoban et al., 1997). On the surface level, it didn't really seem like our team experienced any of these central conflicts. We agreed on our two purposes: revise our curriculum and mentor our new teachers. We had an evolving leadership model to which everyone seemed to respond positively. We had few obvious interpersonal conflicts. At the same time, our collaborative

work felt challenging in a new way throughout the year; and while they may not have been obvious, I believe these typical challenges were a part of our team's experiences as well.

This chapter describes collaborative work practices our team exhibited during the research year, and explores how these practices changed or remained intact as the inquiry year unfolded. The primary source of data for this chapter were the weekly meeting summary logs, my reflections on the team meetings, and most importantly the interviews conducted with each teacher individually. While the reflections tracked my growing understanding of the team practices during the action research, the interviews allowed me better access to the experiences and perceptions of the individuals in the team as they lived the collaboration and research. Based on the themes which emerged from the individual interviews, I explore how we utilized two of the scarce resources that constituted our team practices. First, I describe the way that resources of time were allocated in both effective and (in)affective ways. Next, I explore the ways the labor in our collaboration was divided amongst the team members. In particular, I look at the ways each team member perceived self and co-collaborators' roles. As was also evident in our language practices, the major tension that existed in this team's experiences was between the established practices amongst the veterans, and the need to revisit and revise those practices in light of the goal of mentoring our newest teachers. Ultimately, I argue that we learned much about our practices, and that there were incremental changes and improvements as a result of this inquiry into our work. But like all learning, after one year together we were just beginning to understand our practices well enough to purposively alter them. Unfortunately, our learning process was cut short by the institutional forces that separated us in June. I hope that these interpretations of our team's experiences offer an insight into the complexity of our teacher collaboration, and the learning that occurred as when we made our practices conscious to ourselves.

The school year documented in this project was a critical year for the English 12 team, as it was a year of building new relationships. My sabbatical gave us an opportunity to begin this work, and even so it was challenging; for teachers without the added time benefits as we had, it may be improbable. However, it seemed as though one key challenge for our existing group was to change and revise the old cultural habits to meet the needs of all of our team members. We were aware of this even at our first meeting:

> Madeline: Part of it for us I know
> is that our group kind of evolved *organically*.

> We didn't set out to have a PLC.
> It happened many years ago.
> So it is hard.
>
> I am sure at some point along the way
> —not that we were *consciously* doing it—
> we were evolving and having norms,
> but we don't really think about what they are because they work.

Lydia: Yeah

Rachel: And I think that is a struggle for us.
   Because unlike the groups-
   I mean, all the other groups started last year,
   that was the first time we had PLCs,
   except twelfth grade. . . it's a different issue.

Lydia: Right.
   But now that we have new members
   it's becoming- (team meeting, 9.12.07)

As all three of the veteran teachers tried to explain, our practices of joint work were "becoming" more challenging. In contrast to the "organic" evolution of our norms over the previous decade, during this year we were required to "consciously" recognize and then begin to reconstruct our practices in order to build a new community that included the early career teachers. In some areas, we made progress; in others, despite our increased awareness of our practices as a result of the inquiry into it, change proved more difficult than we could have anticipated.

(Re) Constructions of time

Look around the room at a typical staff meeting or professional development workshop. How many teachers are grading? Reading the newspaper? Doing the crossword puzzle? Socializing? These are signs that the presentation is not perceived to be a valuable expenditure of time. Our students do the same to us as teachers: chatting with their neighbors or surreptitiously texting under their desks serves as our reminder that our curriculum and our instructional practices are not infallibly engaging. Teachers behave the same way, if not worse, when professional development time is not deemed relevant to their professional needs. And why shouldn't they? American high schools are generally not organized to support the demands of effective teaching and learning; the structure of school calendars and school days frequently do not provide enough time to complete instructional tasks individually, let alone the "extended

time needed for teachers to plan and study together" (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 4). Little (2003) found teachers' collaborative work groups "demonstrated a sensitivity to time, task, and pace" (p.937); I would suggest that much of this is a byproduct of the political nature of time allocation within school culture. On one hand, our team and building were quite fortunate to have the support of a principal who found the resources to reallocate the teachers' contract time spent in supervision duties to collaboration. On the other hand, the one hour per week that we had for official "PLC" time, was rarely enough to sustain both our curricular and mentoring aspirations.

Pre-inquiry constructions of time

During the early history of our group, while Madeline, Lydia and I were collaborating, time was managed informally. As our collaboration predated the "required PLC time," the time we spent was at our discretion. The key rule regarding time might be termed simply "as needed." We met as needed to accomplish curricular tasks as needed. We rarely wrote down agendas; instead our work goals were determined by what we needed to accomplish for our curriculum development for the next day or week. Our most common meeting time was Friday after school, once the week's stressors could be put down. As Madeline admitted, "We could stay here until six o'clock." We worked until we were done, or until we had to leave for family commitments. Truth be told, we relished these late afternoons for the intellectual stimulation and camaraderie they provided. The fact that the other department teachers often saw us settle in as they were packing up for the weekend only added to our own sense of pride in our dedication to our work.

The effective management of time

While the three veterans had been developing our norms and relationships over a decade, the research year gave us three new members, new goals, and a need for new practices. Our team's purposes for the research year included two primary goals: curriculum development and mentorship. A productive approach to both of these substantial goals would require vision and structure to manage scarce resources: particularly the scarcity of time in teachers' work lives (Irwin & Farr, 2004; Gunn & King, 2003). Managing the time resources of the English 12 team fell primary to me as the meeting facilitator. However, as I look back over the year and the competing purposes of curriculum development and mentoring, I can see that two competing concepts of time were at odds with one another in my practice. First,

integrating individual and collective ways of knowing takes time for relationships and dialogues to develop. To work toward improving our community and reflective practice required a significant allocation of time. Meanwhile, the effective management of time as a scarce resource was also needed to build trust and sustainability: team members must trust that the extra time spent on a daily or a weekly collaborative effort will be productive and worthwhile to their personal practice. Lydia noted that attendance all year was outstanding— a sign that we had a solid commitment from all team members:

> LYDIA: Number one you need to be there.
> You need to make a commitment. . . .
> The fact that our attendance was great
> that shows me that this is important to us. (Interview, 6.3.08)

As the team facilitator, I wanted to honor everyone's commitment by starting and ending sessions promptly, and structuring meeting agendas to insure we feel this was productive time spent working on issues of importance to our practice . This is one of the major contradictions in my positionality as an "insider on sabbatical:" the sabbatical allowed me the flexibility and time to conduct a more systematic inquiry into our practices, yet may have undermined my insider status if I did not monitor my own relationship to the institutional norms operating within the group and school while I was outside the classroom.

As the research year began, the first and most apparent practices I took on as the facilitator was creating a more formal agenda and trying to manage the time of meetings more consciously. Lydia, Natalie, and I had children at home, which certainly added pressure to have a regularly scheduled meeting, and to leave at a reasonable time. We determined that Wednesdays after school from 2:45 to 3:45 pm would be our planned work time. We worked hard to stay within the predetermined time limits; and although we often went fifteen or twenty minutes over, we were certainly more conscious of this limitation this year. As with Little's (2003) study, references to time were included in and concluded most meetings.

I tried to make sure we were productive during our one hour per week. I was worried that not being on campus every day would make it difficult to remain relevant in the weekly agendas; and I was also very self-conscious about taking on the more public and official "leader" duties. As the year went on, I often forwarded my agendas to the team in advance, so that I could make sure I had their feedback, matched their needs, and that everyone would feel

prepared for the meetings with materials or reflection. Lydia echoed my concerns about my

positionality, but also professed the success of the restructuring of the meetings.

> LYDIA: I was interested to see how this would work this year
> with you not being here.
> And it's been fine.
> I mean in some ways I thought,
> "Oh how can your—what would your leadership be like?"
> But you know the curriculum so well that it hasn't-
> it's just like you're here.
> So you get us on task.
> That's key.
> When you're gone
> we're sort=of=like uhh ((laughter)). (Interview, 6.3.08)

Throughout the team members' interviews, this common theme emerged about facilitation. All

team members felt that our meetings increased in productivity: the deliberate structuring of

each week allowed most meetings to be "on task."   Madeline saw this as the biggest change in

the team's practices during the research year:

> MADELINE: I think the biggest difference is we started out more organized
> and that's because you helped us do agendas.
> We always had a mental agenda it's not that you know,
> but to actually have an email and write it down and kind of remind ourselves.
> (Interview, 6.3.09).

Although Kathy was new to teaching and the English 12 team, she also commented on the

productivity:

> KATHY: I think things that worked for us
> definitely to have a very organized agenda or clear leader
> I think probably helps.
> I don't know what it would be like if that structure wasn't there
> but I think it's much more productive. (Interview, 6.4.08).

Sam's comments on the new facilitation strategies I had used were significant, in that they

noted the benefit of carefully structuring time theoretically. He observed that regardless of who

created an agenda, it existed as a support to the meeting time to mitigate the unpredictable

nature of social practice:

> SAM: I think the one-one of the most important things
> is that there needs to be an agenda

> which sounds silly as can be,
> but I've been in groups without it
> and there needs to be some type of an agenda. . .
>
> Whether there's one person in charge of creating it,
> or whether the group creates it . . .
> But the agenda expressed before the day of the meeting
> that's the key thing. . .
> because it's the structure outside of everyone.
> It's okay if the meeting's falling apart—
> go back to the agenda
> something we all agreed upon
> or something we can keep focusing back on
> and that even if there aren't roles or whatever else
> there's something there.

My response to Sam in his interview honestly conveyed the sense of gratitude I had for this positive feedback on the reconstruction of time within the group, while at the same time confessed my anxiety over it. I was glad that I had been able to provide one form of leadership through my facilitation that might have made our time more productive.

> RACHEL: Everybody has said something
> about how important having that organization was.
> And as awkward as it was for me to feel like I was imposing that this year
> and not knowing if I was imposing what people wanted to do . . .
> But that came through loud and clear:
> groups need some kind of leadership structure,
> or the meetings need some kind of structure,
> that provides the roadmap for the time
> so that it feels like it's well spent.

However, while my leadership performance in terms of managing time and maintaining relevance to curriculum development might have been fairly successful, I struggled to reconstruct time such that it was sensitive to our team's relational development.

Time and affective relationships: "The meeting continues down the hall"

As much as I was able to serve the team by providing more efficient structures to help us manage our joint work, and while we were productive in terms of curriculum collaboration, one of my biggest realizations late in the school year was how acutely I had neglected the affective aspects of our team practices.   This has been one of my personal and professional struggles for as long as I can remember. Tasks are easy to manage; people are hard. I often lead

with the task, when I should be attending more to the people. Taking on the role of team facilitator, coupled with the reflection and writing I have completed since data collection officially ended, has brought this personal shortcoming into sharper relief. Looking back over the first semester of our meetings, there was embarrassingly little personal conversation. We were highly productive and "on task," but that productivity limited the amount of relational work that occurred during the meetings. Without the establishment of those personal connections, relationship building would languish, and as such, the trust required for critical interrogation of our practices.

In January, at the midyear reflection, I posed this question to the group: "What are ways we could consciously structure meetings to help newcomers become socialized more quickly?"   As facilitator, the task of designing those structures fell to me. On one hand, I was entirely focused on what I could structure "during meeting time." As Madeline reminded me later, "the meeting continues down the hall." Our collaboration was not bounded by the one hour per week in the official meeting. Collaboration spilled into the hallways between classes, over lunch, in the parking lot, and over email when necessary. However, given that Natalie was split between two schools—she was not privy to most of this casual interaction whether about instructional or personal matters. She arrived in the building after lunch, and although she often checked in with Lydia in the half an hour she had prior to class, it was not the same access as she might have had if she were in the building all day. So it was paramount that some of the relationship building happen during meetings as well.

The addition of the opening story rounds described in Chapter Five certainly helped develop some of this work. By the time Kathy joined us in March, I had realized that as a team we needed to spend some time specifically getting to know each other's professional history. I consciously designed Kathy's first meeting to include the time required for introductions. About half of that meeting was spent with each teacher introducing himself or herself through their teaching histories. The team then introduced our purposes and norms. Kathy acknowledged the effectiveness of this meeting:

> KATHY: Well I like the fact that coming into this
> even at the first meeting,
> the first one that I attended,
> I think that everyone went around and probably introduced themselves.
> And just getting to know your members on a little bit of a personal level
> that's important I think if you have a new member

> to welcome them in
> and just make sure that everyone's on the same page.   (Interview, 6.4.08)

Kathy articulated the need for "a personal level" to be recognized as a way to establish "same page," in terms of expectations, values, and norms for the team. Natalie echoed Kathy's approval as well:

> NATALIE: Well I like what you did the time that Kathy was on board
> and we had that introductory activity.
> I think it's good to do that every now and then
> just to get to know your new members. (Interview, 6.4.08)

From Natalie's perspective, the lack of formal introductions at the beginning of the year, and the absence of more personal dialogue throughout the first semester must have compounded her confusion and isolation, in an already challenging social situation. And although it seemed like a small thing, it was a powerful lesson for me to learn as a facilitator.

Even within this small improvement, this introduction meeting was framed only as one's life inside the profession. As Kathy joked in her introduction of herself, "Ah. . .my teaching history. I have been teaching three days." It wasn't until our last meeting at the Victory Bar that the significance of the casual social time outside of the official group time was apparent to me. I had been so fixated on the meetings and the tasks we needed to accomplish as products, that I failed to see that we had spent too little time all year on the process of developing our relationships outside of those tasks. In retrospect, Madeline also agreed: a team "needs to have a bonding moment. They need to go somewhere and do something fun together and figure out what they do have in common" (Interview, 6.4.08). For the sake of building trust and relationships, this time outside of "work" was just as important as the level of professionalism we brought to our official work.

Part of this problem may also have been that we were trying to build relationships under the pressure of institutional settings which do not value them. I know that when Natalie and Kathy were not hired for the next school year, despite our advocacy on their behalf, the veterans were angry and hurt. We had invested ourselves in their progress, and wanted to see these two young women continue to grow in their practice. Just as we were beginning to feel connected, we were told that these connections didn't matter in the competition of the hiring process.

But the biggest part of this failure was mine, and I should have known better. Reflection on my own experiences as a new teacher in this team would have reminded me that the relationships between Madeline, Lydia and me were not developed just around the curriculum, but occurred in spite of it. The hours we spent socializing over lunch, in the halls, and in the school parking lot allowed us to understand the intersections of our professional and personal lives. Our "off task" conversations built the trust and the meaningful relationship democratic communities require, as much as the intellectual work we pursued together. Our trip to England together had been a key bonding moment. But as a member of the veteran part of the group, my status as an insider was more assured; and my perspective on what the new teachers needed to become more fully integrated into the team was blurry.

Part of my failure in perspective may also have been my distance from the school during the research year. Although I spent one full day per week on campus, I did not have the density of social interaction that full time teaching in the building would have had. My relationships with Madeline, Lydia, and Sam were sustained by our prior history. I got to know Kathy through our weekly practicum and seminar meetings for student teaching. But Natalie and I never really got to know each other on a personal level. After more than twenty team meetings, I do not even know if we ever shared the names of our children or husbands. Like me, Natalie had not been a full time member of the department during this year, but unlike me, she did not have the benefit of prior history, and had the burden of existing in two new schools with very different cultures simultaneously. In Natalie's final interview she confirmed the importance of this casual, social time. I asked her what PLC's could do better to help integrate new teachers. She replied:

> NATALIE: You know taking the warm-up time,
>   going out,
>   you know that kind of stuff.
>   Because I went to a few of the English parties,
>   that's a whole bunch of English teachers,
>   but more of like a team building within the department.
>   That's helpful.
>   I'm not saying we have to all go out to the nearest pub or whatever
>   anything like that, but you know. (Interview, 6.3.08)

As the school year ended, there was an increase in the casual social interactions outside of the official PLC time, and Madeline and Lydia also commented on the shift in Natalie's connection to the team as a result of these bonding moments.

LYDIA: I've been out to drinks with Natalie
 and she's a different person:
 she's not nervous,
 she's calm,
 she's funny,
 she's says things that I had no idea she was thinking.
 So it's interesting that outside of the PLC she really,
 and that's just been in the last week. . . .
 She talked about how she is truly an outsider in both buildings
 and she cannot get in.
 She had to eat lunch in her car. (Interview, 6.3.08)

The image of Natalie eating lunch in her car as she drove between schools haunts me still. As much as the circumstances of her split position were beyond all of our controls, the benefits of an occasional happy hour out was within our control, but beyond my perception for too much of the year.

The surprise I felt during the last week of data collection was the surprise of having my perspective shift. While I had been focused on the time inside the meetings, I had not understood the importance of the time outside the meetings. Had I realized this sooner, ironically, the relationships I hoped would develop may have bloomed that much more effectively and efficiently.   Those last weeks, that last meeting, with its pints of beer and nachos, allowed the affective parts of our lives together and separately to be acknowledged.   I don't know if any professional development guide book would have told me that. But here it is now: to build an effective work collaboration, allow yourselves the time to play together as well.

(Re)Constructions of labor

Without mechanisms to manage their intellectual and material resources, teacher collaborations are unlikely to be effective or sustainable; thus, the importance of leadership at all levels—the state, district, building, department, and team—cannot be taken lightly (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Hargreaves, 2003). However, at the ground level, teachers may be uncomfortable with leadership roles required for successful collaborations, such as making decisions about group focus or task organization, because it defies the norms of autonomous and egalitarian relationships between teachers (Joyce, 2004; Supovitz, 2002; Westheimer, 1998).   These tensions were certainly present in my practice and reflection about the research year. As much as I wanted us to be a successful collaboration, and I knew that required

leadership, I also wanted to respect my colleagues as equal partners in our work, and did not want to impose my beliefs or vision of what our work should be.

As part of my dedication to the vision of democratic communities, and my unease with a more hierarchical style of leadership, the model of leadership I ascribed to was one of distributed leadership (Spillane, Halvorson, Diamond, 2001). Distributed leadership is best understood as the "collective properties of the group of leaders working together to enact a particular task. . .lead[ing] to the evolution of a leadership practice that is potentially more than the sum of each individual's practice" (Spillane, Halvorson, Diamond, 2001, p. 25) This social distribution of leadership envisions leadership practices which are dispersed throughout organizations, not embodied in the behaviors of one individual. Such leadership practices focus on the interaction between individuals, their interdependencies, and their decision making through collaborative dialogue; and thus, these goals are coherent with the goals of a democratic community more generally. Research on distributed leadership utilizes activity theory to attend to the macro functions and micro tasks which comprise leadership practices and the tools leaders utilize to achieve these tasks and functions (Roth & Lee, 2007; Roth and Tobin, 2004; Spillane, Halvorson, Diamond, 2001). In an effort to understand how or if leadership was distributed throughout the group, I attend in this section to the ways in which our team constructed a division of labor. I examine the ways in which the labor was distributed across the English 12 team, our growing awareness of the dilemmas of our division of labor, and the perceptions team members had about their roles. The theory of distributed leadership, and the concept of division of labor specifically, helped me analyze the challenges we had in achieving more equitable leadership practices, and the implications our practices had for mentoring in particular. For as much as this was the democratic vision of leadership I espoused, like most theories, figuring out how to implement it in practice was a much more challenging matter.

Pre-inquiry constructions of labor and leadership

From the time that LFHS opened until 2006, Madeline served as department leader, and thus unofficially functioned as our team leader as well. However, while many English 12 agendas items were determined by Madeline, and she managed the financial resources of the team as well as the department, like our construction of time, the nature of our distribution of labor functioned on an "as needed" basis. Thus the introduction of an agenda item and the

execution of a work related task might be accomplished by any of the team members. Common tasks included writing or revising assignments, developing rubrics, preparing materials for copying, or if we were working down to the wire, actually making copies. The team member most interested or most at liberty picked up the workload as needed and as able. Most curricular work was proposed collaboratively, and begun individually. We then shared, discussed, and edited documents or lessons as a team prior to use by individual teachers. Overall, there seemed to be a fairly equitable distribution of work and leadership: all of us felt valued, felt that we had agency to initiate improvements, and knew we could trust one another to generate high quality work for all of us to use.

Expectations for Division of Labor during the Inquiry Year

As the school year began, the veterans tried to be explicit about what new teachers could expect from our work in the English 12 team together. Madeline, Lydia, and I each expressed at our first meeting that we understood that especially the first time through the curriculum the veterans would share our materials and help new teachers through understanding the big picture of the course, each unit, and each assessment. However, Madeline noted pragmatically that given the limited one hour per week of official time we had together and in particular the constraints of Natalie's schedule between two schools, daily lesson planning probably could not be part of our weekly meetings.

However realistically these expectations were laid, in retrospect this division of labor generated a problem. The team normally worked under the expectation that "Teaching practices attempt to be uniform in as much detail as is possible." Looking back now, I can see that there was an inherent contradiction between the existing team practices of uniformity, and the time available to maintain such uniformity. While this might have been feasible for Sam and Kathy given their full time status in the building, for Natalie this may have proved impossible. She was teaching three different courses in two different buildings: she had only about thirty minutes of preparation time per contract day after her commute between buildings. In January, after a particularly harsh performance evaluation from our building principal, Natalie admitted she was not completing detailed lessons plans independently. We encouraged her to accomplish this by explaining that in addition to the group planning, we all still completed fairly detailed lesson plans for each day individually. She committed to more regularly planning her class periods; and expressed growing confidence once she did so. However, the ability for us to

mentor her significantly at the level of daily lesson planning remained beyond the scope of our limited time together each week or day. Despite these contextual difficulties and contradictions, the first tenet of our division of labor maintained that the veterans would provide the big picture of the curriculum: its learning objectives, organization, texts, materials, and assessments, while each individual teacher enacted the curriculum on a daily basis.

The second and third tenets of labor within the group were also presented during our first team meeting. Toward the end of that meeting, Lydia and I tried to express two ideas that in retrospect, also seemed to have been mixed together in ways that also might have caused contradiction. The first I presented, which is the idea of contributing to the team:

> Rachel: ((to Natalie)) I hope you'll feel confident just jumping in
> and asking questions
> and also contributing. . . .
>
> One of the things I realized really quickly about this team
> that although there is a way of doing things,
> we have a curriculum for example,
> but we are always under revision.
>
> We want new ideas
> and where our energy comes from has been those new ideas.
> It has been a while since we had a new person on the team.
> And so, we really do look for you to jump in
> when you feel ready and comfortable.
>
> Natalie: I might delay my "jumping in" until later—next semester ((laughter)) (team
> meeting, 9.12.08)

As the year went on, there was an expectation that although the three veterans would share all our resources, we hoped that Natalie, and all the new teachers, would help us generate new ideas and share their knowledge in return to the benefit of the curriculum, our learning, and our students' learning. Natalie's reluctance here was already apparent: she repeated what several of us had also said—that her contributions might be reasonably delayed until second semester, after she had been through the curriculum once.

In response, Lydia recast my community oriented valuation of "contributing" to the group instead as an issue of individual agency and freedom. She acknowledged that despite the typical uniformity in our curriculum, each teacher needed to feel ownership of the curriculum as well:

LYDIA: I mean, it can feel really safe to have this structure,
> just go along,
> but it can also feel stifling.
> Like, "ach—there's no space for me to do anything new."
> But there is.

Rachel: Yeah, to express your own creativity as a teacher. (team meeting, 9.12.08)

Natalie, the new teachers, and all the veterans lived within this constant tension: between the "safety" and the "stifling" aspects of a collaborative curriculum.   For the more veteran teachers, this was less of a dilemma. We had built our own individual spaces within the curriculum and made our contributions over a decade of collaboration. We relied on the safety of our joint work when needed, and could push ourselves into new areas as well. For the newest teachers, the ambiguity of this situation and their ambivalence seemed more acute. Kathy later echoed Natalie's early response about the tensions over contributing as a new teacher:

KATHY: I feel like my role is more to just kind of sit back and learn a little bit
> and then contribute where I could.
> So as a new member
> just kind of being there to just be more of a participant
> more than taking on a very active role. (Interview, 6.4.08)

The dilemma however, was that the more active a role new teachers might take, the more meaningful learning they would likely achieve, and the more agency they would feel within the team.

Division of labor was thus a central dilemma in our team's practices. On one hand, the proposed division of labor meant that the veterans would provide the curriculum design and materials, although new teachers should expect that they would be largely responsible to enact the curriculum as daily lessons plans independently. On the other end, there was an expectation that a return would be made to the team as each new teacher felt comfortable or inspired. These contributions would also give each person increasing sense of ownership in the curriculum as well.   However clearly we had articulated these expectations, as a result of the contradictions and tensions inherent in such an undertaking, we struggled as a team and as individuals to enact these expectations in practice.

Veterans Roles

>   MADELINE: Who will type this?
>
>   LYDIA: I will.
>
>   MADELINE: Great. That was all I was worried about.
>
>   LYDIA: You know why.
>   I don't want to grade my papers. ((laughter))
>
>   MADELINE: You could always clean the bathroom.
>
>   RACHEL: That is what I do.
>
>   SAM: Yeah, I do everything else first.
>
>   LYDIA: I love generating.
>   Getting ready for term three.
>   I've already done my calendar for my CIS class.
>   Meanwhile, I am drowning in papers. (Team meeting, 1.16.08)

Throughout the year, it was apparent to us all that the veterans maintained control over most aspects of the joint work. I organized our agendas and facilitated the discussions at our weekly meetings. I also filled out our weekly reports to administration, and organized our work on articulating essential learning outcomes and our team SMART goals as required by administration. Madeline continued to be in charge of ordering materials, and of being the "history keeper" for our team, department, and building contexts. Lydia was described as the "organizer": she kept the team on track with revision of documents, photocopying, and calendars. She was also the team's "nurturer": she was the most likely to initiate compliments, and to check in to make sure the new teachers were doing okay on a daily basis. Lydia was also most often the teacher to initiate a change or revision in curriculum. Amongst the veterans, these roles were subtle shifts from what had occurred in prior years. My formal position as facilitator was certainly new, although mitigated by the fact that I was not on campus every day. In my absence, Lydia shouldered a larger responsibility for the daily team management. Madeline observed that Lydia and I both had taken on larger leadership roles within the team:

>   MADELINE: I used to kind of be more in charge I think. . .
>   It's not that I'm not a contributing member,
>   I certainly see myself as equally contributing and having plenty of say,
>   but I think it's been wonderful to watch both you and Lydia

just move into the middle of your career.
You're in charge now
and that's a wonderful thing to watch. (Interview, 6.4.08)

While these changes in leadership may have been apparent to the veterans, we also acknowledged that we managed most other aspects of the collaboration:

LYDIA: I really see the veteran teachers as
we do a lot of explaining to the new people.
What the curriculum is about.
We have a lot of history together,
we have a lot of stories about the work that we're doing.
And I think that any change mostly comes from
((quieter)) I am trying to think about this here-
any change that we make usually is initiated by a veteran teacher. (Interview, 6.3.08)

The veterans were the agents in most aspects of group work: we explained, narrated, and initiated the changes. In his interview, Sam described how as a newcomer the work of the veterans was "so interwoven together that as an outsider it's hard to see" individual ownership of curricular work (Interview, 6.4.08). This interweaving may have mystified the process of collaboration and curriculum development from the perspective the new teachers. Conversely, while Lydia agreed with the interwoven nature of the curriculum, she saw this collective ownership as a sign of the team's strength and lack of interpersonal conflict or competition.

LYDIA: I can't say that this unit came out of my PLC or this one lesson plan.
It's like everything
it's hard to even--
I don't know what's mine
there is no mine.
I mean that's the thing.
I can't say "Oh that I created this or Rachel created this or Madeline"
it's like we all-
it's all mixed up
so it's very hard to separate (Interview, 6.3.08)

While the lack of competition and collective ownership was perceived as a benefit by the veterans, I have become concerned about what this might have meant for the newer teachers. I wondered if the collective ownership and distribution of leadership and labor among the veterans made us and the curriculum seem monolithic, and impervious to new ideas.

Consciousness of labor practices

During our midyear reflection, I presented my interpretations of our work so far, and I asked about our labor practices directly: "What are ways that our current division of labor might be helping and/ or hindering our progress?" (Team meeting, 1.23.08) In response to this question, Lydia recollected a story about her student teaching experience, in which her cooperating teacher required her to write a test for use by the team of teachers in which she was working. Lydia's coda to this story linked the learning she had accomplished through this event to our present situation as mentors to our new teachers, and inspired the rest of the team to reflect as well:

> LYDIA: Now I am feeling really bad,
>   that I do take control, and type these things out.
>   I mean, I felt ownership.
>   [My husband] calls this anti-help—enabling.

> SAM: Yep. The parent doing the homework for the kid.

> LYDIA: ((laughter)) Last night at home.

> RACHEL: I think it is about balance.

> LYDIA: It must be overwhelming,
>   but how can you feel ownership?

> SAM: Yeah, I mean if you don't know where you are going,
>   you have to trust the map.
>   But take detours here and there.

> MADELINE: And sometimes you have to draw your own map
>   because you are teaching alone.

Our comments here suggest the tension in the situation which we all recognized. Sam's metaphor of the curriculum map which both guided and allowed "detours" expressed the ways in which he saw the benefit and the constraints of the veterans having provided a curriculum and most attending materials to the early career teachers. His astute analogy of a "parent doing the homework for the child" also suggested he felt there could be a paternalism implicit in our current practices. Likewise, Madeline's closing remark, that we could also find ourselves teaching alone and without any map at all, had significant implications for our mentoring goals: these existing work practices perhaps were not enough to facilitate the knowledge of curriculum

development all the new teachers would need. This left us all in a bind. The veterans were proud of our curriculum, and we wanted to share our work generously to benefit our new colleagues and our students. Sam, who in his recent experiences had been bounced around between two schools and three different grade level teams, had seen the opposite extreme as well. In one of his other teams, he described feeling like the new people were "begging for alms at the bottom" from veteran teachers less willing to share than the English 12 teachers. Natalie and Kathy also expressed gratitude for all the materials that had been shared with them. But conversely, given all that the English 12 veterans had shared, what did this mean for the growing practice of our new teachers? What might happen when they found themselves in a different teaching context in which there were no curricular supports?

Moments of reconstruction in labor practices

While I would love to report that our team boldly redefined our labor practices following the above conversation, changing our existing practices proved difficult even after we were more conscious of them. On a daily basis, much of the division of labor continued as it had throughout the research year. We utilized collaborative time primarily to discuss, revise, and edit aspects of lessons or assignments. Outside of the weekly meetings, Madeline, Lydia, and I continued to provide materials and complete team leadership tasks as required; each teacher generally developed his or her own daily lesson plans, although much of the daily "hallway talk" also focused on instruction.

I can't say for sure why we couldn't change these labor practices. As was also true with my management of the team's time resources, I believe to some extent I trained my eye too narrowly on what happened inside our official meetings. While the meetings were the explicit focus of our joint work and my facilitation, much of this enacted division of labor happened *outside* of the meeting time. Even as I reworked the practices within our weekly meetings, I wasn't reimagining the daily practices outside of the meetings. This seemed to have an effect of maintaining the status quo regarding norms of labor in our group. Additionally, as too many practices often go in institutions—much of this was also probably maintained in the name of efficiency. Sam and Natalie were just teaching one section each of English 12; their attentions were necessarily divided between English 12 and their other courses. Once Kathy joined the team to student teach, Lydia was the team member most at liberty to initiate changes and revisions and provide daily support to the team as a whole. Although we all recognized the

importance of redefining some of our roles, I do believe that the constant battle against time on a daily, weekly, and term basis, kept us from consistently re-allocating tasks to new teachers and mentoring them through such work.

Despite the lack of a major redefinition in our roles, there were events which broke out of our typical norms of labor.   These moments when labor practices were reconstructed corresponded to moments of curriculum creation and co-evaluation of student work; and the early career teachers noted how much they valued those opportunities. At several meetings during the year, we brought in student assessments to discuss and evaluate together. Although the veterans had occasionally done such work before, these more regular meetings allowed all of us to discuss the successes and shortcomings of our students' writing, and use this information as a tool to plan future instruction and revisions in curriculum. Additionally, the meetings during which we created the student self assessments were much more balanced in contributions from early career teachers.   Likewise, in their interviews, Sam and Natalie both noted meetings where joint work was creation of new curriculum. The poetry lesson created in February (as described in Chapter Four) may have been a classroom flop, but it stood out to Sam as a moment which broke through our typical labor practices:

> SAM: [Creating the poetry unit] was one moment where everyone was at an even plane
> and it was "What knowledge do you bring?"
> And it was like the traditional, the modern,
> and the hyper modern
> with the other newer members trying to bring in other things. (Interview, 6.4.08)

This moment stood out to Sam because it was a moment where there was "an even plane"; suggesting that most of the time he felt a hierarchy within the group expressed in part through our labor practices. Sam ran the copies that late afternoon; a task that shouldn't be remarkable, but stands out as well as an emblem of the ownership he felt, and his contribution to the team's work.   Likewise, Natalie recalled one of her favorite meetings as a meeting where a new assignment was being created for the unit on gender:

> NATALIE: The gender assignment
> and just doing it right on the spot
> and kind of making a new assignment from that.
> I think it's pretty dynamic. . .
> You know "Let's change this and let's make it better"
> I mean that was phenomenal.

While the veterans may have felt this enthusiastic about most meetings, the significance of Natalie's and Sam's recollections of these lesson creation events suggest that there may be greater difficulty in achieving an equitable distribution of leadership and labor in teams where roles , practices, and curriculum have already been defined.

Sam's membership in other PLC's substantiated this claim that moments of curriculum creation may be the most integrating and democratic moments of our collaboration. Sam compared his experiences within the English Nine team to that with English 12:

> SAM: [The English Nine team] was almost like a mini class
>   Where we were having someone take over as being a leader.
>   And then by the end of the class
>   we'd come up with assignments for each person.
>   That was your responsibility to work on your one small assignment
>   and bring it to the next meeting
>   and everyone share
>   and that's how things were created.

The English Nine team seemed to work with more fully distributed practices of labor and leadership. Sam hypothesized, and I concur, that the needs of each group defined its practices. The need for extensive curriculum creation in some teams, in contrast to the curriculum revision in English 12, meant that we had a host of attendant practices, for better and worse:

> SAM: Revision versus the creation:
>   and that also drove a lot of the difference within the [twelfth grade]PLC.
>   It was a lot less urgent
>   than what was going on for the other groups I've been part of.
>   It was creation and desperation
>   and that definitely changed the mood of the PLC's.
>
>   Whereas with the twelfth grade
>   it was remembering what had been done in the past
>   thinking through anything that needed to be changed
>   and then continuing on with what was going on.
>
>   And there was always a basis;
>   there was a previous year or a previous iteration of the assignment
>   we were dealing with specifically
>   that you could go back to.
>   Whereas the other groups I've been with were dealing with a blank slate
>   and that—
>   it definitely affected everything within the group. (Interview, 6.4.08)

While Sam clearly valued the moments of creation and the agency provided in the English Nine team, it also was required out of "desperation." Presumably, desperation isn't the most ideal of work circumstances; but the energy and agency felt in that context offered a different sort of satisfaction. Conversely, in the absence of "a blank slate," the English 12 team struggled instead with how to achieve a balance between the fortunate curricular position we were in, and its significance for mentoring possibilities.

New teachers' reflections on tensions between autonomy and collectivity

Given the tension over how to redefine the construction of labor within our group, I was particularly interested at the end of the year to learn more about how the new teachers felt about the tensions they experienced between our collective practices and their individual agency over the curriculum. Like Vinz (1996) found, our early career teachers all expressed some ambivalence as to the relationship between the collective and individual nature of our work.

From one perspective, the new teachers agreed that the more explicit we were as a group about roles and expectations the more they understood how to contribute to the team's collaboration. While we began the year trying to be explicit, our roles certainly needed revisiting and reflection as the year continued. Our midyear reflection in January inspired me to organize a department meeting in February on small group communication. This meeting was facilitated by an English department teacher who had expertise in small group communications, and the framework he offered helped clarify some of the problems all of our departmental teams had with roles and division of labor. Both Sam and Natalie expressed that these meetings caused them to reconsider their own participation in our team:

> SAM: Just the recognition that there are certain roles
> you fill one
> but you need the other ones too. . . .
> [I was] much more aware of my own role within the group
> because the questions were asked
> and then you sit there after the meeting going,
> "Well what is my role? (Interview, 6.4.08)

> NATALIE: It just kind of let the group know what their roles were:
> "Oh I didn't know that."
> I heard that "Oh, I didn't realize that was my role in the group."

It was kind of like, "Well, maybe it's a good time to start taking more risks
or start being more open
or start offering more feedback
or questions
or interacting within a group."   (Interview, 6.3.08)

For both Sam and Natalie, it was important that we periodically revisited and reflected on our roles within the collaboration in a way to help them imagine other ways of being within the group.

Sam: Growing into leadership

In particular, as Sam completed his third semester teaching English 12, it was apparent he was beginning to take on a more active role as a team member. He periodically sent emails to the entire team with web links to new stories or other relevant resources. His humor and sarcasm were highly valued for the laughter they inspired all year. His diverse experiences and critical analysis of other collaborations gave us excellent perspectives to consider.   His efforts and evolving role in the team were noted by veterans and new teachers alike:

MADELINE: [Sam has] definitely taken on certain aspects of leadership
that I think are terrific
and I'm glad he's going to be teaching at least part of the year next year
because I want him to continue to do that. . .
he's really contributing a lot. (Interview, 6.4.08)

LYDIA: Sam's been really I think becoming more of a member this year
he has initiated change this year
he's brought in ideas
he does have that sense of humor
that's good.   (Interview, 6.3.08)

NATALIE: [Sam] is higher up on there as far as experience
and things to share with the group.

KATHY Sam as maybe a little bit of a voice of reason
although it wasn't irrational ((laugher))
but I mean maybe sometimes he's more
he's got his opinions that sometimes are a little bit more different.

Essentially, Sam achieved full membership by the end of this year. All the teachers on the team sensed that his status and role had shifted: he was not "a newbie." His positioning was implicit in his participation in the group meetings, publically acknowledged in our last meeting, and made official and secure by his achievement of tenure at the end of this year.   Madeline and I

encouraged him to take on more public roles. As we looked ahead to Madeline's retirement and my possible departure, Sam was needed to step into a greater leadership position. The veterans made sure he could continue teaching twelfth grade the following year by reallocating some of our own sections. He was encouraged to take Advanced Placement training, which would position him to take on twelfth grade advanced sections as well.

As Sam reflected on his experiences with the English 12 team so far, he noted that he appreciated the tempering effect of collaboration with more experienced teachers.

> SAM: Yeah I can have great crazy ideas of doing all kinds of odd things in the classroom
>   but having a strong basis of things that are proven as well.
>   To then insert my own creativity
>   is something that I've really picked up from being a part of PLC's.

Sam was also clear that he was ready for greater agency and ownership in the curriculum. While he was generally complimentary of our team's practices, he expressed one specific request to facilitate a change in our division of labor. While many of the course documents were available publically on a district server, he wanted to ensure that all course documents were publically accessible, and publically reviewed to provide "the freedom to look over the things and change it." The seemingly innocuous task of sending up photocopies for duplication had a political bent for him as an early career teacher:

> SAM: Sometimes the copies would come back
>   and I'd go "Oh yeah, I don't like this question"
>   and even just getting the chance of other members to have input
>   or even have the option of
>   "Okay I'm just going to change that question for my class and rephrase that "
>
>   That happens some at the end [of the course]
>   when there needed to be a little bit more revision towards things.
>   But some of them where just kind of assumed
>   "This is what's fine, okay we're just going to run that"
>   versus you know "I'd actually like to change the language in that a little bit."
>   (Interview, 6.4.08)

Sam's request was an important reminder that our work practices, even on tasks which veterans "assumed" were completed, carried an implied message about who had say over the English 12 curriculum.   For Sam, a distributed practice of leadership and labor within a mentoring context would both temper his "crazy ideas" and allow greater agency over curriculum revision. For the

rest of the team, the value that his contributions had already made to our collaboration was apparent by the year's end.

The "newbies": Kathy and Natalie

Kathy and Natalie also expressed their perspectives on the tensions between autonomous and collective teaching. Kathy saw herself in a position much like Sam's: wanting to experiment, but also realizing the benefit of utilizing the experienced practices offered by the team. Natalie did not express as confident a desire to experiment as either Sam or Kathy. When asked to describe her role on the team, she said she was "Quieter sometimes because I only have one year here, and now I am just starting to generate ideas" (Team meeting 3.26.08). In their interviews, I asked each woman about the tension between the collective support of English 12 curriculum and her desire to experiment and grow independently. Both women recognized the tension, but felt that the team was open to new ideas.

> KATHY: That was something I was maybe a little bit worried about at first
> because you come into it well
> "I want to do this and this and this."
> But then you quickly realize
> that you can't do a whole brand new curriculum
> and so it helps to learn.
>
> But I feel one thing about everybody
> is that everyone is always open to any suggestions.
> And that's one of the definite positive aspects of this particular PLC
> is that really I felt like if I wanted to try something I could.
> You know if there was something that was pressing,
> " You guys I have to try this"
> no one would say "No, no, we were set."
> So there's flexibility, definitely.   (Interview, 6.3.08)

Likewise, almost ten months later after we had first expressed this idea of openness to change, Natalie repeated almost verbatim what the veterans had described at our opening meeting. Reporting the speech of the veterans, Natalie said this was one of the most important messages to convey to new teachers:

> NATALIE: "Although we've had this agenda here or this set curriculum
> or things that we've known is working or successful,
> we're always looking to improve.
> So if you have other suggestions
> or you have other ways of teaching
> don't be afraid to tell us." (Interview, 6.3.08)

While Natalie said she felt the team was open to new ideas, one of the key moments of tension in the team during this year had concerned her fear about sharing her work with the group.

Although throughout the research year there were few explicit conflicts, the one notable conflict concerned Natalie's practices of sharing and contribution. This was an event both Natalie and Lydia narrated in their individual interviews. In March, Lydia discovered copies of four Powerpoint presentations designed around the individual archetype patterns studied in that unit. Lydia was frustrated, and brought this issue to Madeline and me. We decided that the best course of action was to ask Natalie directly if she was willing to share this work. When Lydia asked, it was apparent that Natalie had not had the confidence to offer her work to the group.   As Lydia recalled, Natalie had responded with surprise: "'Really you want it? It's not very good.' She was apologizing for it." (Interview, 6.3.08). Natalie explained:

> NATALIE: It's not that I didn't want to
> it's just that I also think
> that everyone has different things going on in their classes
> that one more thing - I was going to help
> when you have such a plethora of other different things? (Interview, 6.3.08)

For Lydia, her interpretations of Natalie's "not sharing" had multiple implications: it suggested a lack of confidence, or misunderstanding of the team's expectations. But to the team, it also intimated a potential breakdown of collective interdependence.   An unwillingness to share could become perceived as "competition" (Lydia, Interview, 6.3.08). Fortunately, rather than let her irritation simmer, when Lydia asked Natalie about the work directly, the request functioned as a compliment and a boost to Natalie's confidence.

> NATALIE: It actually was pretty reaffirming
> to see some people say
> "Well, oh, could you share?" or "Do you mind?"
> and I was like "Sure."

I also asked Natalie about her reluctance to share her individual work in our interview:

> RACHEL: Did you feel like it was a risk to share things with the group?

> NATALIE: Well, it's somewhat of a risk.
> You're like, "Well, I wouldn't do it that way,"
> or "We do it this way."

> Instead it's always that feeling when you're not-
> I haven't taught it five six seven times.
> And so it was kind of like
> "Well here's what I've done.
> It's not very -
> I'm sure you've got whatever you got going."

Natalie admitted that it was intimidating to offer up her individual work to the group. She was worried about rejection from either an individual ("I wouldn't do it that way") or more potently, from the team ("We do it this way."). Like her reluctance to narrate, Natalie's reluctance to share probably hurt her positionality early on more than it protected it. In a situation where the division of labor requested that Natalie and all the new teachers "jump in" when they were ready, the sooner that leap occurred, the more the rest of the team would perceive that confidence as competence and full participation in our collaboration.

At the end of the year, Natalie described herself still as:

> NATALIE: The new learner, the new kid on the block
>   I guess just sucking up information.
>
>   Maybe I didn't share everything
>   but someone would say "Oh where'd you get that from?"
>   Or you know just feeling like
>   "Well, I can contribute too."
>   It just takes me a little time to kind of get [that] perspective. (Interview, 6.3.08)

But by the end of the year, Natalie had also begun to redefine her role. She was now able to visualize herself as a contributing member of the team, and that was a success. Those archetypal PowerPoint's were Natalie's first public contribution to the team, and they stuck. Like everything else the English 12 team does, they've been edited, and tweaked collaboratively in the year and a half since she first shared them.   In fact, they are now posted on the LFHS English 12 wiki page for all students and teachers to share. The irony and tragedy of it is that Natalie herself is not.

Chapter 7 : Learning to Teach and Teaching to Learn in Our Collaboration

In this final chapter, I focus on the question: was there evidence of learning in our collaboration? I explore the ways in which our collaboration can be substantiated as teacher learning in three distinct ways: learning about teaching English, learning about reflective practice, and learning about the commitments required for successful classroom practice (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

This chapter is framed both reflectively and prospectively (Vinz, 1996). On one hand, although I have lived and worked in this collaboration for a decade, I am intrigued by the question: how did I learn to teach? My dedication to deliberate improvement in my own practice requires that I analyze both the strengths and shortcomings of my own education as a teacher. On the other hand, as I look to expand my work into teacher education, I also need to be able to envision ways in which my future practice can specifically address the needs of pre-service and in-service teachers. In this way, the process of writing has in itself followed something approximating the iterative and cyclical nature of action research. This chapter comes at the end of the story because it both celebrates some of our most important accomplishments, but also represents my realization of the next cycle of questions necessary to my professional practice. I have been teaching and developing my practice of teaching English with adolescents through the English 12 team for about a decade. As I anticipate my transition into a university setting, I needed to begin to know how to teach teachers. As such, the narrative that might open this chapter is yet unwritten.

Instead, as I approached this chapter, I found myself returning to theories of teacher education, and investigating theories of mentoring specifically. In some cases, these readings reiterated some of my "knowledge that" certain practices are key to teacher learning; in others, it confirmed my struggles to demonstrate the "knowledge how" to accomplish this work (Darling-Hammond& Bransford, 2005, p. 359). After a review of some of the major objects, methods and tensions in teacher education generally, and mentoring specifically, this chapter explores three aspects of learning in our team: learning about content knowledge, learning about reflective skills, and learning about our commitments to education.

Existing State of Knowledge: Teacher Education

Learning to Teach

Educational researchers have long noted that induction into teaching is a challenging process for most student teachers and new teachers. In any professional context, novices are expected to struggle. There is an enormous challenge in shifting from decontextualized knowledge to enacting that knowledge in performance (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 23-24).   Some professions, such as medicine and law, have developed methodologies of induction that allow novices to begin their practice in scaffolded and supported environments where they can openly seek out the expertise of more experienced colleagues. Conversely, teacher education has not even agreed on the length of time that clinical experiences should last (Hollins & Guzman, 2005), let alone standardized a structure of support for the beginning years of a teacher's professional life.   It is not uncommon, even today, to hear reference to the notion of the first years of teaching as a "sink or swim" or "trial by fire" experience.

> Teachers do many more things at once, with many more people assembled at one time, than do most other professionals. Developing an authoritative classroom presence, good radar for watching and interpreting what many different students are doing and feeling all at each moment, and skills for explaining, questioning, discussing, giving feedback, constructing tasks, facilitating work, and managing the classroom—all at once—is not simple. (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 374)

Given the complexity of teaching as a practice, as described in the above quote, and the lack of a deliberate induction methodology for new teachers, the problem of high teacher attrition rates should come as no surprise.

In order to feel successful in the classroom, new teachers must constantly negotiate a series of "unsolvable dilemmas" which are complicated by the identity of each individual teacher and the social realities of the students and community (Lampert, 1985). Lampert argued that the conflict between these various needs should be considered "endemic and even useful to [teachers'] work rather than seeing it as a burden that needs to be eliminated" (p. 192). Yet such a concept of teaching demands that all learning and teaching be considered in the context of the individuals involved, and be focused on developing teachers who are flexible, yet critical thinkers. Research from a variety of fields has suggested that the information needed for this type of effective decision making, referred to as "clinical reasoning" or "adaptive expertise," must actually emerge in the context of practice (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Rose,

1999; Shulman, 1998; Lave, 1996). Lave (1996) described the most effective teaching as learning in practice, and posited that "Great teaching in schools is a process of facilitating the circulation of school knowledgeable skills into the changing identities of students" (Lave 1996, p. 158). Thus, according to Lave's theories, all learning is social and is a part of forging one's social identity. The centrality of this type of identity work is apparent to anyone who teaches adolescents, but is also essential to the development of effective teachers. The need to address the complexities of learning in a social context requires a diverse set of pedagogies. Rose (1999) found that a variety of pedagogical methods are required for the teaching of practice including: lecture, demonstration, personal anecdotes, visual representations, collaboration, and learning to talk about practice in order to refine it.

One of the key dilemmas for most traditional teacher education programs then is that new teachers are given almost no time to develop their practice through practice before they find themselves alone in their own classroom. Rowan, Correnetti, and Miller (2002) argued that "If the information needed to teach well emerges during the practice itself, then learning how to think and act professionally is unusually difficult at the start of a teaching career, and many ways of preparing prospective teachers will not be sufficient to guide their actions": their data showed that the experiences a new teacher has in the first one or two years will be a consistent predictor of teacher effectiveness (Rowan et al., 2002). Given the current state of much teacher pre-service education, most of the work of developing critical, reflective practitioners must occur while in the classroom. Yet there remains dissonance between the need first year teachers have for the time to develop and reflect on their practice, and the reality of most schools: effective teaching and learning demands "extended time needed for teachers to plan and study together" (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 4), and frequently the newest teachers are required to teach in the most challenging of circumstances.

Although this series of dilemmas around novice teaching serves as the theoretical foundation for a variety of non-traditional mentoring and internship structures, it also supports the use of a professional learning community model as a potential site for teacher induction (Eaker et al., 2002). Several theorists have insisted that peer collaboration is essential to professional development in general, as well as teaching specifically. Shulman's "Six Commonplaces of Professions" (1998) included "the development of a professional community that aggregates and shares knowledge and develops professional standards." Likewise, Darling–Hammond (2005) suggested that the one of the main principles of acquiring adaptive expertise

is the ability to learn from others. The case for collaboration also stems from the necessity that most teachers must unlearn ways of being a student acquired through their apprenticeship of observation in order to accomplish the demands of educating all students in our diverse society: "when teachers learn to develop their teaching in collaborative contexts, they welcome rather than avoid such feedback" (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 365). Given the importance of collaboration to professions generally, and the unique complexities of teaching, Darling-Hammond's framework for teacher learning situated learning to teach within a "learning community." However, while from a wide angled view, theorists can easily support the concept of learning to teach within the context of a professional community, the reality of such endeavors are more complex to implement given the tensions that exist when the theory and practices of mentoring are examined in close-up.

Mentoring

The process of induction has been described as "reality shock," a period of great uncertainty and self-doubt, during which there is little to no support or reduced workload for most new teachers (Little 1990; also Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kaffman, & Lui, 2001; Lortie, 1975; Vinz, 1996).   There is a need for both researchers and practitioners to give more attention to the place of early career teachers in the professional community, especially in helping them gain their voices as professionals (Vinz, 1996, p. 48).

One of the most often touted conceptions for improving the successful induction into practice for early career teachers is mentoring.   Like PLCs, while the popular images of the mentoring relationship conjure positive associations, the concept also is more contested and conflict laden than it might casually appear.   According to Bradbury and Koballa (2008) there are three common conceptions of mentoring:

- apprenticeship model= focus on practical solutions
- moral supporter= focus on advocacy, therapeutic functions, friendship
- collaborative partnership= focus on egalitarian, joint work

While ideally, the mentoring of student teachers and early career teachers might include aspects of all three of these conceptions, these are not necessarily compatible goals. Mentors may be expected to offer both evaluation and moral support, objectives not easily reconciled (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008). Additionally, critical theorists, especially feminist and Marxist, argue that these conflicting roles exist as a result of tension between the hierarchical nature of institutions,

including schools, in which mentoring may carry the image of mentor as a nurturer or mother figure, but function as a practice of control and discipline (Sundli, 2007; Colley, 2002):

> Mentors are cast not only as the devoted supporter of the student teacher, but also as gatekeepers to the profession—a dual role that clearly poses potential conflicts of interest and disruption to the mentor–mentee bond. A relationship that is traditionally understood as dyadic is thus covertly transformed into a triad, with the invisible but powerful insertion of agendas determined outside the dyad by dominant groupings. (Colley, 2002, p. 263)

Mentoring, when under-theorized, may become surprisingly problematic as a result of this power imbalance between mentor and mentee. The possible results include mentor centered practices, interpersonal conflict, or a traditional orientation toward pedagogy (Sundli, 2007; Wang, Odell & Schwille, 2008; Vinz, 1996).

Mentoring relationships between new and veteran teachers. While popular conceptions of mentoring may be overly optimistic, and critical perspectives can come across as downright foreboding, the reality of relationships between early career teachers and their mentors as reported by educational researchers appears to exist, not surprisingly, in a somewhat ambiguous realm.

New teachers have been described as normally possessing a "micro-orientation" particularly concerned with their individual performance and immediate classroom needs (Anderson & Olson, 2006), and were desirous of and appreciative of a high frequency of observation and feedback (Wang et al., 2008; Bradbury & Koballa,2008). The desire for feedback might exist as a counter to the high level of self-doubt and uncertainty reported by early career teachers, and the difficulties new teachers face in maintaining "coherence of self" in the face of competing expectations from principals, colleagues, students, parents, and society (Vinz,1996; Bradbury & Koballa,2008).

Even with a micro-orientation, intent on their own classrooms and practices, new teachers generally, and English teachers specifically, often struggled to make their beliefs about education into reality. Vinz's (1996) study of student teacher and new teacher critical inquiry teams reported that early career English teachers found the daily pressure of lesson planning limited their time for reflection and introspection. Lesson planning itself brought new teachers "constant uncertainty" (Vinz, 1996, p. 45). Vinz suggested that new teachers had difficulty anticipating the mismatches between their expectations and the explanation they provided students. Grossman & Thompson (2008) found that under such pressure for lesson planning,

new English teachers often relied heavily and uncritically on the available curriculum materials, such as textbooks, especially if they were not majors in their teaching specialty. However, Vinz's new teachers also reported that they "felt like outsiders with no vested interest in the curricular decisions made by others" (Vinz, 1996, p.47). The practical help and "survival support," is at once desired by new teachers (Anderson & Olson, 2006), and also, not surprisingly, rejected by them; this ambivalence between autonomy and interdependence frames the relationships between new and veteran teachers (Vinz, 1996).

The relationships between new teachers and veteran colleagues may in part be framed by the larger context of the particular school in which a novice begins her or his career. The general climate of a school can be more or less oriented toward successful induction experiences. Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kaffman, & Lui (2001) articulated three patterns of school cultures in a large cross section of Massachusetts schools: novice oriented, veteran oriented, and integrated school cultures. In veteran oriented schools, there was little to no organized or appropriate support for new teachers. As a result, in some schools a novice-oriented subculture at odds with the dominant veteran-oriented culture was created (Kardos et al., 2001). This may also account for reported competition between new and veteran faculty (Vinz, 1996).

Conversely, in novice-oriented schools, while there was a deep commitment and enthusiasm for the work and an openness to experimentation, the experimentation co-existed with long hours and high teacher turnover rates (Kardos et al., 2001). In schools where veteran and novice culture was integrated, new teachers' special status was recognized, and a more collaborative culture prevailed:

> The classroom openness, the support for teachers, and the communication among them extended throughout the team, department, or school. In integrated cultures, the organized structures for support, the norms for how work gets done, and the prevailing attitudes and beliefs about collegiality and professional growth were embedded in the school's professional culture. New teachers in integrated professional cultures said that they and their colleagues characteristically exhibited a collective responsibility for the students and the school community. (Kardos et al., 2001, p. 275)

However, while school cultures that support new teachers' growth and development are important factors to recognize, the mentoring relationships themselves happen at a more intimate level. Even in highly collaborative schools, relationships between mentors and mentees can break down in a number of areas. The expectations of either party in the relationship can be mismatched based on their prior experiences with mentorship (Bradbury &

Koballa, 2008). Philosophies of education can differ widely: mentors can be more student centered than interns (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008), or mentors may be more traditional and resistant to change (Vinz, 1996). Mentors may be frustrated in the performance of their interns, but like in PLCs more broadly, conflict avoidance may be more common than direct conversation about frustrations (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008). Conversely, mentors may have unreasonable expectations, an overly controlling or managerial focus, or foster mimicry and dependence (Wang et al., 2008; Sundli, 2007; Colley, 2002). It has been suggested that too often mentoring relationships lack reflection, and instead focus on purely practical matters such as classroom management, to the detriment of student learning (Sundli, 2007; Wang et al., 2008). Finally, it must be observed that mentoring structures vary widely, and the time, training, and resources to support effective mentoring are often lacking in a typical school (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008).

Effective Mentoring Practices. Like PLCs generally, despite the complications and contradictions involved with mentoring, there are also some promising practices which appear to improve its effectiveness. Effective mentoring must begin with an awareness of and attention to the philosophies of education that each person brings to the mentoring relationship (Vinz, 1996; Wang et al., 2008). In particular, an orientation to improvement, change, and teacher learning appeared to be a common feature of successfully integrated professional school cultures:

> In schools with what seemed to be integrated professional cultures, teachers were always learners, steadily improving their practice, but . . . their improvements and innovations were bounded and directed rather than frenetic and unguided, as they seemed to be in the novice-oriented cultures. (Kardos et al., 2001, p. 278)

Additionally, mentors and mentees need to communicate clearly about their expectations and develop trust: mentors benefit from training which helps them recognize and foster these critical conversations (Wang et al., 2008; Bradbury & Koballa,2008). There can be a variety of formal or informal structures present to support mentoring, as long as structures are congruent with the values of both mentor and mentee (Kardos et al, 2001). It has been suggested that subject specific pedagogy for induction programs may be more useful for supporting curriculum development, while new teachers also would benefit from structured observations and conversations about their practice (Wang et al., 2008).

Finally, for new teachers and their mentors, researchers have also recognized the role that collaboration can have in successful induction (Wang et al., 2008; Darling-Hammond &

Bransford, 2005). Early career urban teachers "talked about the importance of collaboration within and across schools in three central ways: as a means for staying inspired and supported, as a mechanism for sharing ideas, and as an opportunity to organize for change" (Anderson & Olson, 2006, p. 368). As Kardos et al (2001) stated:

> A new teacher's encounter with professional culture will depend on the group of colleagues with whom she works, how they interact, and whether they welcome novices in their professional exchanges and pay attention to their needs and concerns. (p. 256)

Whether a new teacher finds a professional culture which fosters growth and collaboration, or one which maintains traditional norms of isolation, the norms of professional practice will shift significantly what and how teachers learn to teach.

Learning in the English 12 Team

The promises and dilemmas of learning to teach and mentoring mirror the dilemmas of professional learning communities generally; theory can both overstate and understate the tensions which exist when these concepts are put into practice. In this inquiry, with the English 12 team evenly divided between veteran and early career teachers, the problems of learning to teach and mentoring added an additional complicating factor to our work. Given that the team declared mentoring as one of our main purposes for the research year, our actions, reflections, and this analysis were framed significantly by our conception of what new teachers needed to know in order to provide successful instruction in the classroom. Utilizing an interpretative framework for teacher education outlined in Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), which presents three key aspects of knowledge for teacher education, teacher education must enhance teachers':

- Knowledge: in particular, the critical ideas in the subject area
- Skills: in particular, the ability to "reflect on, evaluate, and learn from their teaching"
- Commitments: in particular, to be lifelong learners and to the belief that all students will succeed (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 3)

The following sections make use of this framework to explore the question: Can our collaboration be substantiated as teacher learning, particularly with respect to the mentoring of our early career teachers?

Knowledge about Teaching English

In all teaching disciplines, it is critical that teachers develop an understanding of the critical objectives in their field, as well as an organized method by which to achieve those objectives with students. Called *pedagogical content knowledge*, such learning "represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction" (Shulman, 1987, p.8). For teachers working in isolation, the "wisdom of practice" they achieve over a career is too often lost to history. Collaboration, particularly among a heterogeneous group of teacher such as our English 12 team, provides a peer audience, and a rendering of that history (Shulman, 1987, p. 11-12).

Given the primary focus on curriculum in this group, and the analysis of this particular curriculum in Chapter Four, to list all the varieties of ways we discussed and debated practices of teaching English in our PLC would be redundant (and exhausting). Instead, I focus here on one representative example of a practice of teaching English which the English 12 team developed collaboratively, and the exchange of knowledge that occurred when we first introduced this practice to Natalie. Then I turn to the ways in which the teachers in the team talked about learning pedagogical content knowledge in our collaboration, with particular attention focused on the perspectives of the three early career teachers.

Teaching Shakespeare through Film. Although English 12 is required by district curriculum to contain at least one drama from British or World Literature, in the LFHS English 12 version of the course, we have never read Shakespeare.   At least, we have never "read Shakespeare" according to the traditional conception of "reading." As discussed in Chapter Four, we sometimes taught as many as three Shakespearean texts in the semester; although now, just one remains. *Hamlet*.

Like most adolescents, our students are often intimidated by the very name "Shakespeare."   Likewise, as a new teacher teaching Shakespeare, no matter how much I had loved these texts as a student, it was intimidating to understand how to balance instruction in comprehension of Shakespeare's plays with critical thinking about the ideas. However, when I student taught English 12 at LFHS in 1997, one of the teaching practices to which I was introduced was a hybrid method of teaching Shakespeare, ideally utilizing multiple film versions of the text. *Hamlet* is blessed with a wide range of adaptations: the 1990, 1996, and 2000 films

better known by their lead actors Mel Gibson, Kenneth Branagh, and Ethan Hawke respectively. In the team's conception of teaching Shakespeare, students "read" the text by viewing the Franco Zeffirelli version of *Hamlet* (1990) with Mel Gibson. We augment their viewed reading with traditional close reading of selected key scenes, and comparing those key scenes across multiple interpretations.   I will admit this now: as a student teacher, I was opposed to this practice. I believed then it was "dumbing down" the curriculum; I believed all my students should read an entire play in the traditional method. That was what I had done; that was what I enjoyed. However, I went along as the "new kid on the block." Through 10 years of refining this practice, and also having occasion to teach Shakespeare through a traditional "whole text" reading, I have since become a believer. This practice works effectively to promote critical reading and enjoyment of reading Shakespeare for almost all English 12 students regardless of their prior experience with the challenges of Elizabethan poetry, regardless even of their home language. Each semester, as Gertrude drinks from the poisoned cup, the gasps that spontaneously erupt from my classrooms serve as tangible evidence of how effective this teaching method is for most of our students.

In October, about two or three weeks before the *Hamlet* unit, Natalie asked for some curricular clarification. Madeline had reported briefly that she had been able to order us DVD's of Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet* to replace our unwieldy VHS versions. Natalie's questions provoked a spontaneous introduction to the English 12 method of teaching Shakespeare.

> *Teaching Hamlet Introduction: 10.03.07*
>
> NATALIE: So it's Branagh's *Hamlet*? and that's a movie?
> MADELINE: We only use it to show selected scenes,
>   we have another we use with Mel Gibson.
>   Branagh's *Hamlet* is four hours.
>   There is no way you would ever show the whole thing.
> NATALIE: So what about that book?
>   Are we actually going to read the whole book?
> RACHEL: No, we just read key speeches.
> SAM: And then watch the rest of it.
> NATALIE: Oh okay, key speeches, watch the rest of it.
> SAM: The movie jumps around
>   and it is a little bit abridged.
> RACHEL: It is a very viewable film for an intro to Shakespeare.
>   We have developed this as a technique of teaching Shakespeare over time.
> SAM: It is a little weird teaching it the first time.
> RACHEL: It is.
>   What has your background been with teaching Shakespeare?

NATALIE: I loved it in high school,
        I taught *Romeo and Juliet* in student teaching,
        but I did not take it as a class in college
RACHEL: Did you teach *Romeo and Juliet* scene by scene?
NATALIE: Mmm hmm.
RACHEL: Which is pretty typical.
        I think *Romeo and Juliet* almost always gets that treatment.
        Well, we totally up end that.
        Instead of bad student reading being their primary interaction with the text
[NATALIE: yeah]
RACHEL: we figure why wouldn't you use professionals who understand the language,
        editing, all the things that help support their comprehension.
        And then still do close reading, but only of key moments.
NATALIE: So is this the formalist still?
LYDIA: It's archetypal,
        we look at it as an example of tragedy, and different types of tragedies.
RACHEL: We're still doing formalist along the way.
        One of the things I love about this course design
        we're never dropping the previous lenses,
        we're still going to do reader response and formalist response,
        we're just adding—building on it.
        So by the by the end of the course,
        and their last text, *The Things They Carried*,
        they have all the lenses
        and they pick which lens they want to use for their final paper.

In this short excerpt, we introduce a number of important considerations for Natalie as a new teacher, and particularly as new to the English 12 team. This interaction was unplanned, and as such, not necessarily presented in a logical sequence, yet across the team we co-construct ideas on a number of important issues related to developing pedagogical content knowledge in English generally, and teaching Shakespeare specifically (Table 7.1). For example, we address traditional teaching practices, and specifically ask Natalie to share her prior experiences learning and teaching Shakespeare: this engagement with her prior knowledge is one of the key conditions for teacher development (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Furthermore, even in this preliminary unplanned dialogue, the team described the practices, situated these practices in terms of course objectives and in contrast to traditional methods of teaching Shakespeare.

Table 7.1: Pedagogical Content Knowledge about Teaching Shakespeare, 10.3.07

Knowledge Field	Examples from collaborative dialogue
Connections to Course Learning Objectives: Critical Lenses	" So is this the formalist still?" " It's archetypal, we look at it as an example of tragedy, and different types of tragedies." " We're still doing formalist along the way." "We're never dropping the previous lenses. . . we're just adding." "By the end of the course. . . they have all the lenses and they pick which lens they want to use."
Prior teaching history	"What has your background been with teaching Shakespeare?" "I loved it in high school, I taught *Romeo and Juliet* in student teaching, but I did not take it as a class in college" "Did you teach *Romeo and Juliet* scene by scene?"
Text selection	"It is a very viewable film for an intro to Shakespeare" "The movie jumps around and it is a little bit abridged." "Branagh's *Hamlet* is four hours. There is no way you would ever show the whole thing."
Traditional practices for teaching Shakespeare	"Are we actually going to read the whole book? " "Bad student reading being their primary interaction with the text" "Which is pretty typical"
Rationale for revising practices	"help support [student] comprehension"
Revised practices for teaching Shakespeare	"We have developed this as a technique of teaching Shakespeare over time." " close reading, but only of key moments" "watch the rest of it." "We only use [Branagh] to show selected scenes. "
Teacher Response to revised practice	"It is a little weird teaching it the first time."

I agree, however, with Little's (1990) observation that much of the information within teachers' collaborative conversation is densely coded; I believe anytime a group of insiders are presenting information about a highly specialized field in a highly specific context this would be the case. However, to the teachers participating as insiders within this group, this knowledge about how to teach Shakespeare existed, had been collaboratively constructed, and could be collaboratively articulated even without preparation. In this circumstance, even as a newcomer, Natalie was not excluded from building knowledge and shaping the articulation of the practices more richly. Natalie, who had not yet taught this unit before, and had been only teaching the course a month at this point, asked for the unit to be situated in terms of the overall course learning objectives on critical lenses.

This is not to suggest that I was not highly concerned at moments throughout the research year that we were struggling to communicate effectively with Natalie or any of the new teachers. The barriers of intertextuality (Chapter Five) insured that there would be plenty of need for us to revisit and revise our dialogues in order to be sure of effective explanations of both what we were doing and why. For Natalie in particular, as the only non-English major, there were additional barriers for her in terms of content knowledge. Yet at the year end, she spoke specifically about the learning benefits of the PLC in terms of helping her develop her content knowledge:

> NATALIE: Gaining more knowledge in English and what's out there
>   because I think that's very important
> especially for us who don't have that English degree or background.
> I mean I've had to take my classes of course
> but it's not the English background.
> And so everything that I was seeing pretty much first
> was like "Okay I got to learn this" or "have to reread this"
> even if I had read it in college
> I don't necessarily remember.
> I wasn't reading it to teach it, you know.
> So it's all new. (Interview, 6.3.08)

For Natalie, the subject specific pedagogical content knowledge that was the focus of our work was her most important learning. She articulated this distinction in the contrast between reading as a student, and "reading it to teach it." The collaboration supported her as she learned to perceive text through the eyes of a content specialist in English.

Learning about the whats and whys. One of the themes that emerged from the interviews seemed to separate the knowledge focus of this particular year of collaboration from prior years. Both veterans and new teachers saw that this particular year was more focused on the "what" and "how" of our curriculum, but all felt that we were striving for greater understanding and dialogue around the "whys".

Madeline explained this shift in our team's knowledge building in terms of membership: "I think when you have new folks and less experienced teachers who maybe need more specifics, you have to be more focused" (Interview, 6.4.08). Sam also believed that this was the first logical focus of most new teachers:

> SAM: Kathy and Natalie coming in
> it was their first time being exposed to many of the texts
> was that you get the most basic level is the *what*
> and they're just in there for like
> "What are we doing ?" (Interview, 6.4.08)

However, one of the purposes of the group is to constantly redefine those "whats" in the curriculum. Sometimes such learning and our revisions of curriculum were intentional, but Sam also coined the term "accidental eurekas" to describe how often the learning in teaching, and in our collaboration, was improvisational in origin:

> SAM: [Our purpose is] to establish our teaching norms
> and also to share our accidental eurekas.
> Because I think that is really how we come up with the new stuff.
> It is not that we're setting out to reinvent anything,
> but we always do that though.
> We don't say "Okay we need to redesign this" very often.
> Often it is in class on the fly we think of something.
> We have that little "ah-ha," then we come back and share it.
> Often it isn't intentional. (Team meeting, 3.26.08)

The collaboration allowed such improvisational knowledge generated in individual practice to become a shared, public resource for improving the curriculum and instruction within the whole team.

However, Sam also clearly articulated that the next level of knowledge he wanted was the "why." By the end of his third time through the English 12 curriculum, he was looking at the bigger picture of the curriculum for the course, of the department, or district and starting to ask more frequently, "Why are we doing this?"

SAM: I think that I've moved beyond the *what*
       and gotten to the next question of somewhat the *why*
       and added that in
       and I see that as the next level.

       Where being still a newer
       you still have lots of questions
       you still don't know exactly what's going on,
        but you're starting to be able to piece the links together
       and you can question why one thing feeds into the next one
       or how does that activity lead into that one? (Interview, 6.4.08)

Likewise, Natalie and Kathy noted that this "big picture" framework was one of the most valuable aspects of the collaboration to them even in their first year teaching:

NATALIE: Having that time to discuss
          what are the big pictures?
          What are some of these related tasks that we can do
           to further our students' development and understandings?
           And key issues or key outcomes?
          That was very important.   (Interview, 6.3.08)

KATHY: I can tell you the things that I benefited from
       were the getting into the *whys*
       like "Why are we doing this?"
       As a new teacher I needed to know that as well.   (Interview, 6.3.08)

The *whys* that were discussed could range from articulations of philosophies, connections to research best practices, improvements in the structure of the course, district requirements, or most importantly student learning. For example, the evolution of the student self-assessments and our course Essential Learning Outcomes (Chapter Four) was a year long conversation fed by administrative requirements, our perceived need for this as part of high school to college transition, and research into best practices for this transition conducted by the individual teachers on the team. I do however agree with Madeline's assessment that this particular year was less focused on these philosophical discussions; after reviewing and reflecting on our meetings, while these conversations were present all year, they were often fleeting in comparison to discussion of *whats* or *hows*. This may have been, in part, a result of the need to focus on bringing the new teachers up to speed on the curriculum itself, as well as the additional time spent on our reflection on the process of collaboration. Regardless, it was clear that all teachers on the team felt that our joint work had added to their pedagogical content

knowledge, and this perception fueled their commitment to delving more into the philosophical questions of teaching and learning English in the future.

Skills of Reflection

The second area of teacher learning which I take up here is the opportunity that our collaboration offered for the development of skills in reflective practices.   While reflective practice is much mentioned, it is often poorly conceptualized. Shulman (1987) included reflection as a step in his model of pedagogical reasoning and defined it as "reviewing, reconstructing, reenacting and critically analyzing one's own and the class's performance, and grounding explanations in evidence" (p. 15). Schon (1987) further developed a model he termed "reflection-in-action" (28). He described the process as follows:

- Situation of action to which we bring spontaneous and routinized responses
- A surprise
- Surprise leads to reflection within an action-present
- Reflection questions assumptional structure of knowing-in-action which may lead to change
- On the spot experimentation (30)

Schon also felt that further reflection "on our past reflection-in-action may indirectly shape our future action" (p. 31). Ball and Cohen (1999) concurred that reflection must be situated "in and from practice;" this would require teachers have "the capability to stand back from and analyze their own teaching, to ask and answer such questions as: What is working? What is not working? For whom are certain things working or not working?" (p. 10). However, given Lortie's (1975) articulation of an "apprenticeship of observation" which plagues teacher development, reflection alone is not enough to combat ineffective and conservative tendencies in teacher practice. Thus, Socket & LaPage (2002) stipulated that what is needed is a process of *critical self-reflection* which evolves from description, to self-justification, to productive self-criticism (p. 164). Unlike Schon's model in which change is only a possible outcome of reflection, a primary feature of critical self-reflection would be the use of a discourse of change and improvement (p. 165). Vinz (1996) linked reflective inquiry to narration of teacher's practice: which "open[s] a space where the tension among what was (retrospective) and the meaning of what was (introspective), and what can be (prospective) is negotiated" (Vinz, 1996, p. 28).

I believe that change and improvement was always a feature of our team's discourse throughout the research year. On the most simple level, the collaboration we created allowed us all the opportunity to share our practices, evaluate them collectively, and then take the knowledge gained and return to the class room with a richer understanding of what to change and why. As discussed in Chapter Five, narration was one of the primary ways that we brought our practices to each other. For example, in January as we discussed teaching *The Things They Carried* in preparation for an upcoming paper, Madeline narrated a brief and focused teaching episode in which her reported speech guided students to keep rich and detailed notes of the classroom discussions as part of their prewriting for their individual papers. For both Lydia and Natalie, Madeline's narration offered a window into her practice that then was utilized as a mirror for their self reflection:

> LYDIA: Oh you are doing a better job,
> I should be doing better.

> NATALIE: Yeah now I am thinking about
> what I need to do tomorrow
> and revisit what I did today. (Team meeting, 1.9.08)

This reflective process also worked in the opposite fashion. By providing a window into one's own practices, the team's feedback and interpretations of what occurred and what it might mean could mirror back ideas to benefit the narrator as well.   Natalie noted that the veterans' stories helped her "piece together some new understandings of what I could do next time" (Interview, 6.3.08).   Sam used this idea to explain why sharing was such an important aspect of the learning process within our collaboration:

> SAM: You always share
> because even if you are not sure,
> or even if you think it seems kind of dumb,
> the others in the group have a good way
> to make you feel smarter than you are . . .
> And then the others will decode it
> and you will find out that you subconsciously used best practice.

> MADELINE: That happens when you are old too. (Team meeting, 3.26.08)

Like Sam and Madeline, Lydia spoke extensively about the "energy" that team feedback gave her for her practice, and the validation received when an individual's idea gets taken up by the group. Equally important, the shift Sam mentions from subconscious action to deliberate and

conscious action indicated the opportunities for reflective practice offered by team dialogues. This process of narration was seen as an instrumental part of our collective learning. Sam referred to it as our version of "peer review":

> SAM: It's peer reviewing all your ideas and all your teaching
> instead of having someone sit in your room
> you can at least share portions of it
> and say "Okay, so this is what's going on." (Team meeting, 1.30.08)

This process of peer review was not only integral to our own learning, but to establishing the norms of professional practice within our community.

Narration was the main method through which we made our practice present to each other for reflective purposes. However, as we became aware of the research on increased transparency of classroom practices within PLCs leading to better gains in student achievement (Little, 1990, 2003; Louis & Marks, 1998; Supovitz, 2002), it reinvigorated our dedication to seeking out addition ways to achieve this. One aspect of reflective practice which increased in use during the research year was a more regular review of student work samples. The direction for the practice certainly was imbedded in the PLC model generally employed within the building (Eaker, DuFour& DuFour, 2002). As Lydia noted, part of a team's purpose was "if they have common assessments looking at what is working, what's not working, and helping raise that achievement "(Interview, 6.3.08). Natalie mentioned how helpful this was for her to experience:

> NATALIE: Where we were norming with that first paper, "The Wise Teacher,"
> and seeing what's okay what's not okay.
> I still don't think I have it all down
> but it was really a good practice to see.
> So it was more of a different focus
> but it helped with lesson planning
> addressing those essential learning outcomes
> what we want students to take away from each lesson or each unit (Interview, 6.3.08)

By "engaging with materials of teaching practice" those concrete tasks of teaching and assessment that illuminate the processes of learning and development (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995), we were all better able to plan our instruction in ways that would make explicit our expectations for student learning, and what interventions in practices we might need to make to achieve those outcomes.

One additional area, in which I especially desired to improve our transparency of practice, and to expand beyond the vicarious narrative experiences of one another's practices, was in spending more time observing in each others' classrooms. All teachers expressed openness to this idea. I do believe that there was enough trust and appreciation for the benefit of this across the entire group. However, this was another instance when the realities of time seemed to weigh heavily on the ability to make this commitment. While I was on sabbatical, I had the flexibility to visit each teacher's classroom. I observed Natalie and Kathy three times each, and each of the other teachers once. Natalie expressed her appreciation for this time, but I know that in reality, she would have benefitted from more consistant opportunities for feedback from a greater range of the team. Perhaps even more importantly, it would have benefitted all the new teachers to increase their own observations of each other and the veterans. I know that every time I step into someone else's classroom, and observe their practice at that level, I leave with a richer understanding of my own practice.

Regardless, increasing the amount of time spent in each other's classrooms did not get taken up as part of our research year. As we moved into the following school year, the building administration also began to encourage more peer-to-peer observation, and there was a small increase in such interaction as teachers could find time in their busy schedules. I know that this was an improvement in collaborative practice that both principals and our team desired; but the ability to overcome the constraints of time and schedules has yet to be solved. The principal has included consistent peer to peer observations as a primary improvement goal for all departments in the year ahead; and it may yet become part of the standard practice within the English 12 team. If it does, I believe that the capacity for both individual and group critical reflective practice would be improved.

Finally, I believe it is important to admit that although the process of peer review and collaborative reflection certainly contributed to the learning within our community, ultimately, each teacher returned to his or her own classroom to enact this learning. As Natalie reminded us:

> NATALIE: PLCs are helpful
> because we're all talking and everything.
> But nothing like having that first time or second time around
> and gaining new understanding yourself.
> Because you're rereading it,
> you're understanding it . . .

> Definitely the second time around
> a lot more light bulbs started coming on for me.
> And I was able to kind of see some areas
> where I really need to focus
> and make things a little bit more clear for myself and my students. (Interview, 6.3.08)

I do not mean to suggest here, or in this project at all, that collaborative reflection trumps or replaces individual reflection and learning. Certainly, the lived practice of each teacher in her own classroom, and the opportunities that practice offers for creating a rich learning environment for students, remains paramount. However, the reflective opportunities offered by team collaboration expanded the available knowledge for teacher learning beyond what any one of us alone could achieve. And by making such reflective work part of our team's norms of practice, such skills should also become available and naturalized into each teacher's individual practice as well.

Commitments

> MADELINE: I think what helps with our group
> is philosophically
> we're all generally on the same page.
> We all want to do a really good job,
> we care about kids,
> and we like each other. (Interview, 6.4.08)

The final aspect of teacher learning I explore here are the philosophical commitments that our team espoused. In retrospect, given the abstract nature of this aspect of our learning, I wish that I had asked a more direct question about it in our individual interviews. At the same time, based on the substance of our meetings, and the interviews, three key commitments guided our collaboration and informed our work throughout this year and are each partially embedded in Madeline's statement of our shared philosophy above. First, we all "want to do a good job," this included our commitment to ongoing learning and improvement in our practices. Second, we "care about kids": we wanted students to be successful and respected in our classrooms, and were willing to keep improving in order to achieve that. Finally, we enjoyed our work together, "we like each other," and remained committed to accomplishing this work in collaboration.

Lifelong Learning and Improvement. As Madeline reflected on the history of our work and her impending retirement, her raw feelings about learning we accomplished together were apparent:

> MADELINE: I feel like I've learned so much everyday ((crying, struggling to speak))
> and I don't know what I'm going to do when I'm not learning. . .
> I love using my brain and thinking about things with smart people
> and it is the best part of teaching . . .
> to be able to get ideas from other people
> and make myself grow . . . .
>
> It is absolutely such a critical part of our job
> and it's what keeps me going whatever else has gone on.
> And that is the thing that I will absolutely miss the most. (Interview 6.4.08)

Madeline's tears at the thought of leaving our team were a tribute to the commitment we had all made to work together; the fact that most of us cried at some point in our interviews and again at our final meeting suggested to me that we had a similar sense about how powerful our work together had been.

I believe that the English 12 team's commitment to our own learning permeated most of our meetings and interviews. We all were excited to learn from each other. Lydia admitted that our collaboration was in part "selfish": but in learning together we all felt fulfilled and better able to serve our students. We were dedicated to constant improvement. We were open to both systematic inquiry and the magic of successful improvisation.   As Sam proclaimed, we "keep pushing and experimenting," that is what "any good teacher should do" (Interview, 6.4.08). Madeline concurred:

> MADELINE: It would be so easy in this job to get bored
> or to start doing the same thing over and over again
> even if it's good stuff.
> You could so easily get bogged down with the minutiae of this job
> and lose sight of the creative part
> which to me is the thinking part.
>
> To work with people who challenge you and your ideas
> and who say "we should try this" . . . .
> that's the exciting part
> and I feel bad for people who don't get that kind of collaborative experience.
> (Interview, 6.4.08)

I feel that the opportunity to engage in deliberate research into our own practices as a result of this project solidified our commitment to more systematic inquiry as a facet of our learning. As we experienced the year together, the growing awareness we had about our practices and our roles with their benefits, tensions, and constraints allowed us all to experience collaborative learning in a new and powerful way.

Effective teaching helps all students succeed. There is a discomfort I often feel when I hear teachers complain about their students. And yet, we all vent at times, and particularly with other teachers. For our team, the opportunity to process such frustrations was certainly a part of some of our meetings. But I know that most importantly, our team could use those frustrations as motivation for our improvement. We acknowledged that many of our students struggle with the higher level reading, writing, and thinking tasks that our course required of them. However, we continued to improve our rigor over the decade I participated in this team, as well as during the research year. Simultaneously, our team exemplified the belief that effective teachers can steadily improve their instruction in order to help all students succeed. The origins of and work with the College Readiness Self-Assessment (Chapter Four) was a key example of how such frustrations with students could become manifested as a grounds for improvement.

I also know that each of my team members was dedicated to issues of social justice: to ensuring that all students were given equal opportunities for learning in our classrooms regardless of race, class, or gender. While these issues of equity were not taken up in our collaboration during the research year as much as I desired, I know that this inquiry into our team practices encouraged us to engage more fully in inquiry on behalf of our increasingly diverse students as well.

In April, an African-American student asked Natalie: "When is this class going to say something relevant to me?" Natalie brought this question to our meeting, where it was seconded by Madeline: she had recently been asked a similar question in an interview with a visiting graduate student. This was a brief exchange, late in the year, but we could see we needed to revisit the issue of equity as related to our curriculum. Although both the beginning and ending of the course presented diverse texts and multiple perspectives, it seemed likely that there was too long a stretch of classical and canonical texts and lenses in the middle; we could see what the student meant. We worked and reworked our unit on the lenses of race, class, and gender. We sought out new texts to add, and tried to decide what we would drop. We

needed to return to our issues of curricular development, and ask ourselves again if our curriculum was relevant to our students.

Like the addition of classroom observations, this work was not concluded at the end of the school year. As a team, we continued to add and refine our texts and instruction during the subsequent academic year. More significantly, the English department as a whole will take up the racial achievement gap as the primary teacher development focus next year: this was a vision initiated by Lydia, and supported by the dedicated work of several of our teachers and principal. I know that as challenging as this personal professional work will be, our teachers will remain dedicated to improving ourselves such that we improve learning for all our students.

Collaboration. This perhaps goes without saying, but the final commitment that I believe is apparent in our work together is our commitment to collaboration. Despite the tensions our team experienced during the research year, we were all together and separately more committed than ever to the belief that we made the work of teaching better by accomplishing it together.   As Kathy declared:

> KATHY: Why would you work alone?
> I mean you should have collaboration
> that just makes sense.   (Interview, 6.3.08)

Kathy's matter-of-fact statement demonstrated that even as a student teacher, she could see how this process was the sensible one for professional practice. This belief in collective responsibility for the curriculum, and for each others' improvements in practice, resonated through the entire year. Lydia noted that as Kathy's cooperating teacher this collective responsibility improved the experience for both of them:

> LYDIA: The PLC has been the best thing as a cooperating teacher
> because now I feel like it's not just me.
> I've said so many times
> "Well, let's bring it to the PLC and see what they say."
> It is fabulous . . . .
> she doesn't have just one cooperating teacher
> she has the whole team.   (Interview, 6.3.08)

As a student teacher, Kathy had gained knowledge, skills, relationships, and beliefs through her experience with a whole team of similarly committed teachers. Kathy was committed to continuing her learning about the profession in this manner, where ever her career might take her; we all had similarly committed. This is not to disregard the tensions that we also

experienced trying to simultaneously mentor our new teachers and revise our curriculum. There was a lot of learning that was happening through our research year as we tried to figure out how best to reconstruct our team practices to better serve the new membership of our team. We were still trying to figure out what work and teaching the early career teachers would bring to our group. As Sam incisively put it:

> SAM: How do you foster the learning in both directions too?
> because that's what that space is created by too.

What could the veterans teach the early career teachers? What could the early career teachers teach the veterans? How would this process look and feel differently from what we experienced in that first year together? We needed to better understand how collaborations across heterogeneous groups of teachers such as ours could make sure that all teachers had an equal opportunity for learning in community. We had more questions to answer; and sadly, we were not going to have the opportunity to continue to refine our collaboration together. But we were committed, regardless of our diverse paths, to continue to learn in community with other professionals. In a profession which has not yet made collaboration a standard of practice, this itself was important progress.

Chapter 8 : Of Listening, Questions, Tensions and Truths

Regardless of the exhaustion of the day, most evenings I snuggle into bed with my daughter, Beatrice, to read a story (or five). One Saturday evening, as I neared the completion of this writing, the library book we picked up was a Chinese folktale, called *The Jade Stone* (1992) adapted by Caryn Yacowitz, and beautifully illustrated in ink and watercolors by Ju-Hong Chen. The story immediately spoke to me. Here is a much less elegant retelling:

The Emperor of All China has been given a large and perfect jade stone. He demands that Chan Lo, the stone carver, create a magnificent dragon of wind and fire from the stone. However, in Chan Lo's practice of carving, he always listens to the stone first, that he may unlock the being it desires to become. As much as Chan Lo tries to obey the Emperor's command, the stone does not want to become a dragon, and he will not force the stone to become what it is not.

Chan Lo labors for a year. When he delivers the jade stone, it is not a fierce dragon, but three joyful carp who have emerged. The Emperor immediately imprisons Chan Lo. For three nights, the Emperor attempts to find a suitable punishment for the stone carver in his dreams. Instead, each night he dreams of the three fish and hears their playful splashing. On the third night, he is awakened by the sound. He follows it through the corridors of the palace, out to the garden, and next to the reflecting pool where the jade carving has been placed. He spends the night meditating on the sound of the joyful fish. In the morning, the Emperor frees Chan Lo, and grants him the title of Master Carver. As a reward, Chan Lo asks only that he be allowed to return home to his workshop to carve what he hears.

In some respects, I identify with this story quite literally. Like Chan Lo, I am grateful to both my teammates and my advisers, who generously granted me the freedom to "carve what I heard" in the context of the English 12 team's collaborative work. As Chan Lo found, this has been challenging and at times anxious labor. But I also believe that I have done my best to listen to and respect what existed within our work, and let those voices guide my interpretations and my attempts to change our practices. I also hope, that like the Emperor, some piece of this work resonates with its audience, especially with those who teach, whether it be in traditions of isolation or in the challenges of collaborations elsewhere.

However, while I am thankful that I did not face "imperial" commands in the production of this work, the social reality I have attempted to capture does not resemble the stability and

perfection signified in the jade stone. As the previous chapters have attested, our work was necessarily imperfect, and much of our year was about destabilization in both planned and unplanned ways. Here is a truth. Teaching is messy work.   Learning is messy work. Teaching and learning in collaboration are even messier. If someone tries to tell a story about teaching or learning or collaboration that appears neat, tidy, and without conflict, we should be suspicious. The truths that exist within any social enterprise—family, classroom, or collaboration—are multiple and dynamic and conflicting.

I began this study with three mutually informing research questions:

- Understanding our practices as collaborators: What happened when our team of English teachers collaborated to develop a high school literacy curriculum?
- Improving our practices as collaborators: How did we improve our collaborative practices to make them more productive, professional, and just for all members of our team?
- Understanding and improving my practice as a researcher and teacher educator: What did I learn about the processes of collaboration and action research? How did I improve my practices as a collaborator and as a researcher?

Existing knowledge about teacher collaborations suggested that despite its growing popularity, the tensions which existed within schools and within teachers' professional practices made the achievement of teacher learning communities more "evanescent" than optimistic reformers might have anticipated (Huberman, 1993, p.12). Prior research on teacher collaborations has also been critiqued as too focused on description, and not enough on the content of collaboration (Little, 1990). However, I have learned through this process that like all social enterprises, how we worked and spoke together constructed and constrained what it was that we did and did not achieve. The description and interrogation of our practices was necessary to understanding the content of our collaboration.   In this final chapter, I reflect on some of the inherent tensions that shaped our collaboration. With an eye to the catalytic validity of this action research, I asked myself several important questions.   How did this research deepen my understanding of the social reality of collaboration? How did it provoke change? What were the implications of those changes? And what are the new questions for inquiry this study has evoked? (Herr& Anderson, 2005, p. 55-57). First, I explore the relationship between our team's

two self-declared purposes, curriculum redevelopment and mentoring. Then, I return to the democratic ideal of community which inspired my inquiry, to evaluate how well our team and my facilitation achieved this ideal. Finally, I close with a discussion of the questions that must frame my future inquiries in teaching and teacher education, and the importance of acknowledging the multiple truths that frame teachers' lives and work.

Dueling Purposes: Curriculum Redevelopment and Mentoring

As I prepared for this study, I knew that both the historical and official purpose of the English 12 team was to improve our curriculum and instruction in literacy skills for the sake of our students. However, what none of the veterans knew until just weeks before the school year started was that the membership of our group would change dramatically. The last minute addition of Natalie, and the mid-year addition of Kathy, prompted us to respond to changing group needs and assert that the English 12 team now had two purposes: both curriculum redevelopment and the mentoring of our newest members.

In some respect, these goals were compatible. New teachers benefit from having a clearly articulated vision of how to organize the content of their subject matter, as well as the relationship between that organization and the learning objectives for students (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 183). Most of the work in our weekly meetings focused on these elements. During the year, we articulated to ourselves and to our students our explicit learning outcomes, and we worked to refine our curriculum and instruction such that we could best help students understand and achieve those outcomes. As we built these understandings together for our students, the early career teachers had an opportunity to experience this work collaboratively and in a context which included three experienced veteran teachers. So in one respect, as Sam noted, these two goals went hand in hand:

> SAM: You're all twelfth grade teachers
> you have the purpose of working on the curriculum
> and mentoring the new people
> so they know what they're teaching.   (Interview, 6.4.08)

While each of the early career teachers acknowledged that collaborative curriculum development constrained individual autonomy in some respects, they also expressed appreciation for the curriculum support the team provided.   As Natalie stated:

NATALIE: The more curriculum focus I think that was very valuable too.
　　　　　Because it was a new curriculum to me
　　　　　and not having taught it before
　　　　　 it was a real good way to talk through some things
　　　　　that maybe I was seeing in the classroom.
　　　　　Or seeing how other teachers would discuss,
　　　　　 how they would go through a lesson plan,
　　　　　and just piggy-back on some of their ideas.
　　　　　Just talk about some things that didn't go so well-
　　　　　what can I do next time.
　　　　　 It was really good and really focusing. (Interview, 6.3.08)

All of the early career teachers felt that their knowledge of pedagogical content knowledge had been enhanced by their participation in the English 12 collaboration.

However, while many curricular needs for both early career and veteran teachers may have been met by our collaboration, in other respects the focus on curriculum meant that mentoring took a secondary role. As was discussed in Chapter Six, the management of time and division of labor in our team, and specifically in my facilitation, often prioritized productivity and efficiency. The more we focused on the curriculum, and on the collectivity of group practice, the less time we had to dedicate to the more specific and individual needs of the new teachers. The nature of the group's longstanding focus on curriculum meant that we needed to revise existing practices more significantly than we did during this one year together if we were to successfully meet both our groups' purposes.

In particular, I can see now that the new teachers would have benefitted from additional structures which recognized their status (Vinz, 1996). Given another opportunity, I would build in more individual observations and opportunities for reflection on their enacted practices in their own classrooms. Kathy had this type of structure built into her experience as a student teacher. Over three months, Lydia and I both were required to observe her and conference with her multiple times; she had explicit opportunity for this type of feedback approximately once per week. Kathy also had additional individual preparation time with Lydia every day. Meanwhile Natalie, with just one year of teaching experience in a very different middle school context, had significantly fewer opportunities for feedback on her instruction. Her supervising principal and I each observed her three times across the year: the equivalent of less than once per month. Sam, as a third year teacher, had only four observations over the entire year. As a means of improving the mentoring functions of our collaboration, I believe that had we ritualized non-evaluative classroom visits between all of our teachers, with

reciprocity between veteran and early career teachers, we all would have benefitted from our observations of and reflection on the enacted practices we brought to our classrooms.

Additionally, in order to benefit their long term growth as teachers, I would want to redefine the norms of labor in our team more explicitly. We all recognized that new teachers, especially in their first semester in a new building or new course may operate in "survival mode." This was especially true for Natalie, given her challenging split teaching schedule, and for Kathy, in her first months in a classroom. It was frequently most efficient for veterans and for new teachers to simply let the veterans complete the tasks required for daily instruction. Again, in retrospect, although I would not want to withdraw this support, I believe we should have delegated more specific curricular tasks to the new teachers. The few meetings when we created new assignments accomplished such work, and were among the most notable for the new teachers. These meetings shifted their role from being more passive recipients of the veterans' prior knowledge, toward more active co-creators of that knowledge. Although the limited time within the official team meetings may have precluded more "creation" work within that context, it would have been beneficial for the new teachers to have been designated "responsible" for drafting or editing course documents, or organizing other instructional materials more consistently. Such work by the early career teachers would have given them a greater sense of agency and ownership in the English 12 curriculum, and may have pushed their learning in important new directions with regard to curriculum writing and instructional design. In short, the team's traditional work practices, while efficient for curriculum development, stood largely in opposition to more effective mentoring strategies.

I also believe a re-orientation in our team practices toward mentoring would also have shifted the language and nature of our discourse. The long standing history of the English 12 team, and the focus on curriculum redevelopment, constructed a discourse that was necessarily rife with intertextuality. The intertextuality of our discourse constructed a context in which the newest teachers coming into the group were positioned as outsiders by the very words and ideas which bonded the veteran team members together. Fortunately, our pre-existing discourse also offered a high level of narrativity to counterbalance its intertextuality. These stories helped us all situate our practices within the context of the school, the district, and most importantly within our classrooms. My belief in the power of these stories to accomplish this work, and the need I saw to make space for the early career teachers to narrate their own experiences more often, led to a change from unsolicited and spontaneous narration, to more

concrete, focused and solicited story rounds. As the year progressed, these stories helped us reflect on and refine our instruction, and we began to narrate the values and the philosophies of instruction that we each brought to the team.   While the veterans had already established a philosophic trust amongst ourselves over the decade we had worked together, this was necessary work for both mentoring and for rebuilding our collaboration into a new inclusive learning community.

In these ways, the tensions between our group's two purposes, curriculum redevelopment and mentoring, are indicative of common tensions which exist in education generally, and collaboration specifically. Prior studies on teacher collaborations have noted that many collaborations have conflicts over the purpose of joint work (Grossman et al., 2001; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Lavié, 2006; Little, 2003; Scribner et al., 2007). Through much of the inquiry year, I mistakenly thought that because we all agreed on our dual purposes, that we had avoided this typical struggle. However, I can see more clearly now that we did indeed have conflicting aims for our work. As a team, we continued to focus primarily on curriculum redevelopment; thus, our practices tended to privilege the collectivity and unity of the English 12 team. This meant that the individual needs of the early career teachers were a secondary focus, and were more subordinate to the limited resources of time within the group. Another way to conceptualize this might be in the tensions between the product of our labor, the curriculum for English 12, and the process of effective teacher development and learning.   In our need to "get things done" for the daily needs of practice under the constraints of time that existed, "figur[ing] out" how to become more effective at collaborative mentoring remained secondary (Little, 2003).

Finally, these tensions also reflect my own divide between my theoretical knowledge and my practical knowledge of teacher education. In the year that followed data collection, I have had to reckon with this. As a teacher and a working parent, my recent tendencies toward my classroom practice and my team facilitation relied more heavily on efficiency; it was how I survived the growing responsibilities I had at home and at school. Collaboration with Madeline and Lydia improved that efficiency.   However, the inquiry year presented a disruption to that efficiency, embodied in the three smart, young, dedicated teachers who joined the English 12 team. The innovation may have reduced our efficiency (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005), but it also opened up opportunities for deeper understanding of our collaboration.

Thus our year together became an opportunity for much learning for myself, and I believe all the teachers in our team, in those moments when we began to slow down and dialogue about the "why" questions in our curricular, instructional, and collaborative practices. As I anticipate my own professional transition into working predominantly with pre-service teachers and early career teachers, I must acknowledge that a personal desire for efficiency exists in many of us, and to some extent, our ability to achieve a reasonable measure of efficiency will determine our longevity in a taxing profession. But simultaneously, I know that I have to fight against these tendencies in both myself and my teacher education students, such that the depth of knowledge for practice and desire to innovate and improve practice also remain paramount. These questions about the practical and philosophical aspects of teacher education must remain essential to my own evolving practice. And I believe research on teacher education would benefit more continued attention to the complexities that heterogeneous and work-embedded teacher collaborations may have as sites of professional induction.

Was the English 12 Collaboration a Democratic Community?

I began this inquiry with the theoretical knowledge that the central tension within the philosophy and practice of teacher collaborations was the achievement of a "workable balance between individual needs and collective responsibilities" (Huberman, 1993, p.14). In order to work ethically within the methodology of action research, and to honor the potential of teacher collaboration to attain improvements in the professional lives and practices of teachers, I committed my vision of our work to the ideal of democratic community. That vision was not the popular conception of democracy as majoritarian rule, but instead, suggested a way of living and working together that honored both community good and individual freedom, and attempted to work in principled ways in the tension between these often conflicting values (Dewey, 1916; Gutmann, 1993). Westheimer's (1998) study of two teacher communities argued that "meaningful relationships," "interdependence," and "shared beliefs" distinguished communities from collaborations. I proposed at the beginning of this study that it would be a "concern for individual and minority views," and as such, beliefs and collaborative practices which encouraged distributed leadership and critical reflection, that would define the contours between communities which were more normative and traditional in their approaches to teaching and learning from those which were innovative and more democratic.

In this section, I take up the task of evaluating our work throughout the inquiry year according to these principles. As Chapter Seven already established a basis for some of the team's shared values, I reflect here on the relationships built and rebuilt during the year, and the interdependencies exhibited by our collaborative practices.   I reflect here on our collaborative practices, and ask how well those practices exhibited concern for individual and minority views, particularly as complicated by the existing power structures on the team.

Relationships

Upon retirement teachers are supposed to say that they will miss their students most of all. But here's a secret reality of teaching in a gigantic, highly departmentalized high school like ours. If an instructor teaches English 12 exclusively, she gets to know students for one semester—twenty weeks. And then most of those students pass English, graduate and are gone. Like parenting, teaching in this type of context is a tragedy: a planned obsolescence, departure and loss.   Unlike parenting, most of our students are only with us fleetingly. We do not often get to witness their long term growth and success. Their individual lives matter to us intimately in the weeks we share in the classroom. But in the long, abstract view of our professional lives, our students abandon us, as they should. The relationships in our professional lives which remain year after year, semester after semester, for better or worse, are with our colleagues. We are married to them professionally, and we'll divorce them when necessary.   But in the case of the English 12 team, our forced separation hurt. The break-up of our team felt like a funeral; we talked about it together as "grieving," and it was replete with the tears and anger which often complicate such a process.

Of course these relationships did not just magically appear, and there is much I learned that could have improved my facilitation of this process of relationship building. Our team's relationships had evolved slowly over the course of the entire year, and in the case of the veterans, over many years. This inquiry allowed the veterans to reflect on our history together. It made us more mindful of the dynamics between the personal and the professional within our team, and the relational needs required to integrate our newest teachers into an effective practice of teaching and collaborating.   As Madeline described it, we were

> MADELINE: Divorcing the kind of the social interaction
> that we've been blessed with
> and the professional aspect.
> Keeping those more separate.

And I think that's one of the things that we've done
is we've made our PLC time pretty professional.
We don't do a lot of socializing. (Interview, 6.4.08)

It seemed that on one hand, this separation had been needed. Importantly, the shift toward a professional discourse within the meetings benefitted aspects of mentoring, and mitigated some of the problems with intertextuality. However, it needed to be better balanced with opportunities to bond socially with our newest team members. I credit Sam's razor sharp wit, and the team's easy laughter, at accomplishing some of this bonding in spite of my predilection for tightly structured meetings. I recognize now that my facilitation of team meetings was often too task-oriented, and that embarrassingly little explicit interpersonal work was accomplished during the first semester. Learning is only possible with another human being when one feels that the relationship is built on shared values and mutual respect. While I knew this in theory, it was not until I tried to recalibrate the meetings toward more effective relationship building that I began to understand what the process might entail. Increasing the narrativity within the meetings as the year progressed contributed in part to the development of shared personal knowledge and relationship building. Sharing coffee or a meal outside of the meetings likely would have done even more. More personal time within our professional space could have helped us build trust, and thus provided a foundation for the more personally challenging and emotionally-charged elements that come with critical reflection and change.

Despite my feelings that more could have been done to build relationships during the year, it was apparent that the English 12 team had accomplished much in this arena, and we were all increasingly conscious of its importance.   As the year was winding down, I facilitated a department meeting in which each grade level PLC reported on their work from the year. Lydia asked me in her interview what I had noted about the other team's presentations. I responded:

RACHEL: Nobody else talked about their team.
Nobody else talked about the human element of this.
And no matter what it is,
teaching is very personal.
And so sharing your practice with a group of people
also inherently is going to be very personal and emotional.

And so I think that's one of the things-
one of the pieces of advice
that I would certainly give to other groups
which is you need to make sure
you're paying attention to the affective aspects of this. (Interview, 6.3.08)

The fact that our team chose to talk about our relationships publically suggested that of all the work we had done that year, relationship building was among the most important. Despite my tendencies to pull in us in the direction of "professionalism," those personal relationships had begun to develop. The above advice I offered, to pay attention to the affective aspects of collaboration, stands as much as an admonition for me, as it might any other collaboration.

Interdependence

Our practices of curricular collaboration suggested interdependencies in many aspects of the English 12 team's work. We relied on the collaboration for conversation and direction regarding course design, unit design, and instructional materials. We discussed student work together to identify areas for improvement in our course. We spent time at most meetings debriefing and reflecting on our teaching successes or frustrations. Although the official meeting times rarely got to the level of daily lesson planning, casual conversations over lunch and in the halls between classes also offered an opportunity for feedback or sharing at the level of daily instruction as well. As our relationships developed, they also afforded affective support for the demands of teaching in a large institution such as Lafayette Falls. All of these practices suggested the interdependencies that were woven through our work. Speaking for myself, and echoing statements I heard from others on our team: I could not have done this without the team's support.

These interdependencies were apparent between the veterans as individuals, and in the sharing of veterans' knowledge and materials with the early career teachers. However, the team's division of labor over the year did suggest that the team struggled to find ways to have the early career teacher reciprocate with their own contributions to the team. Dewey (1916) argued, "If democracy has a moral and ideal meaning, it is that a social return be demanded from all and that opportunity for development of distinctive capacities be afforded all"(p.117). Improvements in our division of labor might have afforded more of a social return, more individual learning, and as a result, further community development. Previous empirical studies of mentoring have suggested that some mentoring practices fostered dependencies rather than interdependencies (Colley, 2002; Sundli, 2007; Wang et al., 2008); but that new teachers may be ambivalent about these arrangements (Vinz, 1996). Sam suggested in his interview that there

were aspects of his position as an early career teacher working in a collaborative setting that suggested dependency:

> SAM: Honestly you have a subordinate
> "Give me things still role."
> You know some of it,
> but you're still trying to work through. (Interview, 6.4.08)

Narratives of classroom practices offered one opportunity to contribute to knowledge generation.   But there was a need for continued improvement in finding the ways and means to have the early career teachers participate more in the generation and refinement of team knowledge. Practices which were most promising for reciprocity were the moments of curriculum creation—such as the generation of the poetry lesson, or the writing of the essential learning outcomes. Such improvements would have aided all of our learning, and in the early career teachers' feelings of agency and ownership in the curriculum.

Even though we did not significantly change our distribution of labor during the research year, our growth was again in consciousness of action. We all became aware together of the tensions between interdependence and dependence, and the need to continue to strive for a more balanced reciprocity of labor for our joint work. As I continue my work in teacher education, this tension between dependency and interdependency will remain central as I seek out practices which provide both the support and agency new teachers require to gain confidence in their own practice.

The Individual in Our Collaboration

In October, Natalie came to a meeting with a question a student had raised about changing a film choice for her semester-long critical lenses portfolio. The student wanted to know if she could change the film she had selected for this ongoing work. In helping Natalie rehearse a possible response to this student, I introduced a feature of English 12 discourse that carries with it the complications of individual autonomy within a collaborative context. In my sample response, I explained that in some of these difficult conversations with students (or parents or administration), particularly those that are complicated by issues of authority, I used "we" as my pronoun of choice: "we" as in "The English 12 team met and discussed this question, and we want you to know why this might not be in your best interest."

This shift from "I" to "we" is at the core of collaboration. On one hand, such a shift gave each of us more confidence and more authority in our work. For teachers, and particularly for early career teachers, this confidence and this authority are often essential struggles of daily practice. Our students, our administration, and our community send us mixed messages about what they want from us: be student-centered, but authoritative; make personal connections, but get those tests scores up. Negotiating these competing visions of what it means to teach was made easier when we could rely on the collective power of "we."

At the same time, within our collaboration, I worried that the power of "we" was undermining the creativity and the agency of the six "I"'s who worked within our group. I was aware going into this study that power and conflict will always complicate the development of collaborative communities. However, previous studies also suggested that communities could use generative conflicts as an opening for critical reflection (Gunn & King, 2003; Achinstein, 2002). The recognition of the power "we" contained both complicated and generated new possibilities for our collective practice. The major tension that existed in this team's experience during the research year was between the established practices of curriculum collaboration that had existed among the veterans, and the need to revisit and revise those practices in light of the goal of mentoring our newest teachers.

After a meeting in January, I wrote myself the following note in my reflection:

> Relationships generally versus mentoring? It is about power. Relationships among vets are democratic. If they weren't, we would not have continued working together. The relationships with the new teachers involve necessarily unequal power relations. (Research log, 1.9.08).

The mentoring goals seemed to be frustrating relationships within our team. But did it have to be "necessarily" unequal? Was mentoring as a goal undermining democratic practices more generally? I returned to reading, as I often do in a puzzle, and began to think more carefully about mentoring and democratic pedagogy. I began to more carefully structure our meetings so that the "unequal" power relations could be better balanced through rituals and routines that respected individuals and build community (Zeichner, 2003; Wilson & Berne, 1999). These structures increased the narrativity within our group, while minimizing the intertextuality that inscribed the newest teachers as "outsider." These structures gave the new teachers more explicit notice of the texts and topics we would discuss each week, and afforded them an opportunity to participate in increasingly dialogic discussions. By the end of the year, Sam's

evolving leadership role, Natalie's growing confidence in her practice and her voice within our collaboration, and Kathy's powerful relationships within the team all suggested we had made some significant and important changes which benefitted each of the new teachers as individuals within a community.

But despite this progress, in our team "we're always under review." Although the English 12 team as it existed during the 2007-2008 school year would not have a collective opportunity to continue our reflections and revisions, my inquiry into our team's practices has helped me visualize where we needed to go next. If we were to continue to strive to honor the individual within the context of collaboration, we needed to help bring our personal knowledge into the collective knowledge of the group in increasingly meaningful ways.

The intelligence and talents of each of the new teachers had much to offer us: and I am grateful that my inquiry gave me the opportunity to re-listen and re-experience the wisdoms they brought to the group. I speak here of my own learning solely, in recognition of the need to break down the collective "we" here into "I" as a learner. Sam's passion for history and context, and his evaluations of his varied experience in collaborations across our district gave him an insight into collaborative practice which enhanced my own learning tremendously. Kathy's gift for noticing, observing, and listening to her students and to us, was an inspiration for practice that has given me a new dedication to improve these skills in myself. Natalie's grace and fortitude under work conditions and institutional callousness that would have broken many more experienced teachers, left me in admiration. Her dedication to her own learning and her desire to develop more student-centered and critical pedagogy reverberates more powerfully than ever in my own questions for practice. Although there were moments when their individual capacities and talents may have appeared subsumed by the power of "We the English 12 team," their ways of knowing and being within our team added to our capacity as much as did Madeline's narrative prowess and depth of organizational history, Lydia's abilities to both synthesize ideas and empathize with people in powerful ways, and my dedication to inquire into what it all might mean.

So, in the end were we a democratic community? I think that is the wrong question. As an ideal, democratic community isn't an end. It can't be achieved and certified like a driver's license. It is a way of being present and mindful in our work and lives together. I believe I have established that aspects of collaboration were present throughout the school year. I believe that we did succeed in becoming a new community as we reached the end of the inquiry. Did

we live and work together in democratic ways that honored and respected the individual? That depended on the day, and on the task. I believe we each tried to do our best, to be courageous and funny, smart and empathetic. Some days, the need for efficiency won out over processes that might have had more democratic promise. But other days, our openness to theory, to reflection, to inquiry was there to help us live out our commitment to continual improvement in our work together, and our individual practices.

Evolving Questions for Inquiry into Collaboration

In ways both intended and unintended, the recreation of our team during the inquiry year led to new questions. Like Gunn and King's (2003) insider study of a teacher collaboration, we found that with a change in membership, new possibilities for reflection and learning emerged. The questions generated by this inquiry take aim at some of the key issues which teaching as a profession must address to improve our relevance in an increasingly diverse world.

As a profession, doctors have their creed: do no harm. For teachers, it just isn't that simple. Teachers' creed must be: to educate all, to learn, and to improve. This means we must constantly ask: who is learning? who is not? what can I do to improve learning for all my students? As much as our progress as a team began inquiries into these questions, our continuing work individually must continue it. This means that in my practice as high school English teacher, a teacher educator, a collaborator, and a researcher, I needed to find ways to structure inquiry into critical issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation more concretely. There were aspects of my practice in all my multiple roles in which I wore my authority and my power as a white, middle class, straight, veteran teacher uncomfortably, or tried to avoid it altogether (Delpit, 1995). There were times when I mistook laissez-faire policies with democratic practice. I needed to be willing to intervene more explicitly in order to enable dialogue which asked "Is what we are doing consistent with what we believe?" (Westheimer, 1998).

Specifically, my experiences as an action researcher within this collaboration have left me wondering about the complexities of learning to teach when a new teacher's identities conflict with the prevailing Discourses of the profession, school, subject, department, or team in which he finds himself. In the context of this inquiry, that might mean interrogating further: How did Sam experience gender in our team as the only male teacher? How did Natalie experience race as the only teacher of African-American descent? These were inquiries which I

did not achieve in this project; and that lack rightfully troubles me. These concerns represent significant questions which I must carry into in the future. If students of literacy are to understand literacy as empowerment of all people, not as just the purview of straight, white, middle class women, they need to experience models for that empowerment which challenge those prevailing Discourses of "English teacher." Thus, my personal challenge will be to explore the pedagogies of teacher education which can best nurture the voices and critical practices of all aspiring teachers.

In addition to inquiry into the relationship between collaboration, teaching, and discourses of power, I also know that research on teacher collaborations does not end when the meeting adjourns, or with the teachers themselves. The links between teacher collaboration and student learning are still tenuous (Little, 2003; Huberman, 1993). Gee (1999) argued that "It is the fundamental job of education to give people bigger and better Discourse maps" (p. 32). Despite our team's commitment to critical theory as the foundation of our curriculum, in order to explore the effectiveness of our joint curricular work, this study would have benefitted from another action cycle which followed the curriculum into its enactment within our individual classrooms. Natalie posed this question as part of her planned inquiry into our curriculum: "What use do our students find for critical theory in their daily lives?" It was a question our team had asked our students and ourselves before as well. A sustained inquiry into the pedagogical and affective elements of critical literacy in English classrooms would benefit our local knowledge, as well as contribute to the understanding of the complexities of teaching and learning for critical literacy more generally.

Taking Perspectives: Reflexivity for Practice

The title of the English 12 course on our syllabus is *Perspective is Everything*. Ironically, it remains as one of the few intertextual references to the *SpringBoard* curriculum which forced its creation just two years prior to the research year. As I conclude the official work of this study, it strikes me how essential that motto has been to my inquiry. Gee defined truth as "a matter of taking, negotiating, and contesting perspectives created in and through language" (Gee, 1999, p.5). As I negotiated the tensions within our collaboration, I found that I constantly needed to shift my perspective. I was an insider who needed to try to see our work anew as an outsider might. In concert, those "outsiders" were embodied as newcomers to the team: three early career teachers who desired support, and likewise wished to contribute to our growing

understanding of what it meant to teach literacy today to ever more diverse students. I needed to try to see our work not just as a veteran team member, but as the new teacher coming for the first time to the school, the curriculum, and the team. My challenge as an action researcher was also reflect on my own multiple roles. I was a colleague, a facilitator, a university supervisor, a department leader, a mentor, and a friend. Each shift in role required a shift in perspective, and consciousness of action in order to work ethically with the tensions between those positions.

At times, like teaching, this work felt like negotiating a high wire act: the angles and tensions of the interconnected strands of our work shifting underneath us.   The central tension was between our twin goals of curriculum redevelopment and mentoring as complicated and constructed by the team membership of three veteran and three early career teachers, and six uniquely talented individuals. As such, we traversed between the spheres of the professional and the personal; collective good and individual freedom.   Our relationships were defined in part by the institutional realities of time in our school, and our own construction of labor. Our language itself spoke the fluid tensions between us: at moments defining our borders, and at others opening them.   In order to make some sense of the multiple meanings generated by our work, we needed inquiry, and multiple tools of analysis to make available alternative perspectives. By remaining open to these multiple ways of seeing our work and becoming more conscious of these tensions, we achieved learning about curriculum, instruction, mentoring, leadership, each other, and ourselves. The alternation of these perspectives was at times bewildering.   But how exhilarating too were the possibilities we created to learn together, and the knowledge that we could continue to reconstruct our own teaching lives in mindful community with others.

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Appendix A

Evolution in Research Questions

Fall 2006: Research Core with Misty

It is thus the purpose of this proposed research to investigate the emancipatory potential of professional learner communities to initiate and sustain critical educational reform at multiple levels of influence. The primary research questions include:

- Institutions: How can the implementation of PLC's aid in the democratizing and professionalization of the teaching culture of a department, school or district community?
- PLC groups: How do the processes in which PLC's engage promote dialogic and emancipatory practices and content, particularly in the areas of teacher development and curriculum reform?
- Individual teachers: Do the pedagogies and curricula espoused within a PLC's collaborative work promote critical changes in individual teachers' practices?
- Students: In classrooms taught by teachers in PLC's, does student oral and written work demonstrate academic success, particularly in the areas of critical literacy, for all students regardless of race, gender, class, or language?

Summer 2007: Revision undertaken with Tim's guidance.

- What happens when small groups of teachers employ collaborative processes to develop a high school literacy curriculum?

Fall 2007: Revisions with CDA in mind:

- How do the PLCs develop norms of collaborative practices and navigate potentially problematic issues such as leadership and conflict?
- How do teachers collaboratively construct a vision of effective practice in English Language Arts instruction through the PLC process?
- What types of resources or "funds of knowledge" are utilized in teachers' collaborative curriculum development?

- How are students and student learning constructed within the groups, and what relationships might this have with the formal and enacted curricula as the product of collaboration?

December 2007: Narrative and CDA

- How do the narratives told within our English teachers' professional community construct knowledge and mediate the relationships within that group?

Dissertation Official Proposal: March Meeting

- Understanding our practices as collaborators: What happened when our team of English teachers collaborated to develop a high school literacy curriculum?
- Improving our practices as collaborators: How did we improve our collaborative practices to make them more productive, professional, and just for all members of our team?
- Understanding and improving my practice as a researcher and teacher educator: What did I learn about the processes of collaboration and action research? How did I improve my practices as a collaborator and as a researcher?

Appendix B:

Senior English College Readiness Self-Assessment

We are interested to know how much this course, and your previous experiences in English classes, have helped you feel ready for college level reading and writing skills. Please answer as thoughtfully as possible as your responses will be used to help us improve our class.

A= always   B=usually   C= sometimes   D=never

Reading

1) When I read, I am able to figure out the point the author is trying to make.

2) To figure out the author's point, I can identify examples or language from the text and evaluate whether or not they are convincing.

3) When I read literary texts, I know how to examine conventions such as setting, character, plot, theme, and imagery, and identify patterns in those conventions.

4) When I read, I can select different lenses and use them to analyze the text from multiple perspectives.

5) When I read, I think about how an author's culture or the historical period might have influenced his/ her ideas.

6) When I read a difficult passage, I slow down to make sure I understand it before moving on.

7) When I read, I can take notes identifying main ideas and questions I have about those main ideas.

8) When I encounter a word I do not know, I try to figure it out by the rest of the sentence, or look it up later.

9) I am able to think about the assumptions underlying my own beliefs, and I am willing to consider how my opinions may be viewed from the perspectives of others who may not agree with me.

Writing

10) I know what prewriting strategies work best for me, and I use them to develop my ideas and organize my thoughts before I start writing.

11) I can construct paragraphs with effective topic sentences and create logical connections between the ideas in my paragraphs.

12) I can focus all of my ideas for an essay into a single clear thesis statement.

13) I can develop my ideas effectively in an essay: I break down ideas into individual points and I can put those points in an order that will support my thesis.

14) I can use evidence to support my ideas and I can connect my evidence to my thesis.

15) When I write, I think about the purpose and audience for my writing, and I can adjust my writing style to match both.

16) When I revise, I am able to identify places where my ideas need to be expressed more clearly and make substantial changes that improve my overall essay.

17) When I proofread my writing, I am able to catch and correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, or sentence errors.

Research

18) I can use the library and Internet to find appropriate sources, and I know how to evaluate the quality of those sources before I use them.

19) I understand what plagiarism is, and I know how to use and credit outside sources appropriately in my own work.

20) I can use a documentation style to credit my sources, and understand why it is necessary to do so.

Appendix C

Lydia's Film Horror Story Transcript

Recorded : 9/26/07   **Transcript Revised: 11/30/07**

Context:

This is one of two teacher collaboration groups in my study. This is a group of five high school English teachers who are required to meet weekly to develop and revise their twelfth grade curriculum. The immediate context for this discussion is the need to decide on a film title to use for an upcoming unit on formalist criticism of film.

The speakers are:

- Madeline: a white female, 20+ years teaching, nearing retirement, former dept leader
- Lydia: a white female, 12 years of teaching experience
- Rachel: a white female, 10 years of teaching experience, current dept leader,   and the researcher on sabbatical from teaching in this department
- Sam: a white male, mid twenties, 3 years teaching experience, second semester w/ twelfth grade team
- Natalie: an African-American female, early thirties, 2 years teaching experience, this is her first semester in this school and team, her position is split w/ another district high school
  Madeline, Lydia, and myself have been collaborating together on this curriculum for the last eight years, and are good friends outside of school.

Minute 13-26

How do the narratives told within meetings construct what it means to be a member of this group, and mediate tensions between the collective and individual professional (?) identities?

- Integrating vs. polarizing narratives
- Role of intertextuality: bonding and bounding/ barriers/ borders
- Teacher centered vs. student centered stories

This segment starts with Sam challenging the status quo of the curriculum by questioning whether he wants to teach the film *A River Runs Through It*, or replacing this text in his classroom with *The Graduate* (a former group text) or *Big Fish* (a film not previously taught by the group). This is potentially problematic. A common tension in PLC's is the negotiation of what it means to participate in team planning, is it "uniform practice . . .down to the details"? (Little 2002) This team has an historical expectation in which most practices are uniform to as much detail as is possible. There's an ongoing joke that we could walk in at any moment and begin teaching each other's classes—and occasionally in emergencies, we have.

However, rather than simply say "yes" or "no" over the next thirteen minutes of conversation, twelve story episodes of varying length and complexity are utilized by four of the five participants to explore multiple dimensions of what it means to select a film for classroom viewing.

<u>Line</u>

01.	L:	alright then Madeline, you're gonna use *Riv↑er↑*,
02.	M:	yep↓
03.	L:	Sam, doesn't know yet↑ you're still deciding↑((slightly amused tone))
04.	S:	I'll figure it out this weekend ((mumbled and flat pitch makes tone quietly exasperated))
05.	L:	okay alright ((slightly amused tone))
06.	R:	I was skeptical about *River* ((sniffs)) but I was pleased
07.	S:	yeah↑
08.	R:	like I was a hold out last-last spring and wanted to do something more [(.) <u>artsy:</u>
09.	L:	[he wants to-*Big Fish-Big Fish* is more artsy=
10.	S:	=that could work or still go with *The Graduate* or something
11.		I was just-°I was bored watching River Runs Through It I really was personally I° ((tone is quietly confessional)
12.	M:	°The kids aren't↓ [they love it↓° ((volume match to Sam))
13.	S:	° [I don't know↑°
14.		maybe I'll try it [but I
15.	L:	[But if you'r::e WELL
16.	R:	The problem is if you don't (.5) [enjoy the text then=
17.		((volume up))
18.	L:	[right, and it doesn't <u>really</u> matter]
19.	S:	=<u>Exactly</u>
20.	M:	NO [it doesn't-you could do-the only thing
21.	S:	[Exactly that was the problem too ((laughs))

22.		I was sitting there watching it and like ((Natalie laughs)) "I don't want to talk about it"
23.	M:	>yeah well that is a problem because it should be something that you can get excited about too < ((tone flat, matter of fact))
24.		*The Graduate* is problematic in the context of today's world I think
25.	S:	yeah
26.	L:	yeah
27.	M:	I mean it's an <u>icon</u>
28.		and they don't understand <u>how</u> it's an icon
29.		so they miss that whole thing and yeah
30.	L:	I mean there's something creepy about
31.		I mean that whole term MILF or whatever they use now
32.	S:	yeah yeah it's gotten (?)
33.	N:	MILF↑ Mom I'd Like To ((laughs))
34.	L:	it has this ick:::y
35.	M:	yeah but it didn't used to it really didn't
36.		but it's the same discussion we had when we originally starting using *The Graduate* again
37.		and realizing-we were doing <u>archetypal</u> analysis
38.		and realizing that it was <u>ironic</u> at the end
39.		and you really are left hanging
40.		you know on the one hand it is sort of happily ever after
41.		except they look at each other
42.		and you know they're thinking about Thanksgiving
43.		and you know this is never gonna work in a million years
44.		but I know because I <u>saw</u> it when it came out
45.		that's not what people thought
46.	L:	[Really↑]
47.	M:	when we saw it originally
48.		we thought it was youth triumphing over stupid middle aged over thirty plastic people
49.		and they <u>won</u> in the end
50.	L:	really↑ that's funny
51.	R:	[cuz they escaped
52.	M:	[Absolutely↓]
53.		cuz they escaped↓
54.	L:	yeah and does it matter↑ that they ended up together↑
55.		or you just thought=
56.	M:	=I think we thought that they <u>would</u> be together it didn't matter-
57.		who cares about the <u>PARENTS</u>
58.	L:	even with the Sound of Silence↑ in the background
59.	S:	yeah
60.	M:	who cares about the parents we were oblivious to it
61.	L:	yeah okay
62.	M:	so I think it is a--I mean it's interesting in that sense
63.		to think about it in its historical <u>context</u>,
64.		but that's not what we're trying to do here

65.	L:	ye:ah and you need to be a <u>sophisticated</u> twelfth grader to <u>get it</u> (.) I think
66.	S:	yeah exactly yeah
67.	L:	right↓ so <u>frankly=</u>
68.	M:	=NO it would not work in my class
69.	S:	(?) ((general laughter))
70.	R:	They also didn't like that incest really was a theme of the course when both *Oedipus* ((Laura laughs))
71.		you bascially went from *Oedipus* to *The Graduate*
72.		and they were like "WHOA why are you doing this to us↑"
73.		and then *Hamlet* later on "why're we doing this again↑"
74.	S:	["they're like oh no no I'm not going to talk to my mom ever again"
75.	L:	((laughing))
76.	M:	[right exactly yeah
77.		and it is
78.		and you do open yourself up
79.		I mean B__ J_____ ((another dept teacher))is the only person I know who ever handled this well
80.		making those boys who would guffaw at the treatment of Elaine (.5)
81.		he would make them feel subhuman
82.		but no female is ever going to be able to do this
83.		I mean you're just going to sound like a whiny feminist
84.	N:	((laughs))
85.	L:	And you'd have to worry about stopping and fast forwarding
86.		I missed the cue one year ((R & L laughing))
87.	M:	<u>too much stress</u>
88.	L:	I was so nervous and then it got <u>stuck</u> on it
89.		I was like "NO CLOSE YOUR EYES"
90.		I think I put a big thing over it
91.	S:	You know that didn't matter to my kids as much as the rabbit in *Roger and Me*
92.		that- I got them even worse
93.		cuz I completely forgot about that one ((multiple people laughing))
94.	R:	eww yeah they need a little head's up
95.	S:	I don't think I am going to do that
96.		I don't know
97.		I'll think about it this weekend
98.	R:	well you've used *Big Fish*↑ before haven't you ((to Laura))
99.	L:	no↓
100.	S:	<u>I've</u> used that before. I have.
101.	R:	I thought you used it↑ ((to Laura))
102.	L:	I thought about it↓I really did think about it.
103.		I mean it is s:oo good
104.		and it is so-*The Things They Carried*:
105.		stories can save us, story truth versus happening truth

106.		it's so good=
107.	S:	=exactly
108.	L:	it's s:o good (.5) <u>but</u> (.) it's <u>weird</u>
109.		I just don't know-I don't know
110.		I'd-I'd be interested
111.		it's a great movie
112.		it's a great great movie it really is
113.	M:	Well if you wanted to give it a shot, Sam
114.		[you could be our guinea pig
115.	S:	[Maybe I will
116.	L:	yeah
117.	M:	But it absolutely doesn't matter what film
118.	L:	But there is the topless issue to:o in that one
119.	S:	ugh it's one split second and she's under water
120.	L:	ugh I'm <u>PARANOID</u>
121.		<u>do you know my history</u>↑
122.	M:	what's it rated↑
123.	S:	it's PG13
124.	L:	PG13 it's just a naked mermaid
125.	S:	it's just a mermaid distorted by a foggy window and the water↓
126.	L:	I actually remember sitting in it watching it
127.		and thinking "this is great this is great" and then "NOOO NOOO"
128.	M:	why did they do that↑
129.	S:	you actually see her (butt crack?)
130.		yeah it is like the one split second were you're like ohhhh↓
131.	L:	yeah cuz I knew it would be a great <u>classroom</u> movie
132.		it <u>is</u> a great classroom movie
133.		well I think--I don't know
134.		I think if you really do not like <u>*River*</u>
135.	R:	Yeah if you can't sell it (1.0) then it's not worth
136.	L:	yeah
137.	M:	I've never had any trouble selling it they-they all seem to like it
138.	L:	yeah the boys like the fishing and the girls like Brad Pitt and I like the/
139.	M:	if nothing else the boys will like the sun tanning scene
140.	S:	I liked the movie, but I just kept waiting for it to get started
141.		I was like "okay what what's going on here↑"
142.	R:	NO it doesn't
143.		and and it actually
144.		I mean you could have a very interesting <u>formalist</u> discussion about where does the <u>plot</u> of this story actually begin↑
145.	S:	[yeah that's what I'm thinking as I'm watching it
146.	R	cuz you have a good forty minutes that's <u>background</u>
147.		and WHY why is that↑
148.		because you've got Robert Redford trying to adapt somebody's autobiography
149.		and so where do you start the story↑
150.	S:	yeah that's what I kept thinking too in the classroom

151.		is where is the breakdowns come
152.		and it comes what like maybe a half an hour
153.		and the first half an hour of the film standing alone
154.		and then leaving them out-like kicking them out of the room
155.		and being like "okay come back tomorrow and we'll finish it"
156.		and they'll be like "no"
157.		I couldn't picture how I could sell them on "it gets better"
		((pleading voice))
158.	M:	yeah I don't know(1.0)
159.	N:	((laughs))
160.	L:	and then you don't have to sell-
161.		I mean it is okay to <u>criticize</u>
162.		actually you kind of do,
163.		I like *River* because some of the acting is not so great
164.		and it is really (bothersome)=
165.	R:	=yeah a <u>perfect</u> movie is harder to <u>critique</u> than a <u>flawed</u> movie
166.	S:	yeah
167.	R:	and if the purpose is to have some evaluation (1.0)
168.	N:	I've gotta get that movie
169.	R:	Have you ever seen it↑
170.	N:	No ((laugh)) I was thinking that I've gotta put that on my to do list
171.	M:	it's fun to watch
172.	R:	yeah it is very pretty
173.	L:	yeah the cinematography is great you can talk about that
174.		some of the scenery is just •hhh
175.	M:	and you know there are some great themes in it I mean
176.		besides the obvious tragedy themes
177.		the world of the Native Americans and the-I mean
178.		there are all these little sub plots that I think are interesting for kids
		to pick up on and that's(.5) yeah
179.	L:	and I do like referencing it again when we're in the archetypal lens
180.		the classic tragic hero
181.		who have we seen so far↑
182.		[oh we've seen Paul, we've seen Oedipus
183.	M:	[yeah yeah
184.		exactly
185.	S:	You know, if we're looking for tragic heroes we should just bring
		in like *Brokeback* or something. ((jokingly))
186.		((laughter from multiple sources))
187.	L:	Oh yeah you <u>DO </u>that
		((laughter continues))
188.	S:	it's got beautiful [cinematography there too
189.	M:	[you go for that, Sam.

190.	L:	[you go for that, Sam,
191.		We'll visit you at your next job ((laughter))
192.		I wouldn't touch that ((laughter))
193.	M:	No (.5) it's not worth it
194.	L:	n:ooo↑
195.	R:	you've heard that story↑
196.	S:	yeah
197.	L:	you know that I'm the-
198.	S:	[yeah
199.	R:	[have you heard that story↑ Natalie↑
200.	L:	[the reason that there is a movie policy is (.) me:::(•hhhh)]
201.		I showed a movie-
202.		I was going to show a movie once tha:t was no:t/
203.	M:	she wasn't even showing it to the whole cla:ss
204.	L:	•hhh((hissing)) I know
205.	M:	it got such a-it got so built out of ( )
206.	L:	the short story is
207.		I had a school board member's daughter in my class
208.		who wanted to watch it
209.		they got in a fight as she was going out the door
210.		I got a c:all
211.		>"don't you dare show that movie"<
212.		>I said "okay, I wo::n't "<
213.		and then it just=
214.	M:	=then it just went nuts
215.	L:	[yeah he just didn't let it go •hhh
216.	M:	[I will never forget talking to him on the phone=
217.	L:	=I remember that
218.		I remember you walked by
219.		and I was like (.5)
220.		I kne::w
221.		°"I'm in trouble"°
222.		I was like "this guy is out of contro:l"
223.		he's screaming at me at seven fifteen in the morning
224.	M:	yeah I don't [remember who told-
225.	N:	[was it a parent↑
226.	L:	it was a [school board member and a parent
227.	M:	[it was a school board member and a parent
228.		and he was very conservative
229.	L:	[yeah
230.		yeah very [T_____
231.	M:	[I mean not an easy guy to deal with
232.	L:	you helped me ((to Madeline))
233.		we went into Dave's office
234.		I think Dave was gone
235.	M:	y:eah [y:eah
236.	L:	[or something
237.		I was like "ohh"

238.		I knew↓
239.		I'm like "o:hh this is not good" ((laughter))
240.	S:	[I (?) I even know this is bad
241.	M:	[I don't remember why I had to end up talking to him↑
242.		how did that come about↑
243.	L:	the what↑
244.	M:	why did I end up having to talk to him↑
245.	R:	you were department leader
246.	M:	well I know
247.		but I still don't know why
248.		it would have to be me
249.	L:	and you were nice to me and [you walked by me
250.	R:	[if Dave B. wasn't around
251.	M:	maybe Dave B.
252.	L:	did you talk to T_____↑ that day↑
253.	M:	oh I will never forget
254.	L:	oh yeah that's right
255.	M:	I went up to
256.		yeah at that time
257.		up in the house four counselor's office
258.		it used to be Dave N----↑
259.	L:	[oh yeah yeah yeah I remember
260.	M:	[n:o maybe who was it↑
261.		it wasn't Dave N----
262.		it was the guy before him
263.		who was originally in the school
264.		god I can't even remember his name
265.		I think I wrote him a letter of recommendation for him once but I can't remember his name
266.		((bit of laughter))
267.		Anyway it was <u>his</u> office
268.		I had to go someplace where I wouldn't be overheard↓
269.		and I actually-I actually <u>sat</u> in his big chair
270.		you know they have more <u>formal</u> [office settings
271.	L:	[channel his power
272.	N:	Oh yeah
273.	M:	and I sat down and I kind of thought "okay I am not wearing a <u>suit</u> but <u>pretend</u>" you know
		((Laura laughs))
274.		I was wearing normal school clothes
275.		but I-I kind of put on my <u>professional ha::t</u>
276.		and I-I remember very consciously
277.		<dialing> the phone and thinking
278.		"okay↓ (.) <"you are the professional here">
279.	L:	[yeah
280.	M:	["you're not gonna let this guy get to you"
281.		but he had to vent at somebody I think

282.		>and he had already vented at Linda
283.		and that wasn't enough<
284.		and and that's all
285.		I don't remember what I said or anything like that
286.		but just I remember
287.		((starts quietly, builds to a crescendo over the next 3 lines, slightly husky, masculinization of voice))
288.		"I'm on the-in the counselor's desk
289.		I'm <u>feeling</u> in [<u>cha::rge</u>
290.		there's a feeling of <u>POWER</u> here↓"
291.	L:	((laughter)) [power
292.	S:	the chair helps
293.	M:	yeah
294.	L:	he was awful
295.		I remember he was like
296.		what kind of <u>morals</u> do you have ((imitates angry voice))
297.		he was just <u>totally</u> trying to personally insult me
298.	S:	what was it for again↑
299.	L:	see the thing is-
300.		it was for the University if Minnesota course
301.		it was for the <u>college</u> course
302.	M:	yeah mmm hmmm
303.	S:	but what was it like-was it like a film review↑
304.	L:	they had to do a
305.		they had to do a film review
306.		and I was running short on time
307.		and I said "if a bunch of you want to watch the same film
308.		I can give you some time in class"
309.		>because they were doing research outside of class<,
310.		and so I said "you –whatever [YOU organize it and I"=
311.	M:	= "bring the movie in and I will set it up for you"
312.	L:	I said "it doesn't matter what movie it is
313.		it should be a critically acclaimed movie↓"
314.		they chose "The Pi:ano"↓
315.	S:	that wouldn't be good
316.	M:	which-which had-it had the young girl
317.		who was the youngest one at that time to win
318.		the Oscar for best supporting actress
319.		I mean it <u>was</u> critically acclaimed=
320.	R:	=and the title is *The Piano*
321.		it doesn't sound like there's going to be [full-
322.		full frontal nud-full frontal male nudity
323.	L:	[And Harvey <u>Kiet::el</u>
324.	N:	WOOH ((laughter))
325.		That's the kicker (.5) okay
326.	L:	he went off on pornography
327.		I remember he was like-
328.		and then for ye::ars later

329.		people would pass me in the hallway
330.		"you know I saw *The Piano* and >I didn't really like it<"
331.		and I was like "O::kay↑ (laughs) [it's not really my choice"
332.	M:	[O::kay ((laughter))
333.		o::h it made the talk shows on the radio o::h
334.	L:	oh and the Star Tribune had me as a seventh grade <u>art</u> teacher
335.	N:	[o::h::
336.	L:	who <u>forced</u> her students
337.		that's how they reported it
338.		<seventh grade <u>art</u> teacher>
339.	S:	[yeah
340.	M:	yeah it was so:: not good
341.		from ever after/
342.	N:	really↑ you got in the news↑
343.	L:	you know what
344.		if <u>any th::ing</u>
345.		it just gave me confidence about
346.		that <u>this</u> is a place I wanted to work
347.		that was it↓
348.		everyone backed <u>m:e</u>
349.	M:	mm hm
350.	L:	no one leaked my <u>na:me</u>
351.	M:	no no
352.	L:	everyone supported me
353.	M:	that's right
354.	L:	I mean
355.		this was-it my <u>first year</u>↑
356.		I think it was my first year here
357.	M:	I think it might have been your first year
358.		it was early on anyway
359.		[it was a <u>lo::ng</u> time ago
360.	L:	[I think it was
361.		it was my first time through CIS
362.		and yes <u>that</u> was my first year and I was
363.	N?:	•hhh
364.	L:	I mean had taught for two years before that
365.	M:	and he had a lot of kids
366.		that school board member
367.		and some of them were really not great students
368.	L:	I had them
369.		I had (.5) you know (.) other ones
370.		I think T____ was one I had that I really liked
371.		but I think they all sort of
372.	M:	I had M_____ I think
373.		was M___
374.	L:	yeah M____ remember M___'s racy dress that she wore↑
375.	M:	yeah
		((Linda laughs))

376.	S:	they didn't like dad so much↑
377.	L:	I don't think
378.	M:	yeah there was a lot of rebellion [in that family
379.	L:	[lot of rebellion goin' on
380.	M:	because he ruled with an <u>iron fist</u>
381.		you know that's all it takes
382.	N:	oh yeah that's all it takes
383.	L:	yep
384.		so anyway yeah
385.		so I'm a little twitchy ((laughs))
386.	R:	ALRIGHT
387.		s:o be careful on the film choices ((laughs))
388.	L:	yep
389.	R:	but "Big Fish" sounds like a good option
390.	M:	yeah and then you know
391.		the main thing I think <u>always</u>
392.		when you're thinking about the films
393.		I mean that's why we work as a <u>team</u>
394.		because if somebody said "I'm going to show something"
395.		the rest of them would say "no:: don't do that" ((anxious voicing))
396.		we are going to take care of each other
397.	L:	yeah yeah
398.	M:	that <u>is</u> important
399.	L:	yeah it is important that you don't bring in some <u>wild</u> card
400.		and "<u>oh</u> I didn't know you were showing <u>that</u>" okay ((laughs))
401.	M:	[yeah
402.		no you don't want to go there
403.		never worth it
404.	S:	mmm hmm
405.	L:	yeah
406.		Alright
407.	M:	Alright