Openings and Constraints: The Professional Learning Experiences of Four Beginning Teachers

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative dissertation explored the professional learning experiences and perceived needs of four beginning high school English teachers in two NYC schools and the ways and means those needs were being addressed or not addressed. Through in-depth interviews with the teachers, my renderings from the interviews focused on how discourse shapes an understanding of the professional learning opportunities that operate as openings and constraints for teachers' professional growth. I drew on the work of historian Michel Foucault as a theoretical framework to examine the production of a teacher's sense of "self" as an effect of power/knowledge relations circulating within the dominant school discourses in which they are situated and the larger educational context at this historic moment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS v

DEDICATION vi

CHAPTER I: TIPTOEING THROUGH A MINEFIELD 1

- Why Interview? 1
- Brief Overview of the Study 2
- Research Questions 3
  - Guiding Subquestions 3
- Participants 4
- Data Collection 4
- Interpretation 5
- How I Came to the Topic 8
- Statement of the Problem 12
- Significance and Rationale 14

CHAPTER II: WALKING ON A BOG 16

- Whose Knowledge Is Valued? 17
- A Brief Glance Backwards 22
- Teacher Inquiry 26
  - The Value and Import of Teacher Inquiry 28
- Collaboration: The “Hey Threshold” 32
- Writing to Learn 39
  - Ongoing Learning Experiences 40
- Summary of Literature Review 42

CHAPTER III: THE SPACE IN BETWEEN 45
Finding My Way as Researcher 45
I Am Not an “ist” 46
How to Introduce That Which keeps Moving, Not an “ism”? 47
Research Questions 52
Guiding Subquestions 53
Participants 55
Kate 56
Richard 56
Evie 56
Amy 56
Kate and Richard’s School “Specialty” 56
Evie and Amy’s School “Charter” 56
Methods 57
Data Collection 57
Interpretations of Interpretations 62
CHAPTER IV: WHERE THE DATA GLOWS 65
Four Goodbyes and a Hello 65
Evie 73
Amy 75
Richard 76
Kate 77

CHAPTER IV (continued)

High-stakes Testing and Accountability 79
    "Gotcha" 84
    "Retroactively Dysfunctional" 86
    "You are pushing me into a very specific way of teaching" 87
Openings 93
Constraints 98
    "Okay, I really want to know about X" 104
Teacher Attrition 113
CHAPTER V: POWER/KNOWLEDGE RELATIONS 120
Theoretical Frame: Michel Foucault's Relations of Power 121
Flight as Resistance: Amy's Experience 122
    "I fucking burned them" 124
    Refusing to Be Contained 126
Collision of Cultures: Evie's Experience 128
    Teaching as a Political Act 131
    Measured and Boxed 132
    Professional Learning via the Internet 134
What Constitutes Normative Bounds of Discourse: Richard's Experience 135
    Surveilled and Classified 140
    Angles of Analysis 145
Storm of Energies: Kate's Experience 148
    Energy From Below: Students 149

CHAPTER V (continued)

Energy From Above: Administrators....150

Energy From Within: Kate....151

CHAPTER VI: PROVOCATIONS....156

Provocations....156

Toward Further Inquiry....164

REFERENCES....167

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Invitation Letter to Potential Participants....177

Appendix B: Interview Protocol and Informed Consent....178

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the four relationships that bookend my life with meaning: Mom and Dad. Emily and Jamie. Mom and Dad, thank you for a lifetime of unwavering support. You have taught me the importance of living a life of purpose. Your examples of working hard instilled in me the belief that with hard work and perseverance anything is possible. I am grateful for every caring phone call you made checking in on me–encouraging me to keep going, imploring me to take a break, and always whole heartedly believing in me.

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CHAPTER I: TIPTOEING THROUGH A MINEFIELD

> A person who had never listened to nor read a tale or myth or parable or story, would remain ignorant of his own emotional and spiritual heights and depths, would not know quite fully what it is to be human. For the story—from Rumpelstiltskin to War and Peace—is one of the basic tools invented by the mind of man, for the purpose of gaining understanding. There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.
>
> –Ursula K. Le Guin, *Language of the Night*

Why Interview?

It's 1992. I'm in Chicago, enrolled in a doctoral program in Clinical Psychology taking the most difficult graduate course I would ever take: clinical interviewing. In this practicum, we hone our interviewing skills by taking on the role of patient and therapist. Professor Derry begins by modeling the interview interaction. He's the therapist and I'm the patient. Then we will switch roles. We have 20 minutes for each interview. We move our chairs around to face each other as the rest of the small class shifts their chairs to face us. He begins, "Beth, tell me about X." I tell him about Y. I'm not being defiant. I just don't want to talk about X. He stays with me and then I move on to Z. Making liquid-quick associations, my mind moves all over the place until I get to the topic that matters to me—my mother's mayoral campaign. Time's up. What just happened? I have tears streaming down my cheeks. The class is staring at us. Not because of the content of anything I said, but because of the interview magic they just witnessed. Professor Derry stayed with me as my thoughts raced, taking me deeper into my thinking. He barely spoke. He never took his eyes away from mine. His quiet "ums" and nods encouraged me to continue. During the interview, it didn't feel as if I was making rapid associations. Later when I listened to the tape, it was clear that I was. My turn. "Professor Derry, tell me about X." He tells me about X. He's done talking about X. Now what? I ask him about Y. He obediently talks about Y. This is flat and lifeless. I want to restart. I can't. I ask another question, but I'm not really focused on his answer. All I can think about is how to tiptoe through his psyche, as he had just done to mine. I'm not listening to him at all. I'm consumed with my own thoughts. I re-enter the interview interaction. What the hell is he talking about? Time is up. So, which interview was more authentic? Valid? Meaningful? What became transparent to me throughout the semester-long practicum is how non-transparent, slippery, elusive, and ambiguous the interview is for both the interviewer and the interviewee. Interviewing is complicated, challenging work. If anyone in my doctoral cohort had suggested that I write a dissertation based on interviews, I would have laughed them out of the windy city. Yet, Professor Derry was able to glean major insights from me in 20 minutes. Maybe not about X, but about topics that mattered and were important to me. In time, I was able to train my mind to stay with the patient in the interview interaction, not by banishing ideas away when they appeared. You can't. But by attending so deeply that my own thoughts were less likely to eclipse those of the interviewee. Many years later in a different big city, when it was time to write my dissertation, I wanted to explore the professional learning experiences and needs of beginning high school English teachers. I had to smile, knowing that a qualitative interview study was the most painstaking way to get to the nerve of research that deals with the imprecise and unknown.

Brief Overview of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative interview study was to investigate the professional learning experiences and perceived needs of four beginning high school English teachers and the ways and means those needs were being addressed or not addressed. I defined beginning teachers as teachers who have 3 years of experience or less. This study seeks to add to the body of knowledge that exists about the professional learning needs as self-reported by the teachers and re-interpreted by me through in-depth interviews with teachers and teachers' reflexive writing about their professional learning. I drew on Foucault's concepts of power/knowledge relations to examine the production of the teachers' subjectivities as an effect of power/knowledge relations circulating within the dominant school discourse in which they are situated and the larger educational context at this historic moment. My methodology was rooted in the traditions of qualitative research, with a poststructuralist orientation. Information and insights shared by beginning teachers about their professional learning may shed light on some ways to support teachers' professional needs and increase the likelihood of retaining teachers in the field and expanding their intellectual and professional growth. Conducting interviews with beginning teachers is like tiptoeing through a minefield. As the teachers slipped in and out of the dominant school discourse and a discourse of teaching formed from their own school experience, graduate school, student teaching, and pop culture ruptures took place during the slippage. I never knew when a change of awareness on their part or mine would trigger a change that would offer a different angle of understanding into their professional learning experiences and needs. So, I treaded carefully but I treaded forward as those moments of slippage were the most generative in terms of gaining insights into their experiences.

Research Questions

What are the professional learning experiences and perceived learning needs of beginning high school English teachers, and in what ways and through what means are those needs being addressed or not?

Guiding Sub-questions

1. What areas of content and processes do teachers in their second-third years of teaching identify as needs?

2. What supports, both formal and informal, do novice English teachers identify as meaningful? And what areas of content and processes do novice English teachers think they are not getting supported in?
3. In what ways do novice English teachers seek out some of their own professional learning? And what happens when they do?
4. What constraints and openings do novice English teachers identify as impactful on their learning needs?

Participants

Participants included a total of four high school English teachers who participated in the study. I recruited teachers in their second and third years of teaching to learn about the different challenges and ways that beginning English teachers engage in ongoing professional growth. I sent an invitation letter via email to alumni of the English Education program at a graduate teaching college who have graduated in the past 4 years and who are currently teaching in New York City public schools.

Data Collection

Data gathering for this qualitative study took place over the course of 9 months, from September 2016 to May 2017. I gained an understanding of the learning experiences and perceived needs of four teachers through one-on-one semi-structured interviews, either in-person or via Skype. The broad questions functioned as a springboard for our interviews (see Appendix). Data collection for this portion of the study began with an invitation via email to participate in the study. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Additionally, to ensure a variety of data points, participants wrote reflexively to document the formal and informal professional learning experiences they received, and through their reflexive writing they considered the impact the learning opportunities had on their classroom teaching practices and learning needs.

Interpretation

The school discourses that inform and constitute teachers' understandings of their many "selves" as professionals were interrogated through exploring how power/knowledge relations and dominant discourses produced the participants' subjectivities as they entered the teaching profession as English teachers. My renderings from the interviews focused on how discourse shapes an understanding of the professional learning opportunities that operate as openings and constraints for teachers' growth.

At the wise suggestion of Ruth Vinz, I listened to the interviews on my commute to work each day, living the stories of the participants. I paid careful attention to word choice and emotive intonation. I considered how the participants framed their experiences within the discursive field in which they were situated at a specific moment in time. I was mindful of the myriad limits of representing an experience as memory is fallible and language is inadequate. Our representations are embedded in cultural, social, and discursive contexts that operate both consciously and unconsciously.

I attended to the relationships between power/knowledge and discourse. I was mindful of how seemingly similar events can mean very different things to the participants in the study or even to the same participant as interpretations changed across spans of time, consciousness, unconsciousness, influences of shifting discourses. For example, in my first interview with Richard, he introduced himself as "effective," but quickly went on to explain that last year he was "highly effective." The Danielson Framework, which is a teacher evaluation tool currently used in NYC public schools, classifies teachers categorically and numerically from ineffective

“1” to highly effective “4.” What is noteworthy is that in our initial meeting, Richard introduced himself to me using the classification system in place to judge his teaching abilities. In a different interview, Richard defiantly told me, “I know I’m a good teacher and not just ‘effective.’” So, the same topic—sense of teaching worth and identity—was treated differently by Richard in different interviews, although the label imposed on him remained the same. At different times throughout the year, teachers were able to view such labels as external marks placed on them, then a moment later may shift into internalizing the labels as measures of their worth.

The interviews with the four teachers included such discussion as how paperwork was used to regulate teaching and thinking. For example, teachers were required to complete mandated lesson plan templates each week. The lesson plans were linear boxes in which the teachers had to include exactly what would happen over the course of a lesson. The teachers explained that lessons rarely went as planned. They expressed frustration in relation to the lesson plan templates and the purpose of submitting them: (a) Predetermined lessons leave no room for the unknown and questioning, where most learning takes place. (b) At both schools, the teachers indicated that no one read the lesson plans or provided instructive feedback on the content or pedagogy evidenced in the lesson plans, yet they were logged as having submitted them or not being compliant. All of the teachers experienced a shifting sense of worth depending upon the rating they received on the Danielson Framework, as described above in the example of Richard. These categorical labels informed and constituted the beginning teachers’ sense of self and teaching abilities. Some of the teachers in the study shared with me their teacher evaluations and the comments that were included under their boxed rating. The comments were generic and skeletal. As the four teachers explained, the comments they received on their observations were evaluative and not instructive. Further, they described the feeling of being surveilled through surprise observations, paperwork, and administrators lurking the halls. Kate described such surveillance as the “feeling that they are waiting to catch us doing something wrong. Gotcha.” Professional development (PD), as discussed across interviews, was a standardized, one-size-fits-all approach without consideration of teachers’ needs, interests, or level of expertise. At both schools, it was not encouraged to seek outside PD. The teachers were sent the message that the school PD is the knowledge that counts. In this way, the dominant discourse of PD sustained the regimes of truth active in the schools, which normalized behavior and thinking. The four teachers also included insights into how the dominant school discourses shaped how they self-regulated their own behavior to adapt to the discursive field and school culture in which they were situated. I tried to attend to the ways the power of dominant discourses exerted framings that pervaded their sense of “self” as beginning teachers.

Throughout the dissertation, I refer to professional learning to signal moments of openings and possibilities for the teachers, while I referred to PD as prescribed and mandated experiences imposed on teachers. Taubman (2014) proposed that we should alter the language we use to discuss professional study:

> Perhaps what we really need to do is stop talking about professional development and begin talking about professional study. Those who insist on professional development, expertise, mastery, and teacher effectiveness may offer the illusion that we wear white lab coats or carry a tool kit, but in fact they put us on a conveyor belt to a mechanized job of implementing other people’s directives. (p. 16)

My decision to refer to PD instead of professional learning in instances when the participants described mandated workshops and initiatives was to signal the impact the positivist ontology Taubman described had on their learning experiences. I chose to explore this topic through qualitative inquiry to pose questions and suggest ambiguities that are not readily resolved to glean insights into the professional learning of four beginning high school English teachers. The teachers I selected for the study were teaching in different types of high schools in New York City, i.e., charter and high-performing, to better understand the impact of context on beginning high school English teachers' professional learning experiences and needs. I conducted interviews in person and via Skype either four or five times with each participant over the period of 9 months. The teachers in the study also engaged in reflexive writing of their professional learning experiences over the course of the year to deepen their and my understandings of the learning experiences of the participants in the study.

How I Came to the Topic

A few winters ago, over dinner, a professor whom I hold in the highest esteem gave me a compliment that whispers to me always and acts as a compass. My professor said, "Beth is a student." She said this in response to a question that a senior executive for a company I will refer to as HEPC (Huge Educational Publishing Corporation) posed to me. This executive asked in a very disparaging tone, "Beth, what do you want to do, be an academic?" I was mortified that he would say such a thing in front of my professor, who has devoted her time and mind to academia. But, when my professor jumped in with her compliment, which I received as a precious gift, my heart swelled, my mind awakened, and I was reminded that while my interactions on the HEPC project usually left me feeling cheap and disappointed, my interactions at Teachers College were directed toward what is possible and innovative in education.

I suppose I have been living in a space of possibility and disappointment for several years now. However, rather than this contradiction feeling like an unbearable taffy pull, having witnessed up close how scripted PD experiences were foisted upon teachers—regardless of their professional experience, level of interest, school context, and teacher ownership over the learning experiences—has clarified for me some critical distinctions. I can distinguish between training versus teaching, between one-size-fits-all versus personalized learning, and, perhaps most importantly, between viewing teachers as passive recipients of PD programs they have no input in adopting versus treating them as thinking professionals capable of shaping the future of education. And, because I am after all a student, it is the latter, more generative categories that I was interested in interrogating in my dissertation.

My early professional experience as a beginning high school English teacher informed my epistemological beliefs about the efficacy of learning in relationships, and the importance of beginning teachers having a supportive administration. As the first new hire in approximately 15 years, joining the English department at Lakeside High School in 1997 was daunting, to say the least. I was a brand-new teacher becoming a member of a department comprised of highly intelligent women who represented what Farber (1991) described as women who entered the teaching profession at a time when teaching was considered an esteemed and respectable profession for women who had very few other career choices at that time in our country's history. This group of teachers loved literature, writing, and teaching. Most of all, they loved discussing literature, writing, and teaching with each other. They gently and wisely welcomed me into their teaching community by supporting my growing understanding of the craft, not through mandated, controlled instruction, but rather through what Lave and Wenger (1991) described as a process of legitimate peripheral participation. My status as a newcomer to teaching was viewed as an asset rather than a deficit. My colleagues encouraged the many questions I had about the craft of teaching and learned alongside me as my understandings evolved as a member in their community of practice.

At the time, I was unable to identify the profound learning experiences I had as a beginning teacher as being connected to a particular theory, but I was keenly aware of the support and guidance I received from my colleagues. My department chair, Susan, assigned to me the required four sections of English to teach, but she wisely gave me one preparation. So, over the course of the day, while deepening my understanding of how to engage adolescents in the challenges and delights of British literature, I was simultaneously honing my craft and developing classroom management skills. Members of the English department regularly sat in on each other's classes and then discussed the learning that was taking place. In my third year at Lakeside, the department nominated me to go to Albuquerque, New Mexico to attend the NCTE conference. Again, my colleagues recognized the importance of a beginning teacher gaining access to and becoming an active member within the larger professional community as a critical component of a teacher constructing a professional identity.

My "learning curriculum," to use Lave and Wenger's (1991) term for a "field of learning resources in everyday practice viewed from the perspective of learners" (p. 97), evolved as a member in a situated context whereby I gradually acquired the discourse and practices of a skilled English teacher moving from beginning to continuously growing teacher.

Years later, I moved to Connecticut and took a position at a high school that had a similar demographic and reputation for academic excellence as Lakeside. However, members of the English department were isolated in silos. There was no collaboration among the English teachers, no discussion about the learning that was taking place in classes, no supportive administrators, and no community in which to grow as a professional. Had I been a beginning teacher, it is extremely unlikely that I would have stayed in the school after 1 year, or even in the field, as the culture that pervaded the department was alienating and constraining. The experience of being professionally isolated was unpleasant and detrimental to my own learning and sense of what it meant to be a teacher, and in time I left the school. Experiencing the contrast between the two English departments highlighted the significance of learning in relationships and reinforced for me the importance of supportive colleagues and administrators.

When I began my research study 2 years ago, I intended to focus on the professional learning of beginning high school English teachers and then explore the data through the lens of sociocultural learning theory. However, after the first interview with each of the four participants, I became aware of a theme that resonated among the participants' stories that had to do with the tension between the circulation of power/knowledge as it worked through them and the culture of the school. The teachers in my study told stories of how the PD they experienced served to constrain their understandings, limiting rather than expanding their professional knowledge. For this reason, I believed looking at my data through a Foucauldian theoretical lens was a more appropriate framework to explore regimes of truth in schooling and relations of power as conceived and enacted in the professional learning experiences of four high school teachers. It was through a Foucauldian lens that I interrogated the discourses that organized the teachers' stories.

In the dissertation that follows, Chapter I continues with a statement of the problem, discussion about the Foucauldian theoretical lens I use to examine my topic, an explanation of the study, and a section discussing the rationale and significance of the study. Chapter II includes an exploration of the relevant literatures that are currently in the field on the topic, with an examination of the methodology of the research along with a discussion of gaps that exist. The literature review aims to examine the historical tensions that shape the competing metanarratives which form the discursive field on the topic. Chapter III discusses the relationship between methodology and methods, explicating how and why this is poststructuralist-oriented qualitative research. Issues of representation and reflexivity are also problematized in the chapter. Chapter IV situates the teachers' experiences as represented as interpretations of interpretations in the dominant discursive context of their respective schools. This chapter also addresses my research process and discussion of problematics inherent in the interview process. Chapter V interprets the interview interactions through a Foucauldian framework to interrogate power relations as they produce subjectivities. Finally, Chapter VI offers provocations and suggests considerations for further inquiry.

Statement of the Problem

According to the Guidelines for Teacher Preparation created by the National Council of Teacher of English (NCTE, 2006), "It takes 10 years of support and professional development for teachers to become strong implementation teachers or accomplished professionals" (p. 6). However, many teachers are not receiving high-quality PD experiences and this lack of support is a main contributor to teacher attrition in the United States (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Recent research has documented that teacher attrition is especially high in the first 5 years of entry into the teaching field, with as many as 40%-50% of new public school teachers exiting the profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Further, the data indicated that these numbers are highest in high-poverty, high-minority, urban, and rural public schools, where PD is often a casualty of budget cuts (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Two of the most frequently cited reasons for teacher attrition are a lack of administrative support and professional support (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010). Finally, the statistics cited in Ingersoll and Strong's (2011) study are particularly problematic as first-year teachers now represent the largest group within the occupation. "In short, both the number and instability of beginning teachers have been steadily increasing in recent decades" (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). The above cited research reveals a troubling cycle in education whereby novice teachers are leaving the field within their first 3 to 5 years of teaching, creating large turnover in schools, particularly in high-poverty schools which frequently hire novice teachers (Childress, Doyle, & Thomas, 2009), and leaving students with a steady succession of novice teachers who depart before having the chance to develop teaching expertise.

As previously noted, many studies have demonstrated that a lack of professional and administrative support has led to high teacher attrition and/or novice teachers changing schools in their first few years of teaching. The former creates a teacher shortage, and the latter creates a financial burden on school districts as the hiring and onboarding process are expensive both monetarily and in the form of human capital. Additionally, large turnover creates a culture of instability in schools as a lack of institutional knowledge prevents mentoring systems, which have been shown to support the learning needs of novice teachers (Khasnabis, Reischl, Stull, & Boerst, 2013). Finally, high teacher turnover impacts educational quality (Ingersoll 2001, 2003a, 2003b).

My goal was to delve into the why and how of the professional learning and perceived needs of the teachers in the study. The interview interactions with the four participants in my study cohere with the retention trends established by Ingersoll's (2001, 2003a, 2003b) large-scale studies. Three out of four of the teachers have left and changed schools within 2 or 3 years of teaching. If we leave this fact as another statistic, we are no closer to understanding the complexities that encompass the lives and learning experiences of beginning high school English teachers. Qualitative research can shed light on the nuances and complexities of experiences. It also offers partial, incomplete, and selective understandings of questions. It is important to note that the information shared in this dissertation is not meant to be representative of the field at large or the experiences of all beginning high school teachers. Rather, it offers an in-depth slice into the professional learning needs and experiences of four beginning high school English teachers in New York City.

Significance and Rationale

Exploring high school teachers' experiences about their professional learning helped identify the efficacy of the formal and informal supports teachers receive from their colleagues and school community. I was also interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the degree of ownership beginning teachers have in the professional learning programs they experience. This study asked the question: In what ways do beginning English teachers experience professional learning as an active pursuit of their growth potential, and in what ways do they experience PD as something that is done to them as a form of control? Taking a qualitative approach to research enabled me to examine the dominant and normative discourses surrounding the topic of professional learning. By attending to the participants' experiences through in-depth interviews and reflexive writing, I aimed to explore the discursive field around professional learning in two schools and interrogate its impact on beginning teachers.

The interviews collected also yielded information about where beginning high school English teachers are seeking out some of their learning, and if and in what ways the supports they are seeking out are helping them. Finally, the source of the data came from the teachers themselves. Too frequently, research safely hovers on the periphery of authentic data sources and avoids those centrally involved in education's most pressing issues. For this reason, this study strives to honor the multi-voiced experiences of four beginning high school English teachers. The four teachers explained that engaging in interviews served a reflective function for them and seemed to enable them to gain understanding of their professional learning experiences and needs. The next chapter of my dissertation includes a literature review that addresses relevant research about the topic of professional learning as it impacts beginning English teachers' construction of their subjectivities.

CHAPTER II: WALKING ON A BOG

> We never have firm rock beneath our feet; we are walking on a bog, and we can be certain only that the bog is sufficiently firm to carry us for the time being. Not only is this all the certainty that we can achieve, it is also all the certainty we can rationally wish for since it is precisely the tenuousness of the ground that propels us forward.… Only doubt and uncertainty can provide a motive for seeking new knowledge.
>
> –Skagestad, 1981, p. 18

In my first semester as a doctoral student at Teachers College, Dr. Marjorie Siegel offered the students in her Theory and Inquiry class the suggestive metaphor that being a doctoral student is showing up late to a cocktail party. She explained that the discussions have already started and we need to situate ourselves among those in the conversations that matter most to us. Being Professor Siegel, she couldn't leave it there. She implored us to question what counts as knowledge and truth, and to consider how we might be transgressive as we enter conversations in education by acknowledging and disrupting the act of regulating knowledge. I write this literature review in the spirit of critical inquiry and with her admonition not to "hover over research but to get in there."

This chapter includes a review of the relevant literatures on the topic of the PD experiences and learning needs of novice high school English teachers, with an examination of the methodology of the research along with a discussion of limitations and gaps that exist in the current research. I conducted the literature review by accessing books, articles, websites, and dissertations about PD for beginning high school English teachers in the United States. In gathering my research, the databases I used included JSTOR, EDUCAT, and ERIC. My search terms included: narrative research, professional development, practitioner inquiry, teacher inquiry, professional learning, novice, beginning teachers, qualitative, interpretive. While I did not limit my review to a particular timeframe, as the historical literature is significant to an understanding of the topic, I did strive to include the most recent research about the topic to inform my understanding of how the topic is being addressed in the field today.

Whose Knowledge Is Valued?

My own professional taffy pull, mentioned in Chapter I, is situated in a much larger and long-standing conflict that dates to the 1800s about the much-debated question: What is the purpose of professional learning for teachers? The answer to this question in many ways reveals one's stance regarding the relationship between knowledge and experience and the professional learning of teachers. Deborah Britzman (2003) provided some historical context about learning to teach, as positioned by the work of Edward Thorndike, Franklin Bobbitt, and Joseph Rice:

> Their discourse of science was grounded in the Western Enlightenment, a project that sought to determine unitary laws of nature: one truth, and an objective reliable, and universal foundation of knowledge. The effect of their work has been to shift the center of education from 'the tangible presence of the teacher to the remote knowledge and values incarnate in the curriculum.' In their discourse learning was depicted as the achievement of preordained goals and reduced to a behavioristic vision of stimulus and response; the problem of learning was considered a technical problem of management. (p. 47)

Britzman went on to explain that the assumptions inherent in this discourse leave no room or need for teacher growth as teacher understanding is viewed as a "static product of an assembly-line socialization" (p. 49). This legacy thrives today in the format and values inherent in prevalent PD workshops, despite the fact that many studies reveal that the dominant model of PD in the United States, which is frequently referred to as "drive-by workshops," is ineffective (Beach 2012; Coburn & Stein, 2010; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2011). Edward Joyner (2012) argued that such traditional and dominant PD typically views knowledge as a commodity that is fixed, codified, and deliverable in disjointed workshops. He explained the process whereby "external trainers parachute in to offer their new method for teaching math or reading" (p. 397). Under this model, the trainers disregard the unique school context along with the teachers' expertise, learning needs, and ownership over their own learning.

Joyner (2012) pointed out that a major limitation of this format is that "no time is allotted for reflection or active participation, by the educators or anyone else" (p. 397). A reliance on external trainers offering set PD experiences without teacher input or consideration of teachers' interests, needs, and expertise frames teachers as passive recipients. The message such an offering sends to teachers is that they are not qualified to take an inquiring stance into their teaching challenges to expand their own professional growth (Brause & Mayher, 1991; Taubman, 2009).

The research of Clandinin and Connelly (1985) offered a counternarrative to the dominant approach just discussed. They posited that teachers are theorizing agents who construct knowledge from their "personal practical knowledge as a means to regain a person-centered language and perspective for accounting for school practices" (p. 361). Their research honored the contextual, situated, and fluid nature of learning and provided educators with alternative ways of conceptualizing professional learning.

Research (Alvarado, 2006; Coburn & Stein, 2010; Mayher, 1990; NCTE, 1985, 2006; Richardson, 1996) about learning experiences that are job-embedded and fully integrated into teachers' daily practice has pointed to the importance of continuity, coherence, and situating PD experiences in the lived experiences of the teacher in the classroom. Darling-Hammond (1999) advocated for a cohesive, strategic professional learning strategy for teachers:

> Professional development investments are fairly paltry and most districts' offerings, limited to "hit and run" workshops, do not help teachers learn the sophisticated teaching strategies they need to address very challenging learning goals with very diverse populations of students. Most school districts do not direct their professional development dollars in a coherent way toward sustained, practically useful learning opportunities for teachers. (p. 2)

Challenging the epistemological theory undergirding episodic PD, Britzman (2003) presented a compelling argument about how decontextualized learning experiences are detrimental to a learner's capacity to "bestow experience with meaning, be reflective, and take action" (p. 52)—all qualities necessary to being an active agent in interpreting one's daily life in its situated context. Britzman contended,

> Fragmented experience is the shattering of experience into discrete and arbitrary units that are somehow disassociated from all that made experience in the first place. It is experience that is less than it could be, because fragmented experience cannot be extended or transformed. This form of fragmentation separates knowledge from experience and experience from knower. (p. 52)

Britzman maintained that this fragmentation of knowledge is pervasive in schooling and cautioned that "what becomes fragmented is not just our conceptions of knowledge but our relationships—both possible and given—to it. We lose our ability to theorize about the consequences of social activity and our own power to effect and understand its effects" (p. 52). The fragmentation of experience decenters teachers from their practice, making professional growth impossible.

Additionally, several researchers have indicated that effective teacher learning is continuous (Beach, 2012; Clandinin & Connelly, 1988; Lampert, 1985; Swenson, 2003). Marie Eiter (2014) stated her case forcefully as she pointed to ways that technology can be leveraged to ensure active learning and meaningful participation for learners. She stated, "Learning can no longer be thought of as an episodic event occurring only in the classroom. Today learning is continuous and interactive" (p. 2). She cited the Wharton Business School Executive Programs as an example of how blended learning makes more efficient use of students' time as online learning experiences are integrated before, during, and following face-to-face workshops. Similarly, in an effort to provide continuous learning and to flexibly accommodate busy schedules, the Harvard Leadership Development Program uses simulations to extend and reinforce learning that takes place in face-to-face workshops. Researchers (Beach, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Johnson, 2004) have cited the design flaw of dominant approaches to PD, which are based on philosophical beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how people learn as treating learning as a one-size-fits-all, episodic event that ignores the question of what expertise teachers already have. The dominant PD approach ignores the question of what expertise a teacher already has and wrongly assumes that if teachers are not doing something in their classrooms, it is because they do not have the expertise. Typically, experts are then called in to lead a workshop to get teachers the necessary expertise, which can possibly squander teachers' time by teaching them information they may already know.

The National Institute for Research (AIR) (2000) conducted a 3-year longitudinal study inquiring about whether PD changes teaching practice. The AIR findings demonstrated "that on average, teachers do not experience high-quality professional development. Having a coherent, long-term plan would enable districts and schools to provide both the depth of coverage of specific content and teaching strategies that teachers should learn over time" (p. 15). The results of the AIR study cohered with Schoenfeld's (2011) research findings regarding the need for teachers to have continuous and varied PD throughout their careers to support their ever-changing professional knowledge base. As Schoenfeld theorized, teachers iteratively traverse three planes of teacher activity throughout their careers. These planes include orchestrating classroom activities, overcoming the limitations of available curricular and the values inherent within them, and diagnosing student understanding. All three goals are always present, but what the teacher is paying attention to shifts as their knowledge grows. In addition to insightful discussion about how teachers use in-the-moment problem solving to help students learn, Schoenfeld offered a situated approach to learning that can inform our understanding of what causes problems in the design of many PD approaches and open the way for discussion about PD practices that offer the promise of reflective, ongoing, collaborative work among teachers. The design principle of this model is built on the belief that teachers can always learn and improve their practice, regardless of their level of experience. Schoenfeld's theory also illustrated the flaw of many current PD models that offer "'one-shot workshops professional development days with little direct connection to classrooms, coaching support, or follow-up" (Beach, 2012, p. 256).

Researchers have also insisted that PD support needs to be available at the point of need. Swenson (2003) drew from her experience and research on The Write for Your Life program to argue that "in order to achieve the type of school reform we purport to desire, professional development needs to be available *at the point of need*—whether the need occurs during the school day or on a weekend night, in the school setting or elsewhere" (p. 267). By approaching PD with the understanding that teachers are active agents of their own learning, schools can break out of what Schmoker (2004) termed the *culture of dependency*: people waiting for the right research or workshop to come along in order to solve problems. Many schools already have the expertise they need to improve and teachers have the ability to assess what works in their classrooms through ongoing teacher reflection, collaboration, and research to determine the kinds of programs and policies that will fit specific contexts (Schmertzing, 2007; Smith, 2004).

In the following section, I start by looking back at the traditional education power hierarchy to frame how and why PD models that were rooted in the beliefs of social efficiency educators have held dominance over more egalitarian approaches. This history is important to my study as the theorists whose work comprised my theoretical framework offer an epistemological perspective that runs counter to the dominant view. Without a counternarrative, the creation of truth and the establishment of power will remain solely in the hands of the dominant group. Whether the means of marginalization is PD, policy, or politics, the necessary work toward social, economic, and educational equity is to challenge the dominant narrative (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006/2009).

A Brief Glance Backwards

At this point, it may be important to look backwards in order to understand some important historic tensions regarding PD before venturing forward to trouble current PD practices. I briefly discuss the philosophical conflict between John Dewey's beliefs about the purpose of schooling and those held by social efficiency educators. Dewey did not recognize a distinction between academic learning and practical skills related to jobs, whereas the social efficiency educators saw schooling as a sorting ground where children could be taught the practical skills necessary for future jobs. While Dewey held a highly collaborative and holistic conception of education, the social efficiency educators held hierarchal and specialized beliefs. As Ellen Condliffe Lagemann (2000) stated, Dewey was displaced by educators who were "expecting schools to prepare students for the world as it was rather than, as was the case with Dewey, for the world as it ought to be" (p. 67). While Dewey viewed the economically and socially stratified Chicago of the 1890s as an opportunity for social change and the distribution of power among classes, the social efficiency educators viewed the increasingly industrial early 20th century as an opportunity for social sorting and the amassing of power among the elite. Ours is a "society that is structured to produce inequality" (Siegel & Fernandez, 2000, p. .70) and schooling is the primary institution responsible for perpetuating class and economic inequities.

Dewey believed that an interdisciplinary education would create civic-minded citizens who would lead the charge for social progress. He sought to distribute power among teachers, students, parents, scholars, and community members. Dewey tried to narrow the divide between schools and other social institutions by connecting subjects holistically. He created a naturalistic setting whereby everyone could explore the links between scientific and social innovations to effect purposeful change. Dewey also ran counter to the mainstream in his anti-hierarchal desire to empower teachers. He encouraged teachers to become deeply reflective of their practice and knowledgeable researchers. His work liberated teachers from the bureaucratic shackles that prevent scholarship (Kliebard, 2004, p. 74).

Dewey argued for the "adoption of intellectual initiative, discussion, and decision throughout the entire school corps" (p. 50). He enlarged the scope of teaching to include intellectual cooperation based on freedom of thought and action. This conception of teachers as practitioner-researchers and active, expert decision makers in the school community places the teacher in the center of education. A teacher's ongoing reflections of her teaching experiences and her changing identities as teacher lead to knowledge that is not fixed, certain or absolute. This stance honors the teacher as change agent and learner.

While Dewey's vision of life and education was certainly more Democratic than that of the social efficiency educators who followed him, Dewey was still operating from a position of power and privilege. His lab school at the University of Chicago was insulated from budgetary restrictions that cripple public schools. Further, he hand-picked his "superb corps of teachers" (Kliebard, 2004, p. 74) and the student body was largely comprised of the children of University of Chicago faculty members. Perhaps these factors contribute to the fact that Dewey's vision does not easily translate to mass schooling, but more likely it is because the lab school was built on the deeply Democratic belief that social change is not only possible but necessary. Dewey was vehemently opposed to standardizing education and he refused to adapt his ideals to the machine that became known as social efficiency education.

By exploiting heightened anxiety over increased population growth and industrialization in America, the social efficiency educators positioned themselves to take over the organization of schools. In a time of rapid, chaotic change, these educators promised order and efficiency in our school systems. By modeling the factories of the day, schools would eliminate waste in education. These educators advocated a top-down hierarchal structure for schools. This took the form of an assembly line. Knowledge was generated by White, male scholars who disseminated information to White, male administrators, who then mandated this information to female teachers, who obediently taught. In the factory model, beleaguered and disempowered teachers were just as circumscribed as the students.

Social efficiency educators held and perpetuated the belief that there was a schism between academic learning and job skills. Children would only be taught what would be useful for their predicted role in society. What that future job would be was determined by the probability of what could be achieved by an individual’s class and gender. This doctrine of “education according to need” required differentiated courses of study, depending on one’s future role in society. The purpose of schooling was to limit options systematically, ensuring a pool of low-skilled but needed workers. Today’s practice of tracking students according to ability level and hence restricting their potential reach is born from this tradition. Social efficiency educators left a legacy of utilitarianism, standardization, and a value of life as a commodity that is as pervasive and socially divisive in the 21st century as it was in 1900s.

Their opposing views regarding teachers’ roles and the necessary training to fulfill those roles can serve as a vivid illustration of two (there are many more) opposing camps that form competing metanarratives in education at large, and more specifically the teacher's role regarding her own growth and expertise. But mainly we have witnessed the egalitarian approach advocated by Dewey displaced by the hierarchal approach promoted by the social efficiency educators. Ingersoll (2003) conducted a large-scale study investigating the question—who controls the work of teachers? His findings are noteworthy because as he explained:

> They were obtained at a time—the late 1980s to 2000—when one would expect teacher control to have been at a relatively high level. Education reform runs in cycles, and it was during this period that proposals and initiatives for teacher empowerment, school decentralization, and school-based management seemed to be at a peak. In other words, even at their highest levels, the power and influence of teachers has been very low. (p. 221)

The implications of Ingersoll's findings on my research are important since during the time in which he obtained his research and now, we have witnessed the pendulum swing further away from teacher control over their professional learning. Today's dominant view of PD and expertise requires measuring teacher effectiveness by students' performance on standardized, high-stakes tests. PD takes the form of stimulus-response: if teachers learn how to teach to the test, then students will earn higher test scores (Taubman, 2014).

In the 1900s, as now, the social efficiency educators were intent on creating a huge divide between the expert researcher in the laboratory conducting "scientific" experiments and the teacher in the classroom whose individual experiences were not valued and heard. This division increased the status and power of researchers since they were perceived as the seekers of knowledge and truth, and correspondingly decreased the ability of teachers to participate in inquiry-based experiments in their own classrooms since they were perceived as unqualified for work that extended beyond transmitting information (Lagemann, 2000). Moreover, since the social efficiency educators' legacy has prevailed in the United States, it is experimental evidence-based research, not teacher inquiry, which is generally equated with expertise and authority, and informs policies, initiatives, educational reform, and teachers' professionalism.

Teacher Inquiry

One goal of teacher inquiry is to shift the traditional education power hierarchy by having teachers generate knowledge by "looking from the inside out" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Teachers move from the margins to the center as they produce knowledge and consequently gain power. While highly individualized, telling one's story is situated in a social context. The work of posing a counternarrative requires a heightened, not deadened, awareness of the self and one's role in a particular social context. Vinz (1995) along with four first-year teachers conducted a study to explore their interpretations of the daily concerns they had as beginning teachers. The study revealed that "as teachers situate their inquiries in the settings in which they work, they examine teaching in its contextual fullness" (p. 159). The four teachers in my dissertation study shared a similar experience to those teacher inquirers in Vinz's study, *Opening Moves*, in that their concerns were embedded in the larger discourses shaping power and authority in schools. Similarly, they also experienced insecurity as a result of being alienated from the mandates and practices that govern teachers in their schools.

In many ways, the history of teacher inquiry is the history of unconventional individuals challenging the dominant group. When the balance of power tilts too far in the direction of an almost exclusive reliance on standardization and measurement for its continuance, there are those researchers who call for a redistribution of power (Christianakis, 2008). This "democratic impulse" can be traced back to the 1900s. Dewey's highly collaborative and holistic conception of education challenged the hierarchal and specialized beliefs held by the social efficiency educators (Lagemann, 2000). During the McCarthy era, a time when "the separation of the practitioner from the expert" reached new heights (Noffke, 1997, p. 310), researchers Lewin and Cory advanced a localized, socially integrated, and collaborative model of curriculum development. Since this time, many prominent researchers (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Noffke, 1997) have advocated for a knowledge base that privileges teacher inquiry.

Teacher research breaks methodologically and epistemologically with traditional forms of research. Teacher research rejects a positivistic view of knowledge which holds that research is only valid and credible if it seeks a truth that is objective and value-free, observable, and replicable (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003). Conversely, teacher research values multiple truths that are situated, contextualized, and fluid. It is inquiry that is interpretive and value-laden because knowledge is socially constructed. Positivistic approaches aim to understand phenomena for the purpose of prediction and control; the aim of teacher research is to broaden the sources of inquiry to shift control. It investigates from an emic perspective to achieve a more democratic generation of knowledge. Cochran-Smith and Donnell (2006/2009) argued the following:

> Boundaries between teaching and inquiry must blur so that practitioners have opportunities to construct their own questions, interrogate their own assumptions and biographies, gather data of many sorts, develop courses of action that are valid in local communities, and continuously reevaluate whether a particular solution or interpretation is working and find another if it is not. (p. 510)

There is no one, standard methodology that teacher researchers employ in their inquiry. Rather, they select the methodology that is most consistent with their epistemology and will most effectively answer their research questions.

The Value and Import of Teacher Inquiry

The standardization of education and increased reliance on high-stakes testing as required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top are diminishing the power teachers hold while widening existing social and economic inequities (Taubman, 2009). PD mandates connected to reform efforts such as the 2001 NCLB Act are designed and mandated largely by politicians and policymakers, with little consideration for the teachers accountable for implementing ineffective programs and the students deprived of access to the resources which would enable them to meet the standards. Ingersoll (2003) pointed out that “contrary to some critics, a close look at the job of teaching reveals that teachers are pushed to accept a remarkable degree of personal accountability, in the face of a remarkable lack of accountability on the part of the schools that employ them” (p. 13). The trend of testing and accountability as measures of student success subvert a truly democratic notion of schooling. Teachers’ voices are marginalized in the debates about education reform. Increasingly, policymakers and government agencies look to “true experiments” for some kind of silver-bullet solution that will work in all settings (Schmertzing, 2007; Smith 2004). Pinar (2005) explained in the preface to *Sounds of Silence Breaking* that “teachers *and* students have been forced into positions estranged from their lived experiences of intellectual work” (p. xxiii). Teachers do have the ability to assess what works in their classrooms and the rich description of teacher research is essential to determine the kinds of programs and policies that will fit specific contexts (Schmertzing, 2007; Smith, 2004). The relationship between knowledge and power are at the core of teacher research and entails a value shift in terms of what is being researched and to what end (Brause & Mayher, 1991).

Engaging in research not only provides teachers with a mechanism to share their insights, but it also increases their awareness and knowledge about broader educational and political concerns. Teachers should be trained to be “expert consumers and implementers of educational research” (Schmertzing, 2007, p. 1). Districts and school boards are increasingly adopting all-inclusive and heavily scripted programs with little or no input from teachers. Teachers are not included in the selection of these programs but are accountable for implementation. Yet, teacher support and involvement are essential for school reform efforts to be effective (Smith, 2004). NCLB and Race to the Top mandate that assessments must be based on scientifically based research. In order to become part of the policy discussion and offer alternative research methods, teachers need to become fluent in the language and methods of research and know how to conduct research and disseminate their findings (Schmertzing, 2007).

Many schools already have the expertise they need to improve, and by fostering the practice of reflecting-in-action about one’s teaching practice, teachers can deepen their understanding of the beliefs that drive their practice. Teachers working together can have dramatic and rapid impact on student achievement (Schmoker, 2004). Further, such collaboration reduces professional isolation as teachers become part of the larger professional community (Brause & Mayher, 1991; Vinz, 1995).

Research (Supovitz & Christman, 2005) has advocated for teachers constructing meaning out of their everyday classroom concerns to better inform practice and student learning. To do this successfully, teachers need to have a say in what is studied—and how to review, plan, and assess instruction. Communities also need protected meeting times so that they can contribute their perspectives and voices to the process of inquiry.

Teacher research often takes place in the context of Professional Learning Communities (PLC). PLCs that promote teacher reflection and practitioner inquiry have a “better chance at promoting competence” (Schmoker, 2004, p. 85) than many other tried and failed initiatives. Clarity is a necessary precursor to competence: teachers must be clear about the fundamental commitments and goals of the learning community. The learning community is not simply a place to meet and share; it must be a forum for improving teacher practice and student achievement (Schmoker, 2004). I cannot stress the importance of teachers having ownership over the PLCs’ direction and content. In Chapters IV and V, I discuss PLCs that were mandated to two of the participants in my study and the impact this had on their learning.

Emerling (2010) tracked four teachers as they conducted teacher research. He studied this inquiry group to determine if their research improved the effectiveness of their teaching practice. He found that with support from colleagues and the assistance of trained teachers, there was demonstrative improvement in the quality of student work. Emerling’s study adds to the growing body of research that substantiates the value of teachers working collaboratively to improve their practice and improve student achievement. The positionality of teachers in relation to research transforms the hierarchal power relationship in schools, thus challenging the status quo. Teacher collaboration and inquiry can help teachers confront their assumptions and unwitting participation in perpetuating problems (Friedrich & McKinney, 2010).

Hopper and Sanford (2004) highlighted the power of self-reflection in PD. They are both professors who undertook a 3-year collaborative teacher research project involving a kindergarten class. They explored an integrated teacher education course offered at their university. They posited that “through inquiry, teachers across their professional careers make problematic their own knowledge and practice as well as the knowledge and practice of others”

(p. 58). The integrated teacher education course allowed students to work collaboratively with the teachers to build their professional identity as well as their practice. Over the course of the study, the data demonstrated growth not only in the student-teachers but also among the mentor-teachers. While they were initially skeptical of the course's efficacy, the mentor-teachers re-evaluated their assumptions and ideas about teaching. This teacher research established a relationship among the three actors that was beneficial for professional development.

The research I reviewed supported the contention that the current reform movement perpetuates the hierarchal structure in place within educational systems (Christianakis, 2010; Schmertzing, 2007; Taubman, 2009; Tiesco, 2004). Reform efforts tend to be top-down from outsiders who exclude teachers from the decision-making process. Teachers are further marginalized and scapegoated as they are held accountable for programs they are forced to implement. Christianakis (2010) argued the following:

> Never before has it been so important for teachers and teacher educators to collaborate with one another to produce studies that expand educational research beyond the narrow, randomized controlled trials that are being trumpeted by politicians and policymakers, despite the fact that classrooms are complex social settings and not laboratories. (p. 111)

Policies and mandates are translated into action by teachers. Through their daily interaction with students, teachers see and experience the direct impacts of these policies inside their classroom. Thus, they are ideally situated not only to examine their pedagogy critically but also to better inform policy decisions. Schmertzing (2007) contended that "practitioner research is an essential component of school reform" (p. 1). Therefore, teachers need to learn the language and strategies of research in order to leverage the expert knowledge they possess, so they can influence policy decisions and increase their level of professionalism. By undertaking teacher research with the four participants in my study, I hope to contribute to the field of qualitative research by exploring the dominant discourses and power relations as they construct the four teachers' subjectivities.

Collaboration: The "Hey Threshold"

Many researchers (Daro, 2014; DeWitt, Babinski, Jones, 2003; Mayher, 1990; McDonald, 2012) have demonstrated that collaboration among professionals can reduce professional isolation and improve teachers' understanding of teaching and learning, leading to gains in student academic achievement. Darling-Hammond (2013) cited the Teacher's Network in Singapore as an exemplar of collaborative work among educators to support new teachers. She stated, "The Teacher's Network in Singapore serves as a catalyst for teacher-initiated development through sharing, collaboration, and reflection. The Network includes learning circles, teacher-led workshops, and conferences, as well as a website and publications series for sharing knowledge" (p. 113). Darling-Hammond criticized the inadequate amount of time U.S. teachers have to collaborate with fellow teachers. She stated:

> U.S. teachers have little or no time to work with colleagues during the school day. They typically receive only about 3 to 5 hours weekly in which to plan by themselves, and they get a few "hit and run" workshops after school with little opportunity to share knowledge or improve their practice. (p. 110)

The implications of this PD approach for a beginning teacher are a solitary sink-or-swim learning experience. According to the research cited above, it is unusual for a novice teacher to be initiated into a generative learning community whereby PD consists of reflecting on practice and producing knowledge with colleagues. This latter approach fosters beginning teachers' capacity to become active agents of their own learning within a dynamic professional community.

Researchers (Baxter, 2010; NCTE, 1985; Taubman, 2014) have posited that effective PD involves teachers working with each other to discuss curricular options and student work. These researchers advocate for a different approach than the dominant "drive-by," one-size-fits-all model discussed previously. They advocate for PD experiences that provide a combination of supports to enhance beginning teachers' knowledge and skills during those early, challenging years in the classroom.

Tiesco (2004) investigated the impact of an ongoing, external coach on the learning experiences of teachers. His was a collaborative effort between the author as a technical coach and elementary school teachers. Technical coaching, according to Joyce and Showers (as cited in Tiesco, 2004), is "coaching that occurs with the assistance of a university representative, usually from a school of education, who is fluent in the curricular or instructional innovation they seek to implement" (p. 58). The author addressed the tensions that occur when teachers are expected to provide quality education and the demands that are placed on them through standardized testing and assessment of their students. Through continuous discussion among the elementary school faculty, the teachers were able to reflect on and modify teaching practices. Through technical and peer coaching, teachers, students, and the principal saw changes in how teachers differentiated and enhanced their lesson content to meet the unique needs of their students. As noted earlier by Schmoker (2004) regarding the possibility of expanding professional learning in teachers, teacher research can allow teachers to develop their professional skills through collaboration and self-reflection. Likewise, Tiesco (2004) urged schools and school districts to invest in PD that incorporates coaching strategies. In Tiesco's study, a space emerged in which practitioners could explore alternative modes of teaching practices.

The four teachers in my study worked with coaches, and I was interested in investigating the impact the teacher/coach collaboration had on a teacher's professional learning. The coaches in the two schools were educators external to the school who were hired to support the learning of teachers. I was also curious about the importance of the teacher/coach relationship within the same school. How did the teacher's and coach's unique beliefs and values about the purpose of teaching and what it means to be a teacher impact the learning that took place? In a talk at Teachers College's A& H Distinguished Speaker Series, educational philosopher David Hansen (2019) discussed the call to teach as being an ethical endeavor as well as interrogating the "Why" of teaching. I was curious to learn how the larger philosophical questions teachers have about responsibilities, mandates, and fulfillments influenced their coaching relationships.

Substantial research supports the belief that learning in relationships as part of a social, cultural process is a valuable way to elevate the profession of education. Mayher (1990) explained that a large part of PD happens if teachers are given time and space to work together. Moreover, in an interview with Kallick (2014), she insisted that collaborative work "elevates professional discourse as you think through issues together hearing more perspectives" Daro (2014) explained that PD workshops are weak unless they are connected with a broader collective task. The challenge facing most schools is how to provide opportunities for this kind of generative collaboration among teachers, given their demanding and inflexible teaching schedules. We know that pulling teachers out of class disrupts the continuity of learning for students and teachers. However, online PLCs as described by Beach (2012) can offer flexible alternative approaches to teacher collaboration. "PLCs consist of teachers working collaboratively within a school to support each other through shared planning and curriculum development, accessing resources within and outside the school and providing feedback or coaching for teachers" (p. 256). Daro in an interview (2014) stated that the main use of technology for most people is communication. He explained how schools can leverage technology to address the issue of lack of shared meeting time:

> A social network is a network where people talk to other people by choice and they have thresholds for sharing expertise, asking questions, helping each other in various ways. This threshold for initiating a transaction is low. It doesn't cost me a lot. It's like, "Hey, what do you do when? Hey." It's the "hey" threshold. In other words, I see you

> and just seeing you reminds me I have this problem and you might be able to help. And I say, "Hey," that's a low threshold. And so, you don't have the social network. What do you do with that problem?

The Social Exchange theory offers a more scientific way of explaining what Daro referred to as the "Hey Threshold." It posits that the rewards of a social exchange must outweigh the costs if participants are to stay actively engaged in the relationship. This reward can come in the form of reflection and feedback leading to professional growth. The four teachers in this dissertation also cited learning experiences that were ongoing and collaborative as valuable, but only if authentic and not mandated. Forced collaboration had the perhaps unintended effect of feeling like yet another task that needed to be documented for administrators.

Another point about the learning capabilities of online PLCs was raised by Beach (2012). He claimed that online PLCs will not only improve PD as they offer self-paced, flexible, ongoing, learning opportunities for teachers, but student learning will also improve as teachers "grow their teaching of digital literacies" (p. 256). This is particularly valuable for novice teachers who are learning how to use instructional technology in their classrooms. Researcher Amy Hutchinson (2011) conducted a national survey of literacy teachers' perceptions of PD that increased the integration of technology into literacy instruction. She found that too often PD focuses on how to use a particular technological tool instead of teaching how to integrate a learning-with-technology perspective into classrooms. The teachers in her study called for better PD that provides ongoing support and more time to work collaboratively. The most frequent complaint by teachers was that the actual PD workshops about integrating technology did not provide learn-by-doing experiences and teachers were expected to listen to and absorb massive amounts of information that they could not immediately apply and, in some cases, may not use for months.

Daro (2014) was emphatic about the need for teachers professionally talking about student work. He urged teachers to create online social networks and to gossip about what kids said in class: “This is how my kids look at that problem. Have you ever seen anything like that? Look at this…. I know half a dozen kids who are doing this. This is cool... This is interesting... This is curious… What sense do you make of it?” Daro made it clear that if teachers are talking about kids’ thinking, then when the teachers are in the classroom with the students, they have a heightened interest in students’ thinking because they have a place to go talk about it when something interesting happens. Daro (2014) paraphrasing Psychologist Jean Piaget explained that “the motive for intellectual development is the joy of being the cause.” I imagine that by sharing their classroom occurrences with their colleagues and receiving feedback, teachers will become keenly attuned to ways they are the cause of learning experiences and will feel the joy that Piaget described so poetically. Incidentally, the same holds true for students as they increasingly become agents of their own learning.

An important benefit of using of such tools is the opportunity for teachers to work together collaboratively on new content or research, specific topics within their discipline, and issues relating to pedagogy in real time, with constant feedback and reinforcement from members of the PLC who include other novice teachers as well as more experienced professionals. This is a significantly different approach than the dominant model of PD which treats professional learning as an episodic event, bringing masses of people together in a classroom at a set time to receive instruction and information that many people will not need to use for days, weeks, months, or at all. Digital PLCs allow teachers to expand a teacher’s circumference of expertise to include professionals beyond their home schools to learn about their content areas as part of their professional and social life. One of the possibilities that technology affords us is the ability to connect educators internationally in learning networks—expanding a teacher's world rather than circumscribing it. Another possible benefit of more globalized, elastic professional learning experiences is expanding the discursive fields in which teachers are situated to offer alternatives to the dominant school discourses in their school, state, and country.

Howard Gardner, in his introduction to David Allen's (1998) book *Assessing Student Learning: From Grading to Understanding*, described the characteristics of generative communities of practice:

> These communities encourage their participants to put their own understanding at risk, to construct new practices, to try them out, to receive feedback from friendly critics and critical friends, and to try again. It is intriguing to realize that such work among teachers bears a significant resemblance to the work that teachers are-and will be-asking students to do. (p. ix)

Knowledge about effective teacher collaboration was extended by Randi Engle's (2006) research on *The Middle-School Mathematics through Application Project: Supporting Productive Collaborations During Two Different Phases of Curriculum Design*. Engle outlined four principles that support productive collaborations: problematizing together, respecting everyone's authority, engendering a dynamic internal accountability to others and to shared norms and goals, and having access to sufficient resources to make all of the above possible.

Several studies (Baxter, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1997, 2013; NCTE, 1985) posited that effective PD involves teachers working with each other along with experts to look at coherent curriculum and student work. Brown, Smith, and Stein's (1995) research of the QUASAR study demonstrated that students achieved at higher levels when their teachers had greater opportunities to study a coherent curriculum that focused on enhancing teachers' understanding of mathematics teaching strategies *and* on their implementation of new approaches with systematic reflection on instructional outcomes.

Several researchers (Coburn & Stein, 2010; McDonald, 2013) have insisted that teachers need to have opportunities to discuss students' ways of thinking with each other in order to make sense of their experiences. As discussed earlier, such forums or PLCs create opportunities for teachers to pose problems of practice to each other and benefit from the larger expertise of the profession. The National Writing Project fosters teacher demonstrations to communicate what works well and, most importantly, why a particular practice is successful. Many of these demonstrations include looking at student work together. David Allen (1998) noted "that in looking at students' work samples, teachers are really looking—as in double exposure—at their own work" (p. 3). In a 2014 interview, Sally Hampton recounted the most powerful PD experience she witnessed as one where teachers were looking at student work together. The intent of the PD was to score portfolios, but instead teachers became engaged in the student work and professional discussions took off with teachers asking each other questions such as "How did you teach your kids to do that?" The portfolios never got scored, but what came out of the PD experience went far beyond scoring and, according to the teachers, was the "most useful thing in the world." Hampton emphasized that teachers need to see and share students' writing that can be considered along-the-way-writing. She acknowledged the importance of sharing student work that meets standards, but found that discussions about along-the-way writing were particularly generative. She also advocated for teachers when examining student work to look at what is there instead of thinking about what kids did wrong.

Writing to Learn

Collaboration and written reflection of one's practice, successes, and dilemmas can cultivate ways of knowing that may otherwise go unexplored. E. A. St. Pierre (2015) explained that for her, writing is a form of inquiry. She stated, "It's when I actually have to put one word after another and one sentence after another that I understand what I don't know—that I don't know enough to write the next sentence" (p. 21). Writing to learn is grounded in the belief that through the process of writing, reflective thought becomes possible. Ann Berthoff (1981) changed composition theory by popularizing the question: How do I know what I mean until I hear what I say? She saw writing as a process of meaning making and deepening thought. These scholars have shaped our understanding of the composing process, elevating it to a philosophical level as writing makes the expansion of consciousness possible.

These lines of inquiry share the belief that writing for a specific audience, with abundant frequency, and a reflexive stance fosters thinking clearly, precisely, and deeply. These theorists would argue that writing allows for, indeed, enables thought itself. Swenson (2003) extolled the process of working through understandings by engaging in reflecting and writing. In discussing the Write for Your Life Project, she explained:

> On many occasions, WFYL teachers struggled to give voice to what were initially only inchoate understandings of what was transpiring in their classrooms, but in the process of writing; of reading and reflecting on their writing and of reading, reflecting, and responding to the responses of their colleagues, they had opportunities to revise their thinking based on those various readings and reflections and to begin the process of articulating for themselves and others concepts and understandings that might have remained uncomposed. (p. 276)

For a beginning teacher, such PD opportunities can foster intellectual and professional growth. Further, dialogue and reflexive writing enable an individual to constitute their sense of "self" as professionals. In a context where beginners are encouraged to become agents of their own learning, they can continually be reflexive about the dominant school discourses in which they are situated.

Ongoing Learning Experiences

The large-scale studies conducted by Coburn and Stein (2010) suggested that in order for PD to be effective, teachers need time to show what they are doing, not just say what they are doing with actual students in real classrooms. In separate interviews in 2014, educators Richard Beach and Phil Daro explained how the affordances of e-learning can heighten the possibility of teachers showing and sharing their work with colleagues. Beach discussed how teachers can videotape their class, annotate the video with comments and questions, and share the video with a trusted coach/colleague who can provide feedback by further annotating the video. This approach also enables teachers to identify areas of PD that they (not others) identify as needs. Throughout the school year, Kate, a teacher in my study, asked for this type of professional learning.

Daro explained that videotaping moments in the classroom is an important way to follow through on PD workshops. He described the process as a cycle whereby teachers follow through what happens in a workshop in the classroom and then what happens in the classroom back to the next workshop. As Daro explained, “A lot of the most important things are bringing what’s going on in the classroom back in the PD process.” Daro described a situation in a school where students videotaped their interactions with other students. The students were charged with the task of explaining their way of thinking about a math problem. The video enabled teachers and students to see exactly how students grappled with trying to make sense of each other’s way of thinking.

> …So, the videotape is of the smart kid being wrong and trying to intellectually bully the other kid, but the other kid—since the right answer made so much sense to him-explained

> his answer. Even though he was emotionally prepared to be bullied, the fact that the answer made sense, he didn't give up. And then you watch the smart kid finally realize that he was wrong and then go through this elaborate rationalization like, "Maybe we're both right." And the other kid said, "Well, I think you're wrong for the same reason I think I'm right.

The teachers who discussed this video remarked that "kids were talking so intelligently in ways they don't normally do." The power of seeing students' interactions up close sheds light on how explaining ways of thinking can strengthen the learning for all types of students. Further, when teachers talked about what they saw, they became better informed about how to support their students. This approach has the potential to be ongoing and is socially situated in the context of a teacher's learning environment. Additionally, sharing classroom videos can be done remotely to create asynchronous interactions and that possibility would allow the frequency of interaction to be much greater.

Finally, cognitive psychologist and learning theorist Roger Schank (1997) criticized most PD, both in and out of the school setting, as being locked into fixed schedules that do not honor just-in-time learning. He pointed out that the dominant model of PD, which brings masses of people together in a classroom at a set time to receive instruction, does not work for the reason that many people will not need to use the information for days, weeks, or months. Schank advocated for a learning approach that is not premised on simply teaching something clearly and testing it. Rather, he suggested that creative, effective training needs to honor how the mind works. We remember and learn from what impacts us, largely through stories, particularly stories that are bewildering and disrupt one's expectations. If teachers engage in the process of documenting and discussing what and how students are learning, the stories of the classroom, this can foster PD experiences that are practical and socially situated and leverage the collective expertise of all participants.

In order to retain good teachers and develop master teachers and educational leaders, it is essential to foster an active belonging within a professional community. The Guidelines for Teacher Preparation created by the NCTE (2006) cited the following as one of the four dispositions effective English teachers need to develop:

> A commitment to ongoing, lifelong learning and continuous reflection in order to maintain professional growth in the teaching of the English language arts, leading to both participation in and identification with a variety of professional communities and a willingness to take an informed stand on issues of professional importance, as well as a commitment to standards of ethics within the profession. (p. 14)

The Guidelines urge novice teachers to become active members of the professional community at the local, state, and national level for the betterment of their own practice and the field of education at large. Lieberman and Wood (2003), in discussing lessons to be learned from the National Writing Project, insightfully stated, “If professional development is to become a part of a teacher’s life, it must combine not just new knowledge but a way of building new relationships within a professional community. One feeds the other, and both help teachers think differently about their own learning as well as their identity as teachers” (p. 51).

Summary of Literature Review

The intention of this literature review was to situate my research within current scholarship about the professional learning of beginning teachers. In this chapter, I attempted to weave together the research issues and problems that exist surrounding the topic. As the research in this chapter pointed out, episodic and fragmented learning experiences lack educative value as a learner cannot apply new learning within his own repertoire of experiences. Disconnected learning not only hinders professional growth, but it also stunts an individual’s ability to learn how to construct meaning out of his or her experiences and disconnects a practitioner with his or her practice. The competing metanarratives surrounding the topic are framed by opposing research methodologies with the positivist worship of scientism on one end and teacher inquiry examining discursive practices on the other.

The theoretical framings that comprised my research, along with current scholarship cited throughout this chapter, point to professional learning that is based in a teacher's particular context and driven by a teacher's participation in the formation of his or her own learning. The implications of this for beginning teachers' learning experiences suggest that the dominant, "drive-by workshops" that are usually mandated from administrators and the state will hinder, not expand, a new teacher's ability to constitute teaching subjectivities that grow beyond normative, dominant school discourses. Through in-depth interviews, new insights may be gleaned that can inform alternative approaches to professional learning that address beginning teachers' perceived learning needs. My research aimed to move the needle away from positivist research by situating inquiry in the contextual, fluid, interviews of the teachers in the study.

The relevant literatures discussed in this section spoke to the importance of learning in and through relationships. Additionally, the research discussed in this chapter pointed to the need for shared meeting time among teachers that affords them time and space to discuss their practice, look at student work, and engage in the dialectical process of learning to further their professional growth.

Finally, in the last 10 years, there has been a gap in the research about the learning needs of high school English teachers. I theorize that this gap exists in part because the Common Core State Standards, high-stakes testing, and teacher evaluations/accountability have captured the attention of researchers, policymakers, and the media in the past decade. It is important to note that this is not the case for the STEM content areas, and this may signal funding opportunities that are available to STEM researchers that are not available to those researchers investigating the content area of English. I hope that this study contributes to the body of knowledge that exists in the field of education and generates interest in supporting the professional learning needs of beginning English teachers. I contend that in-depth interviews will present the complexities of their professional learning experiences and needs to gain understanding into the ways dominant discourses in PD impact the openings and constraints to beginning teachers' growth.

In the next chapter, I discuss how reflexivity informed my mediation of the research study. I explore my ontological and epistemological stance as it informed my methodology and its relationship to my methods. Finally, I interrogate the use of interviews as a research method, and walk the reader through the research design, analysis, and issues of representation and interpretation.

CHAPTER III: THE SPACE IN BETWEEN

Rationalists, wearing square hats,
Think, in square rooms,
Looking at the floor,
Looking at the ceilings.
They confide themselves
To right-angled triangles.
If they tried rhomboids,
Cones, waving lines, ellipses—
As for example, the ellipse of the half-
  moon—
Rationalists would wear sombreros.
  -Wallace Stevens, “Six Significant Landscapes”

Finding My Way as a Researcher

I open my research notebook and the questions on the first page read: How do I mediate myself through memory, unconscious, discourse, social, historical, and cultural contexts? What are the implications of all these factors on the “I” that is a researcher? What biases, assumptions, and expectations do I bring to my study? How do these factors change as the study progresses and how can I own the assumptions that I bring to my study? How can I situate myself with what I believe?

Even when I wrote these questions 2 years ago, I knew there were no simple answers to issues of representation and legitimization. My approach to reflexivity was informed by Pillow’s (2003) uncomfortable reflexivity—“a reflexivity that seeks to know while at the same time situates this knowing as tenuous” (p. 188). My work to interrogate subjectivity and perspectival understandings required an ongoing effort to tease apart and interrogate my positions as I was aware of them in each moment of their constant flux. So, how could I account for multiplicity without making it singular? How could I encounter the unfamiliar without making it familiar? I did not know how hard it would be to resist these impulses when I wrote these questions in my notebook. It took a disciplined thwarting of thinking habits that were trained to (re)solve problems and consider issues within the normative discourse available to me.

I was aware of how embedded I was in my research study in terms of the topic and participants and required a concerted effort to experiment with Pillow's urging to move with the fluidity that accompanies shifting ways of coming to know someone, thing, idea, self, or discourse. This required an insistent and compulsive questioning instead of answering. I knew surfacing and interrogating assumptions were a beginning, but there was never an end or an enough. As Spivak (1988) wrote, "making positions transparent does not make them unproblematic" (p. 6). Throughout my dissertation, I attempted to situate knowing as tenuous and treat interviews as interpretations of interpretations constructed through and by the discourses available to the teachers in the study and me as researcher.

I Am Not an "ist"

I am not a Positivist (Comte & Martineau, 1896) or a Post-Positivist (Kuhn, 1962; Lakatos & Musgrave, 1970) researcher. I disagree with the belief that there is one fixed, knowable reality out there waiting for me to capture or approximate. I am also not a Constructivist (Schon, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978) researcher. I put too much stock in the unconscious to accept that researcher and participants can co-construct understandings and agree on meanings of subjective interactions. My background studying psychology taught me that the unconscious is not to be trifled with, as it is the unknown, unknowable, and uncomfortable that largely construct our identities shaping our always tenuous memories and shifting subjectivities. While I care deeply about issues related to race, gender, and class, I am not a Critical Race (Ladson-Billings, 1995), Feminist (Butler, 1990), or Freire+ist (1968) researcher either. However, for the purpose of my dissertation, I lean on Poststructuralist researchers (Foucault, 1979, 1980; Lather, 2013; Tamboukou, 2013) to theoretically frame my exploration of the dominant discourses of schooling in two NYC high schools and how this may have impact on the four teachers' experiences. I wanted to gain understandings into how power/knowledge relations and dominant school practices shaped the participants' subjectivities as they entered the teaching profession as beginning high school English teachers.

I wondered in what ways the language available to the teachers and to me as researcher enables us to constitute our sense of ourselves and our subjectivities. It is important to note that I am not claiming to be a poststructuralist. My use of theoretical poststructural framings assists me as a researcher as I look at discursive spaces that constitute and produce power relations. A poststructuralist framing enables me to examine the grand narratives that often become the dominant school discourse that normalizes policy, practice, and behavior, all of which shape how a teacher constitutes his or her sense of "selves."

How to Introduce That Which Keeps Moving, Not an "ism"?

In this chapter, I discuss how I am situating myself within the broad field of qualitative research. I frame my interview study through a poststructuralist lens, which is tenuous, moving, and fluid. This lens is in sharp contrast to a positivist paradigm, which contends that there exists one knowable truth "out there" distinct from the knower to be captured, studied, and understood. By contrast, poststructuralist researchers contend with understanding how language organizes a way of thinking into a way of acting in the world. The epistemological belief that truths are local, temporal, and in flux calls for a methodology that examines polyvocal texts with a focus on how power is "exercised' within knowledge creation to explore how subjects get constructed. Accordingly, poststructuralist researchers, with their emphasis on the discursive, grapple with the "crisis of representation" as they hold that language is not transparent and we are not neutral, impartial, and unbiased. In addition to discussing the aforementioned, I examine the complicated relationship between methods and methodology, interrogating interview and poststructural critiques thereof with qualitative research, along with how I interpret my data and how I interpret my own research processes.

I was interested in exploring the professional learning experiences and needs of four beginning teachers entering NYC public schools. I was fascinated by the interstices or the space in between in the teachers' discourse. The four teachers in the study were new to the profession and to their respective school cultures. They entered their teaching positions with a discourse of schooling that was formed by their own school experiences and representations of teaching that pervade pop culture and the media. The dominant discourses circulating in their schools and the entire school community were new to them, yet they were deeply impacted by the discursive field in which they were situated. They were in the space in between. They were still new enough to the profession and its dominant discourses to hold ideals and have discourse for openings and possibilities of learning, but they were now in a school that had an established dominant discourse and regimes of truth that would shape how they were able to constitute their sense of "self." Through interview interactions, I examined how dominant discourses of schooling shape, expand, and constrain what is say-able, do-able, and think-able for beginning teachers and for myself as researcher. For example, Richard, one of the teachers in the study, a self-proclaimed rebel, was locked into the use of the word "effective." His interviews were riddled with the repetition of "effective." Things and people were categorized by the binary of effective or ineffective, a way of thinking popularized by the Danielson Framework used to evaluate teacher "effectiveness." However, Richard's use of effective also sheds light on how beginning teachers shape and are shaped by dominant discourses available to frame interpretations. As discussed in Chapter I, the Danielson Framework is the evaluation tool currently used in NYC schools to evaluate the “effectiveness” on a continuum of ineffective “1” to “4” highly effective. These teacher evaluations take place through the process of being observed by an administrator in the school.

Foucault’s notion of discourse, as ways systems of linguistic representations organize social institutions and produce subjects in and within power relations, emphasizes how power is exercised within knowledge creations to produce subjects. To think in this way is to look at the social, cultural, historical conditions that produce dominant discourses, which in turn produces the dominant ways of thinking through language, which form into regimes of truth that constitute the norms that we take as givens. For this research study, I wanted to associate myself with thinkers who believed that language is deeply constitutive of “reality” (Foucault, 1977; Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2013; St. Pierre, 1993) to interrogate how beginning teachers create their subjectivities through the discourses available to them as well as to historicize how some of the current dominant school discourses appear at this historic moment. As the interviews with the four teachers illustrates, discourses become ingrained in us and shape our behaviors and thinking in schools. Within a school there is a discourse we adopt, like Richard’s use of “effective.” This discourse starts to shape what we believe and do.

My rendering of interpretations from the interviews give glimpses into how four beginning teachers problematize perceived openings to how they learn, know, and grow within two NYC public high schools. I also include data about the constraints that map the constellation of forces that circumscribe their learning and growth. Engaging with the tenuous and fluid construction of meaning, I considered the participants’ interpretation of their experiences as non-unitary and not fixed to a single subject, but as socially constructed and constructing. This line of thought holds that language is complex and not transparent; therefore, as a researcher, I had to question what discourses were available to the participants as well as to myself to ascribe meaning. I also considered the dominant discourse of schooling at this historic moment. How does the language of accountability and audit culture inform teachers' subjectivities? I was interested in interrogating how the dominant school discourses normalize, regulate, and classify teachers. I was also curious how technologies of power are exercised and circulate within the teachers and discursive field in which they are situated to shape technologies of the self, the ways we self-regulate our own behaviors to shape ways of being and thinking.

How the human is subject and made subject is always shifting, local, and contingent within particular power relations. Tamboukou (2013) applied a Foucauldian read on the topic of being and becoming a woman to interrogate the discursive ways technologies of the self can constitute women's ways of knowing. She analyzed metanarratives and counternarratives that shape dominant ways of thinking and resisting "regimes of truth." Tamboukou (2017) explained that "A key insight of the genealogical approach is that truth cannot be separated from the procedures of its production. Consequently, genealogy is concerned with the processes, procedures and apparatuses, whereby truth and knowledge are produced as power effects" (p. 90). In Chapter V, I re-interpret the transcripts from the interview interactions by treating them through a Foucauldian theoretical reading. In this way, I juxtapose the participants' interpretations with Foucault's ideas about technologies of power and technologies of the self to read more deeply into the construction of beginning teachers' subjectivities.

The ways I am framing my research runs counter to Enlightenment beliefs which treated the individual as a reasoned, fully conscious, unified, stable, presence. From this tradition was born positivism, which Siegel (2011) in a class lecture explained as based on the assumptions that:

> Reality exists "out there" independent of human inquirer, and is based on immutable laws. The world is mechanistic and deterministic. Knowledge of reality can be observed, measured, and summarized in time- and context-independent generalizations, some of which are causal. Logical positivists reduced all theoretical terms of science to operational definitions.

Positivists of the 1900s, Bobbitt's, Charters', Thorndike's legacy is manifested today in NCLB definitions, Race to the Top mandates, and the call for "scientifically based research." This paradigm holds that research is only valid and credible if it seeks a truth that is objective and value-free, observable, and replicable. Accordingly, people are treated as datum. However, the dominant doctrine of Positivism only holds for problems with known solutions and is an inadequate means by which to grapple with uncertain, ambiguous, unpredictable problems—the kind, I would argue, that face most classroom teachers.

Many researchers (Lather, 2014; St. Pierre, 2002; Taubman, 2014) have challenged the positivist approach to research and criticized the fact that government mandates and funding endorse such an approach over qualitative research. Such a valuing of "scientifically based research" over narrative inquiry is evidenced by legislative mandates, the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), and, more recently, Race to the Top (2009) which awards federal funds to grantees who implement "evidence-based strategies" that are "scientifically-based" to effect school reform. Federal endorsement and funding of a positivist methodology in research on education are two of the factors that have marginalized other epistemological perspectives (St. Pierre, 2002). A reliance on problem solving at the exclusion of questioning may compromise a beginning teacher's ability to engage in the intellectual activity of problematizing unknown aspects of teaching and learning. In a stimulus-response paradigm, the knowable is reduced to a cause-and-effect equation at the exclusion of the myriad variety of subjectivities working in and through the power relations of teachers, students, and administrators. Poststructuralist researchers may explore the slippery aspects of language to interrogate how we construct and are constructed by the discursive fields in which we are situated. In this study, I dig into specific contexts to explore the multiplicities of subjectivities that the participants constitute.

Working with the transcripts of interviews and participants' self-reflexive writing, I explored four beginning teachers' professional learning experiences and needs and how they were and were not addressed. During some moments in the interviews, the participants interpreted their experiences as resisting teaching identities that were imposed on them and that they deemed degrading. In these instances, I examined the dominant discourses and specific technologies of power circulating in the power relations in which they were situated. Tamboukou (2017) located her discussion of the narrative modalities of how power operates as productive by explaining, "…power should not be seen in its negative dimension—as a force imposing and sustaining domination—but rather in its Foucauldian reconfiguration as producing truth, knowledge, and ultimately the subject" (p. 90). Similarly, this study explored how power/knowledge relations and the discourses which construct them shaped the participants' subjectivities as they entered into the teaching profession as beginning high school English teachers. The interview interactions were produced through the dominant discourses available to the participants as well as myself.

Research Questions

What are the professional learning experiences and perceived learning needs of beginning high school English teachers and in what ways and through what means are those needs being addressed or not?

Guiding Subquestions

1. What areas of content and processes do teachers in their second-third years of teaching identify as needs?
2. What supports, both formal and informal, do beginning English teachers identify as meaningful? And, what areas of content and processes do beginning English teachers think they are not getting supported in?
3. In what ways do beginning English teachers seek out some of their own professional learning? And what happens when they do?
4. What constraints and openings do beginning English teachers identify as impactful on their learning needs?

I explored these questions through interview interactions that are interpretations on the part of the teachers in the study about their professional learning experiences and perceived learning needs, which were doubly situated by my interpretations as researcher. The insights culled are local, temporal, and in flux.

A word on my use of "experience" in my research questions. The word "experience" as it is used by poststructuralist-oriented qualitative researchers requires some attention. I align with Foucault's thinking that experience needs to be understood as produced by dominant discourses which have social and cultural histories. In my study, the discourses of schooling and teacher learning are investigated. Scott (1991) argued, "It's not individuals who have experiences, but subjects who are constituted through experience" (p. 779). Experience, according to Scott, is already an interpretation and in need of constant reinterpretation. It is through Foucault's and Scott's frame regarding experience as discursive that I examined the dominant school discourses that construct and were constructed by the participants' subjectivities. Scott offered a definition of experience that highlighted its discursive nature:

> It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced. (p. 780)

Scott's definition of experience problematized the subject's agency in the production of discourse in the cultural, social, and historic context in which one is situated. Language orders the subject's world as she or her produces meanings that then often are ascribed to her or his experiences in a particular context. My epistemological stance toward how the participants accounted for their experiences was based on the belief that there is no one truth to be known about a topic; rather, by investigating the histories, constructions, and regulations of discourses**,** we can study language as sites of power relations that produce subjectivities with(in) specific contexts. Several large-scale studies (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010) have investigated PD and the problem of teacher attrition that rely on survey instruments to gather data. These studies gathered large swaths of information about a topic, but did not interrogate how social, cultural, and discursive power relations produce the dominant discourses in education**,** which then often become the normative school language. On the contrary, my study was bound by the subjective interpretations, contexts, and power relations of my research participants—and of myself—as experienced in particular discursive fields. In Chapter IV, I discuss how over the course of the study, I came to realize I did not have the equipage to analyze what I was seeing and hearing from the four teachers, which led me to Foucault's work as a theoretical framing for my research.

Participants

I recruited four individuals who are alumni from the English Education program at a teaching college to participate in this study. I disseminated an invitational letter to participate (see Appendix B) in the research study via email to students who have graduated in the past 3 years. I asked the program coordinator to disseminate the invitational letter via email on my behalf. Additionally, I sent the invitational letter to former students of mine whom I met in my English Methods courses in the fall of 2014 and fall 2015. My rationale for including some of my own former students was to engage in purposeful sampling. Reflexive writing was a source in data collection, and I believed that including participants who enjoyed writing might increase the likelihood of retaining research participants throughout the course of the study and perhaps make the writing less burdensome. I recruited two former students who indicated that for them writing was a conduit to thinking.

The other possible benefit of including former students of mine was that the starting-off point between me (the researcher) and the participants was one of trust and familiarity. Since time is at a premium for novice (and all) teachers, beginning interviews from a place of trust maximized the time focused on content rather than introductions. I sought to recruit participants who had graduated from the program already, so there would not be conflicts of interest between the participants and me. I also wanted to recruit two pairs of teachers from the same schools. I was interested in investigating the effects of power relations on beginning teachers as unique satellites of power relations in a specific context. The participants in the study had all garnered 2 to 3 years of teaching experience. Finally, participants chose or were given pseudonyms to conceal their identity. They were also made aware that they could end their participation at any time during the study.

Kate

Kate was in her early 20s. She was in her second year of teaching at a public school for gifted and talented students in New York City.

Richard

Richard was in his mid-20s. He was in his third year of teaching at a public school for gifted and talented students in New York City.

Evie

Evie was in her mid-20s. She was in her second year of teaching at a Charter school in New York City.

Amy

Amy was in her mid-20. She was in her second year of teaching, but this was her first-year teaching at a Charter school in New York City. Last year, she taught at a small private school.

Kate and Richard's School "Specialty"

Specialty is a K-12 gifted program in New York City. The school is part of the Department of Education (DOE) and is one of five such programs in NYC.

Evie and Amy's School "Charter"

At the time of this study, Charter had been in existence for 8 years and was due for its renewal in 2 years. The school is a small, well-funded Grade 9-12 Charter School in New York City.

Poststructural notions of the subject are that people are a multiplicity of subjectivities with fluid, diverse, changing perspectives. A Foucauldian reading of the interview interactions allowed for examining the production of a teacher's subjectivities as an effect of power/knowledge relations circulating within the school and the larger educational context at this historic moment. As such, my focus was on relations of power to discourse, the role of discourse as the construction of identities and how power is exercised within knowledge creation to produce subjects. My intention was to go deep into how experience is an interpretation in need of further interpretation (Scott, 1991). The teachers' interviews as interpretations of their experiences as beginning teachers shed light on how they construct and were constructed by dominant school discourses.

Methods

This section of Chapter III discusses the methods I used for gathering and analyzing participants' interviews to explore the links among discourse, subjectivity, social organization, power, and knowledge. As Richardson (2000) convincingly argued, "Language does not 'reflect' social reality, but produces meaning, creates social reality…. Language is how social organization and power are defined and contested and the place where our sense of selves, our *subjectivity* is constructed" (p. 928). In Chapter IV, I situate the four teachers within their school context to consider their professional learning experiences and needs against a Foucauldian frame as well as interrogate my research process. I examine the interviews through a Foucauldian reading to study the functions and effects of power/knowledge relations.

Data Collection

Data collection for this qualitative study took place over the course of an academic year and was intended to add to the current research that exists on the topic of beginning high school English teachers' professional learning experiences and needs. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews and participants' reflexive writing. I investigated the experiences of four teachers from two different school sites via Skype interviews or in person. Whether we conducted interviews in person or via Skype was at the discretion of the participants' schedules. For all the participants, there was a combination of in-person and Skype interviews to accommodate the busy live of the teachers in the study. Because the primary method of data collection was one-on-one semi-structured and informal interviews, it was necessary to trouble the interview as a method to frame qualitative research and consider its problematics.

Scheurich (1997) spoke of a "radical, indeterminate ambiguity or openness that lies at the heart of the interview interaction itself, at the lived intersection of language, meaning, and communication" (p. 74). He contended that in the interview interaction, both the interviewer and the interviewee have multiple needs and intentions which may be conscious or unconscious for either party at any given moment. He challenged the positivist view of interviewing as one that "vastly underestimates the complexity, uniqueness, and indeterminateness of one-to-one human interaction" (p. 64). He also critiqued a postpositivist (Mishler, 1986) view of interviewing on a number of points, but the one that spoke to my research was Scheurich's (1997) position that "interviewees are not passive subjects: they are active participants in the interaction" (p. 71). He critiqued the call to empower the interviewee as an oversimplification of the interaction because it suggests a totalization of the power asymmetry, which he claimed is fallacious. Rather, he argued, the interpretations, and the "plethora of baggage" (p. 74) that accompanies them on the part of both the interviewee and interviewer, constitute the complex play of interaction that takes place in an interview. Further, interviews that adopt postmodern sensibilities (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003) focus the process on "language, knowledge, culture, and difference" (p. 3). Gubrium and Holstein argued that interviews as method are about ways of constructing experience. It is important for the interviewer to contextualize the interaction within larger sociocultural relations to avoid undermining the complexity and uniqueness of each interview interaction. Brinkman and Kvale (2015), also operating from a postmodern stance, insisted that the interview itself was the "production site of knowledge and its linguistic interactional aspects, including the differences between oral discourse and written text, and emphasizes the narratives constructed in the interview" (p. 62). Acknowledging that every interview question can be interpreted differently by the interviewer and interviewee is critical to treating the interview as a complex interaction between two people who are jointly engaged in the production of meaning. The interview dialogue invites differing responses to questions, valuing multiple perspectives on a topic.

Interview as a research method has been challenged by some poststructuralist researchers, such as St. Pierre (2009), for its insistence on the truth inherent in the voices of the participants, while positivist researchers have challenged qualitative interviewing for its inability to generalize to other contexts, its inability to produce an unrivaled account of an event, and its inability to warrant scientific claims, to name a few critiques (Shavelson, Philips, Towne, & Feuer, 2003). St. Pierre (2009), arguing from the position of a poststructuralist researcher, problematized interviews for phonocentrism, the "metaphysics of presence" that privileges voice as the truest, most authentic data and/or evidence. She argued that "presence in qualitative research is problematic for those with a poststructuralist bent because voice is part of the humanist discursive and material formation poststructuralism works against" (p. 221). She troubled her analysis by interrogating the notion that critique of a system cannot escape the discursive language used to describe it. However, the answer is not to abandon critique nor is it to create a new language. Spivak (1974) pointed out the danger in linguistic erasure: "to make a new word is to run the risk of forgetting the problem or believing it solved" (p. xv). St. Pierre (2009) landed on a formidable challenge for poststructuralist researchers. She wrote, “there is no need to give up on *voice* but rather to bring into question its authorizing power” (p. 225).

Interview as approached as interactional, linguistic, and relational aligned with my methodological orientation, which contends that language is constitutive of “reality.” Interpretations as produced from interviews do not mirror a world out there; rather, they construct identities and experiences through discourse situated in a specific social, cultural interaction. The cautionary message offered by the above researchers is that it is imperative for the interviewer/researcher to both attend to the “communicative interplay” and the cultural, historical, social, political context in which the interview takes place. Finally, Jean Lave offered a compelling explanation of the importance of the researcher as an instrument in the craft of interviewing: “The only instrument that is sufficiently complex to comprehend and learn about human existence is another human. And so what you use is your own life and your own experience in the world” (Lave & Kvale, 1995, p. 220). However, as the postmodern researchers discussed above demand, this requires a self-reflexivity on the interviewer’s part that allows for a multiplicity of meanings and an awareness of the processes of knowledge construction within the possible limits of knowing. I am using the term *reflexivity*, as defined by Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater’s (1996), as distinct from reflection. Chiseri-Strater clarified the terms as follows: “to be reflective does not demand an ‘other,’ while to be reflexive demands both an other and some self-conscious awareness of the process of self-scrutiny” (p. 130). My use of reflexivity is a version of “uncomfortable reflexivity—a reflexivity that seeks to know while at the same time situates this knowing as tenuous” (Pillow, 2003, p. 188).

As a springboard for the interviews, I crafted three interview protocols (see Appendix B). I conducted four interviews with two participants and five interviews with the other two participants. Each interview lasted between 1-2 hours. With the participants' consent, I audiotaped the interviews to remember fine details and attend to not just the content of the conversation, but also to the intonations and ordering of the interviews as well. Recorded interviews were sent to a transcriber. I spent approximately 3 weeks checking the verbal transcripts against the recordings, noting pauses, intonation, inflection, and other linguistic markers in the body of the transcripts. In Chapter IV, I explicate aspects of my research process that changed over the course of the study and the rationale for why a literary or constructivist approach to data analysis did not equip me to go deep into what I was learning. I then noted the places in the interviews that resonated for me. In Chapter IV, I refer to these as the moments where the data glowed. These are the ideas that haunted me at 2:00 a.m. because I could not neatly resolve them. I could not messily resolve them either. Rather, a Foucauldian theoretical framework enabled me to gain an understanding into how the dominant discourses of the two schools in the study and the larger discourses of education in 21st century America shape what is thinkable and doable for teachers. Largely, these places were concerned with the regimes of truth dictating power/knowledge relations, discourse, and openings and constraints to professional learning.

In addition to interviews, I asked participants to write about the professional learning experienced from their perspective of beginning teachers. Reflexive writing problematized participants' noticings about learning needs that they wanted to explore in greater depth. Their writings were yet another interpretation of their experience. For me, they enabled me to see in written form the discourse they used to interpret how their professional learning needs were or were not being addressed. For example, Amy described the experience of being barraged with feedback, which she more frequently referred to as criticism.

> It often feels with so much constant feedback and criticism and so many adults always present in my classroom, it is very difficult to form my teaching identity. Of course, feedback and constructive criticism can be useful to a certain extent, but when I am constantly receiving criticism and being told to implement different styles and techniques almost on a daily basis, it doesn't allow for the time and space to explore what works for me.

Amy's observations of having so many adults present in her classroom criticizing her teaching deprived her of the opportunity to establish her own teaching presence.

The teachers' reflexive writing functioned as data sources for me, but ultimately I did not include them in the manuscript. My decision to not include them was that when I originally asked them to write reflexively, my research framework held different assumptions than those held by poststructuralist qualitative researchers.

Interpretations of Interpretations

By exploring the learning experiences and needs of four beginning teachers through interrogating the dominant discourses of schooling, I tried to attend to the slippery aspect of language to examine how we construct and are constructed by the discursive fields in which we are situated. For example, Kate's repeated image of seeing and its corollary being watched shaped her subjectivity as a teacher who simultaneously felt agency and disempowered. Or Richard insistently used the word "effective" to categorize people and things as binaries in the school culture, despite its direct connection to the Danielson Framework. Amy's refrain that she needed time and space to find her own way in the classroom enabled her to construct an understanding of the impact that the varied directives she received were having on her teacher identity. Evie's telling of her desire to enact emancipatory teaching, juxtaposed against having to use rigid lessons plan templates, clarified for her what was possible and impossible teaching in her school.

Ultimately, after reading the interviews through other theoretical frameworks and feeling they were inadequate, I analyzed them through a poststructurally informed lens to focus on power and its relations to discourse. In this way, Foucault's work on power/knowledge deepened my renderings of the interpretations of the interviews with the beginning high school English teachers in the study. I focused on the moments of dis-ease and disruption in the interviews to analyze how dominant discursive fields and normative practices are organizational forces that affected how participants' way of thinking produced a way of acting in their schools.

Through the study of participants' discourse in Chapter V, I identified the multi-functioning uses and manifestations of power relations in their practices and how the teachers use knowledge produced from power/knowledge relations to construct their subjectivities. In mapping power relations, I delved into the question How does this happen? by examining the discourses participants used and the dominant discourses that sustain power in their school culture—all producing the regimes of truth that are taken as normative language and practice in the broader social, cultural, historic context. I investigated the productive effects of power as it circulated through the participants with(in) their respective school culture. I mapped the mechanisms and technologies of power that operated on and were circulated through participants in their power relations at school. Additionally, I examined the technologies of self that produced self-regulating behaviors and active practices of self-formation.

A Foucauldian analysis is a bit of a misnomer. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) explained that it is impossible to get out of language and the power relations that sustain it through normative discursive regimes and practices. They wrote, "analysis in a power/knowledge reading does not uncover hidden meaning because cultural and material practices are already interpretations. A power/knowledge reading involves *interpretations of interpretations*, which are found in the significance of cultural practices" (p. 57). To that end, I aimed to make explicit how the dominant discourses available to the participants and myself produced the interpretations shared in this dissertation.

In the next chapter, I map my research journey and introduce the participants' professional learning experiences and needs through their interpretations, which are doubly situated in my renderings. I attempt to problematize issues that come up for the participants and for myself as researcher by considering the data against a Foucauldian framework.

CHAPTER IV: WHERE THE DATA GLOWS

Here should be a picture of my favorite apple,
It is also a nude & bottle.
It is also a landscape.
There are no such things as still lifes.
–Erica Jong

Four Goodbyes and a Hello

This chapter begins with a mapping of my research journey. There were moments when I attempted to interpret the data that caused discomfort for me. My dis-ease was not just because the content of the interview data was troubling, which it was. It was that I did not have the theoretical equipage to trouble the interview data meaningfully. This has not been a linear research journey. It has been more like what Wendell Berry (2000) described in *Jayber Crow* "…Often what has looked like a straight line to me has been a circling or a doubling back. I have been in the Dark Wood of Error any number of times… Often I have not known where I was going until I was already there" (p.66). I do not consider this a journey of error, but rather one of coming to know. I had to learn to trust myself and my own instincts in regard to what I was learning from the data. For that reason, I focused on the pain points, disruptions, and unresolvable tensions in the data or, as the Chapter IV title states, these were the places where the data glowed. With my notebooks from graduate school as a compass, I tried to find my way. My markings were always two vertical lines || in the margin to the left of my text to indicate that a specific idea was important. As I read through the notebooks, my markings guided me.

|| Attend to the power of dominant discourses to exert framings that pervade our sense of self.

|| Discourse isn't just linguistic. It orders knowledge along lines that produce subjects.

|| Look at the discursive spaces that regulate and (re)produce relations of power.

Yes. It was Michel Foucault whose ideas whispered in my ear. It was this complicated historian who created genealogies of the "different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (Foucault, 1983, p. 208), who may be able to help me make sense out of my data and to whom I would say hello. Foucault's (1977) work enabled me to examine how a person comes to turn himself or herself into a subject. The technologies of the self are the self-regulating behaviors that shape how an individual thinks and acts within the normative discourses and normative practices in which one is situated.

Before moving forward to interpret the interview data with Foucault's work as my theoretical frame, it is important to make explicit what was not working along the way. My dissertation proposal, written in 2016, laid out a careful plan to incorporate literary devices and tropes borrowed from Geoffrey Chaucer (1387ish) to create juxtapositions, invent interruptions, and shift conventional ways of making and conveying meaning to present a non-linear, complex approach to storytelling. I intended to apply this non-conventional approach to examining and structuring the data that I had gathered from my research study. As might be expected, this approach missed the mark. So, while I crafted clever ways of framing Chaucer's famous frame tale device as a research tool, I was no closer to gaining insights into the professional learning experiences and needs of four beginning teachers. I sensed it was not working. Every time I sat down to write, I knew I would have to choose between the two distinct manuscripts I was creating: (a) a literary analysis of Chaucer as research provocateur and (b) interview excerpts and analyses of four beginning teachers' learning experiences and needs. The discourses available to Chaucer enabled him to arguably write brilliant poetry, but it was bound by Medieval notions of meaning, knowing, and being that could not problematize my research data. I kissed my beloved Chaucer goodbye without consciously knowing at the time why he had to be abandoned.

I read and re-read the interview transcripts. I listened to them on my lengthy commute to work. I noticed themes within and across the interviews. I spent 2 weeks coding the transcripts thematically. In the margins of hundreds of pages of transcripts, I marked the following codes:

Evals=Teacher evaluations,
Observs=Teacher observations
Coach/Ment=Teaching mentor
Surv=Surveillance
Satis=Satisfaction
Satis Teach=Satisfaction from Teaching
Satis Stud=Satisfaction from Students
Satis Coll=Satisfaction from Colleagues
PD=Professional Development
SupCon=Support Content
SupProc=Support Process
Constr=Constraints
Open=Openings
Attr=Attrition
Ident=Teacher Identity
Disc=Discourse
Pow=Power

I winnowed down the codes. I refined my themes. I kept at it. I reached for sociocultural learning theory as theorized by Lev Vygotsky (1978), reflection-in-action as theorized by Donald Schon (1983), and the principle of continuity of experience as theorized by John Dewey (1938), to frame my analysis and interpretations theoretically. I immersed myself in the research of these three thinkers, which blissfully distracted me from my thematically coded categories which felt superficial, forced, fixed, and painfully inadequate. Thinking in terms of coded themes was not enabling me to address the complexities of how the dominant school discourses were shaping the teachers' ways of knowing and acting as beginning teachers. Thinking in terms of codes was further fragmenting my understandings of the dominant school discourses circulating, which compose what is think-able, do-able, and say-able for the teachers in my study. Finally, splicing interview transcripts into categorized themes altered me to my own poststructuralist inclinations.

Scheurich (1997) described the interview interaction as “fundamentally indeterminate—the complex play of conscious and unconscious thoughts, feelings, fears, power, desires, and needs on the part of the interviewer and interviewee cannot be captured and categorized” (p. 73). Agreed. And by thinking along these lines, I could not then chop up the transcripts into fixed categorical units to overlay meaning on them. If I could accept the interviews as ambiguous and indeterminate interactions between me and the interviewee, perhaps I could abandon the assumptions that fixed constructions can order reality and provide findings. Maybe the best I can achieve through the research enterprise were shifting, partial, tenuous understandings. I told myself I can do this. The “this” was a letting-go. I needed to let go of the illusion that meaning can be located and fixed. The notion that language and meaning is a fixed, bounded relationship is a notion, like any other. However, this notion was held up as the “gold standard” of social science research, as put forth by neoliberal governmentality (Lather, 2014). The positivist belief that meaning can be fixed and bound was part of the dominant educational discourse that infiltrates how we think and the research we produce (Lather, 2012, 2014; St. Pierre, 2013). As Foucault (1976) explained, and as I was experiencing in letting go of a notion that until writing my dissertation I did not even know I remotely held:

> Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate through its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (p. 98)

Deciding upon the type of research I wanted to do had ethical implications. Did I wish to regulate and reproduce the dominant discourses in educational research or challenge my own assumptions about what was worthy research? The beauty of research is analyzing the pulls and tensions in the various positions available to us as researchers. I needed to let go of the illusory notion that there was a fixed, ordered relationship between language and meaning in favor of the indeterminate and ambiguous. But first, there were three gentlemen I needed to say goodbye to.

I studied Vygotksy, Schon, and Dewey to learn how they positioned teachers at the center of their professional learning experiences. Dewey (1972) contended that teachers' identities are continually changing as a function of their experiences and self-reflexive interrogation of the social and historical context, in which "every experience is a moving force" (p.1). This presupposes an ongoing process of learning, whereby the knower can reflect and then act on her experience and so it becomes knowledge (Dewey, 1972; Schon, 1983). Lev Vygotsky (1978) argued that "human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (p. 88). This suggests that there is a social construction of knowledge, whereby people involved in a learning organization develop through the dialogue, discussion, learning scaffolds, tools, and interrelationships the members of the organization provide each other. While an individual creates his or her own thoughts and mental constructions, they are formed by the language and learning opportunities that create the culture in which one exists. Vygotsky studied the relationships between concepts that are developed through experience, what he referred to as "spontaneous concepts" and concepts that are developed through the collaboration of a more capable person, what he referred to as "scientific concepts." Vygotsky's now famous "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) provides a framework for understanding how these conceptual relationships impact learning and development. The ZPD indicates the "distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). This framework can offer insights into how people learn in and through relationships.

The implications Vygotsky's theory has for beginning teachers are that their learning is situated in a particular social context, which includes an accepted language, tools, and intellectual milieu in which one must situate oneself and create a role. Additionally, in order for the ZPD to be enacted, there must be an "other" in the learning experience who is both capable of and willing to provide guidance to the beginning teacher through dialogue, discussion, and building on each other's thoughts. For Vygotsky, language enables intellectual growth as an individual engages in a dialectical process between himself and his environment, whereby language functions as the means by which to develop thought.

But what happens when there is no "other" with whom to learn?—as was the case with some of the teachers in my study. And what happens when language is conceptualized as discursive fields through which power sustains itself through dominant ways of thinking to congeal into regimes of truth? The problems facing the beginning teachers in my study were historic and, as such, needed to be interrogated through a theoretical lens that examined how regimes of truth in schooling are regulated and reproduced.

I tried Schon. Schon (1982) developed the principle of continuity as an essential component of making meaning out of one's experiences. Similar to Vygotsky's ZPD, the principle of continuity is premised on the belief that all experience is social and situated in a particular context. The principle of continuity assumes that knowledge is incremental, with every experience building on what has come before and shaping the nature and quality of experiences that will follow. This is a social process, as the individual is both constructed by and constructs his experience through language. Dewey (1938) told us that "every experience is a moving force.

Its value can be judged on the ground of what it moves toward and into" (p. 38). This suggests that the quality of one's present experience influences subsequent experiences. Like the collaboration or "more capable other" needed to create a ZPD, there is a social component to the principle of continuity by which a more experienced "teacher" (for the purposes of this study, you can substitute in colleague, administrator or coach) guides the more novice learner in evaluating the value of each experience as "educative" or "mis-educative." As the novice learner develops the ability to observe one's situated experience, he can connect present observations with past experiences. Under the guidance of someone with more experience, the novice gradually acquires the judgment to connect the observed with what is known in order to understand the significance of the experience (Dewey, 1938) and develop a unique repertoire of both what is known and how to know. But what if a person is not conceived of as an always conscious, unified, stable presence? What if people did not rationally follow a developmental trajectory? What if there was not a knowing self with a fixed identity who can produce authoritative knowledge? I felt these theorists may have been too grounded in constructivist thinking to assist me in interpreting these particular interviews, which I sensed required an analysis of how power sustains itself through discourse. I said goodbye to Vygotsky, Schon, and Dewey. Their theories could not help me get to the nerve of my research questions. Finally, it was Foucault to whom I said hello.

In this part of the chapter, I introduce the four beginning teachers in this study. The sequencing of their introductions is in order of my first interview with each teacher. I point this out because the teachers all mentioned they were low on the social hierarchy in their respective schools, due to their status as a beginning, non-tenured teacher. Some points to note: I scheduled the interviews with the teachers at their convenience to the extent my work schedule permitted. It was not until I spoke with the teachers that I started to see how impactful the perceived social hierarchy at their schools was in shaping their sense of self as beginning teachers. In their relegated position as novice teacher, they felt a lack of authority as it related to knowledge—knowledge they possessed, knowledge they desired to fulfill their ideal of good/moral teaching, and knowledge valued in the school, as evidenced by the discursive field surrounding professional learning.

I examined these teachers' professional learning experiences and needs through their first-person accounts. Therefore, issues of representation and truth—both complex and problematic issues—in qualitative research must be interrogated continuously. I also considered the dominant discourse of schooling at this historic moment. How does the language of accountability and audit culture inform a teacher's subjectivities? How does this discourse normalize and possibly demoralize? In what ways can/do the teachers resist, regulate, and perpetuate such discourses?

Dominant school discourses pervade my own constructions of meaning, circulating within and through me. I tried to interrogate how the normative discourses in my graduate school shape how I constitute myself as a researcher. I looked at how the dominant discourses in my professional world as an administrator in a leadership position at a university write me as I write this. I was/am aware that normalizing discourses and practices affect me and often in contradictory ways in my multiple roles as a student, professional, researcher, woman, mother, daughter, sister, cousin, friend. I am not outside what Foucault called "governmentality." The practices that govern the conduct of conduct can cause us to self-regulate so insidiously that thinking is shaped and conduct is conformed as a result of the discursive field in which we are situated. To the extent possible, I aimed to interrogate my own use of discourse while attending to the discourse of the teachers in our interviews. The conversations about their professional learning experiences and needs were interpretations which were then re-interpreted by me as the researcher.

What follows is based on semi-structured interviews with the participants that took place over the course of the academic year (see Appendix B for the Interview Protocol). As explained in Chapter III, I sought to examine the professional learning experiences and perceived learning needs of beginning high school English teachers and in what ways and through what means those needs were or were not being addressed.

Evie

Evie was in her second year of teaching at a charter school in the Bronx. Her beliefs about the purpose of teaching /were deeply grounded in her commitment to social justice. She described the evolution of her teaching identity:

> Pending…but for now, unapologetically political. Teaching is a political act. I am influenced by so many of my women of color friends and activists, online discussions of politics, Freire, and bell hooks, among countless others. This is thanks to one of my college professors, mixed with my own rebellious spirit.

Consistent with valuing an emancipatory pedagogy, she despised the bureaucratic paperwork she was tasked with doing. This took the form of prescriptive lesson plans, documenting PD outcomes, and writing weekly student reports. She explained that the paperwork was imposed on her by administrators who "force teachers to justify their actions" and take her away from both the work she wants to do with her students and her conception of what it means to teach. I wondered how much paperwork the administrators are tasked with doing for their higher-ups and in what ways the mandates placed on them to be paperwork-compliant bar them from doing more meaningful work. From the interviews, it was unclear who all the paperwork was for. All of the teachers in the study claimed that their lesson plans, tenure portfolios, and student reports were not read by anyone. I am reminded of Foucault’s analysis of Bentham’s Panopticon, whose power derived in part from anonymous observers, always looming with a watchful gaze. This idea is taken up later in this chapter and in Chapter V.

Evie explained in her characteristically upbeat tone that while she was not currently “bothered” by administrators at her school, she “is living in fear of when I may be bothered at some point.” Evie used the term *bothered* to refer to excessive surveillance and regulation of behaviors by administrators over teachers. A chill ran through me as Evie described the randomness with which teachers were bothered by administrators. I was reminded of the Medieval idea that the protagonist is a victim rather than a hero, raised up and then cast down by the workings of Fortune’s fickle wheel.

Evie’s tone suggested an acceptance borne out of the normalization of constraints placed on teachers. However, I found the worn and helpless tone particularly unnerving coming from a young, spirited woman whose personal and professional values were based in resistance. While Evie felt “drained and exhausted” by administrators who taxed her with paperwork and directives, she drew strength from her belief that the nature of her work extended beyond her school and herself: these opposing tensions served as the constraints and openings that were impactful to Evie’s learning needs.

Evie and I met for coffee. She was tired, I heard it in her voice. “My AP who I love so much and who has been really helpful to me is leaving.” Her AP found out that the principal had posted her current position online. That was how the AP learned it was time to look for another job. Evie told me, “I’m really nervous that the principal will hire another White male. The AP who is leaving is a Black woman, and I appreciate that. And I’m nervous the new person will be an extreme stickler and won’t take time to care about us, or learn about us, which if the principal hires anybody similar to himself is how it will be." Evie's fears stemmed from her 2 years of experience working with the principal and the other APs in her charter school in the Bronx. Evie explained how the school culture established by the administration constrained her learning by de-professionalizing her:

> I despise being forced to do paperwork and justify my actions. I feel like I am not trusted as a professional. I often have to maneuver politics in my day-to-day and whenever I need to ask for something from my principal or assistant principal. I feel tired of being expected to be jolly and cheery in front of my bosses (having been told how "weird" it was that I wasn't smiling when I saw my AP once). Also, I have a lot of pressure on me to teach to the test, since our charter is in a three-year renewal and every number counts. Neither the AP nor the principal respect us teachers, especially the female teachers, and it is evident by the way they speak to and what they expect of us. When I think of how hard each day is, having to deal with administrators who think they show me respect but really do not, imagining the next few months is exhausting. Saying that I am least satisfied with these bureaucratic aspects of my job is an understatement.

Evie's word choice of having to be "jolly and cheerful" in making a professional request from the principal and AP was reminiscent of the Victorian Era Angel in the House ideal, whereby a woman was expected to happily sacrifice herself to the daily needs of her husband and family to the exclusion of her own needs, wants, and desires. Evie went on to explain that the principal "sucks me into a hole and just talks to me for hours and wastes my time just talking about himself all of the time. Or other people, which is really weird." She listened patiently, supported constantly, and smiled readily. Yet, Evie felt relative to other teachers in her school that she was not bothered by the administration and "they kind of leave me alone" in an environment riddled with "gotcha" moments on the part of administrators trying to catch teachers doing something wrong.

Amy

For Amy, every lived day was an experience in being bothered. She taught at the same charter school as Evie and was also in her second year of teaching, but this was her first year in this school. Amy had taught at a small private school the year before, but left because of the dearth of formal and informal professional learning opportunities that existed there. Going into her second year of teaching, she wanted to grow and felt she needed support in the way of professional feedback. However, Amy realized quickly that she needed to adjust her expectations of the type of support and PD she would receive versus what she was hoping to get at her new school in the Bronx. Early in the school year, Amy compared the two schools:

> This school is more structured, there are two assistant principals—one for each department—and then you have a co-teacher, which I didn't have at the other school, and then you have planned meetings times: every day you have to meet with your department which I don't find very productive. But the other school was not as well organized but it felt—somehow it felt like I had more support. I don't know why—it was just more like a sense of community.
>
> I think one of the main issues is that the school is understaffed and so a lot of teachers have too much on their hands. And they say that they're trying to find people but I don't think that's like the priority. And it's like they have co-teachers with teachers when they're helping out in a class that they don't have any background in so it's like—it's a little crazy.

As the year progressed, Amy would discover that the administration, additional coaches and co-teachers, and pointless meetings would serve as strangling constraints to her professional learning.

Richard

Richard was in his third year of teaching. He was responsible for teaching English to the entire eleventh grade in the small, specialty school for gifted and talented students in Manhattan, which is "filled with students who are quite intelligent." He considered his students "bright and eager to learn." He described the student population as "95% of the kids are trying to get a better education. They know that education matters, which makes a huge difference as far as students go." As Richard described the curriculum for his courses, which included classics such as

Hamlet (Richard's favorite text to teach), *The Great Gatsby*, and *The Things They Carried*, his joy for teaching literature was palpable.

However, he quickly steered our conversation from teaching AP Language and Composition to the administration, which he referred to as a "particular struggle at his school." Yet what he described was eerily familiar to what I just learned about Evie and Amy's school. Richard told me about the enormous documentation that was required of teachers for both their classwork and the variety of PD initiatives taking place at the school this year and he stressed that "trust is a barrier to authentic PD." The sense from Richard and his colleagues in his tightly-knit, young English department was that the administration was increasingly removed from teaching and quickly "adopt[ed] Danielson or whatever is the current buzzword." He went on to explain that frequently they "interpret Danielson by the word, or misinterpret it as opposed to understanding what a classroom looks like." He told me that this resulted in flawed and punitive observations and evaluations. The administration, excessive paperwork, mandated PD, observations, and evaluations which inform the tenure process were all chokehold constraints on Richard's professional learning, whereas his colleagues in the English department and having the freedom to design his own curriculum provided him with openings to professional growth.

Kate

Kate taught with Richard in the English department at an academically renowned specialty school in Manhattan. While Kate shared the same facts about excessive documentation, PD that took a one-size-fits-all approach, and "gotcha" observations, Kate was in her second year of teaching and did not have the professional self-confidence that Richard seemed to possess. She explained that her self-doubt stemmed from administrators who did not trust the teachers:

> I'm so new that I think I feel anxious about whether or not I'm a good teacher. And it feels like it's coming from such a lack of trust—it feels like they just can't trust us to do our job. And I already feel like—I'm a new teacher, I'm not sure if I'm doing the right thing. But instead of gradually starting to feel like—I mean in the class I feel more comfortable—like while I'm with my students I feel more comfortable—like every day I feel more comfortable—but then it makes you feel more insecure, like you're never sure you're doing the right thing and you never feel like you're doing quite good enough.

These fears continued to plague Kate, despite her increased teaching proficiency as the year progressed. Interestingly, even though Kate and Richard taught at a school with abundant resources, steady attendance, and few behavior problems, the constraints on their learning they identified were the same as the other two teachers in the study: a lack of relevant professional learning and an administration they viewed as authoritative and distrustful of them. Kate's experience with the literacy coach who was brought in to work with the English department exemplified the openings and constraints surrounding PD at her school. The members of her English department counted themselves blessed to work with this particular coach, an Instructor whom some of them knew in graduate school. Both Kate and Richard trusted and respected her knowledge of the content and processes of teaching English.

For Kate, the opportunity to work with an expert who had very specific English teaching experience was a windfall. However, over the course of the year, teachers were increasingly burdened by administrators to complete paperwork to the extent that Kate and the other English teachers could not bring to fruition the work they were planning with the coach. Kate told me, "She has amazing suggestions and has been really helpful and then we don't have time to do a lot of what we should be doing to implement the suggestions well in general." Kate bemoaned the lack of time she had to develop her plans and was frustrated by the demands the administrators were putting on teachers without providing time to complete them. When Kate was finally given an opportunity to engage with an expert English teacher about professional learning that was personalized and had relevance to her, she was pulled away to fill out paperwork and documents about various things she did not feel anyone would ever read. It was unclear to the teachers in the school from whom the demands were coming; they felt the decisions were made at the top without the input from the Assistant principals or teachers and passed down the hierarchy, with the teachers left to do whatever was being asked. Kate's tone changed over the course of the year from being cautiously optimistic to being constantly frustrated. Her vision of teaching also changed as she felt unable to enact the teaching values she held because leaders in her school context were driven by standardized test scores.

In the next section of this chapter, I present a rendering of the teachers' interviews that illustrate the moments across teachers' experiences that provoked questions for them and for me. I situate the overarching issues, provocations, and tensions within the discursive fields in which the participants taught. Again, in Chapter V, I do a close reading of the interview interactions through a Foucauldian theoretical framework to study the functions and effects of power/knowledge relations on beginning teachers' subjectivities.

High-stakes Testing and Accountability

Evie and I are skyping. I'm in my office and she's in a classroom at her school. It's late in the afternoon, so the normally bustling school has emptied out of students and most of the teachers. Evie is explaining that she feels conflicted. She is considering leaving her school, even though she explains "my students and I love each other and it is important to remember that whenever I feel like the none of this is worth the pain I go through every time I speak with admins." She explains the qualities she is looking for in a school:

> If I'm going to another school, I just want to feel trusted and that my supervisors are trustworthy, that's the biggest thing. And then it would be cool if I didn't work at a school that taught for Regents, like a Consortium school…. They are portfolio schools,

> and so I’m really into that idea. Instead of Regents they do a final cumulative assessment and they invite community members in and other teachers.

The pressure placed on teachers to teach to the test pushed against Evie’s pedagogical values. Ball (2013) situated high-stakes testing in a larger social context, examining it through a Foucauldian lens…teachers, students, and schools, and pedagogies, procedures, performance, data, and initiatives; all of these objects and subjects are to be “focused” on in order to raise standards. Student, teacher, and school are each subject to the gaze of the next, and all are subject to the gaze of the state (p. 107). Evie was far down on this hierarchical network, with her students below her, but also impacting her and in visible sight of all. The scores Evie’s students received on high-stakes standardized tests affected teacher evaluations and were part of the equation determining whether the school’s charter would be renewed. The interview transcripts with Evie were laced with sour references to numbers and statistics. Evie’s normally quick cadence slowed when she discussed numbers. The numbers came to represent judgements on her teaching, removed from the specific context in which her students and she were situated. When she described the numeric scores used to measure her worth and effectiveness, there was a notable change in her tone and intonation, suggesting a sense of helplessness. Santoro (2018) described demoralization among teachers as “a form of professional dissatisfaction that occurs when teachers encounter consistent and pervasive challenges to enacting the values that motivate their work” (p. 10). Evie was demoralized by the excessive focus on teaching to standardized tests. Over the course of the year, her demoralization would become corrosive, coloring her teaching experience.

Evie described her principal as being statistics-driven. He was motivated by “ratings, and scores, scores, scores.” She recounted being cornered by her principal as he “ranted” on about his former school and “not being able push them over an 87. I just couldn’t push ‘em anymore. I couldn't push them over an 87. I couldn't get there. They weren't moving there, so you know what? I left and found this place." The message Evie and her colleagues received was that test scores had to go up and if the scores did not, then the school and people in it were not worth the principal's investment.

John Mayher (1990) skewered mind-numbing standardized testing as being entirely inappropriate for the subject of English. He explained:

> A further limitation of such testing is that it can only ask questions which have a right answer…if we want to know how well someone has read something, what we are concerned with is how well they understood it. This doesn't depend on how they have decoded it, which can be assessed by a right answer format, but it depends on the meaning they have made from it, which can't be tested that way. (p. 256)

Evie knew this. She also knew that spending precious class time teaching students how to best answer multiple-choice questions was not meaningful teaching and learning.

In his third year of teaching, Richard was learning how to be reflexive about his craft and learning needs with the benefit of having 2 years of prior teaching experience from which to draw. Richard also quickly reminded me that being in his third year also meant he was in his tenure year and under tremendous pressure. Richard's opinion of administrators was intertwined with his attitude toward observations, mandates, and evaluations. Richard invoked the anti-hero archetype in describing his stance toward administrators. He explained that he has always pushed back against authority figures and positioned himself as a teacher who defies convention. I wondered if he viewed me as an authority figure. This was our first interview together, conducted via Skype to accommodate his demanding teaching schedule this fall. Would he push back on me in the interview interaction? Or posture? Or would I posture in anticipation of what Scheurich (1997) critiqued as a dominance/resistance binary in the interview interaction? Holding that neither the interviewer not the interviewee are passive subjects in the interactions, Scheurich opted for “an open-ended space which I sometimes, with irony call chaos” (p. 72). — 72). I was mindful (to the extent my subconscious would allow) of the binaries that Scheurich critiqued as Richard introduced himself in terms that circumscribed himself within the dominance/resistance power relations that were enacted at his school.

As Richard introduced himself to me, he contextualized his rebellious stance within the larger social/cultural dynamics impacting education at this historic moment:

> It could just be me. I’m kind of a—I don’t like administrators. I’ve never liked people in power. You know, I’m sort of a grad student who was like, “No, you can’t control me.” You know, I try to be very respectful in my work place and I do well with students because I develop that respect and rapport with them, and I don’t want to be unauthoritarian here. Instead I still feel that way often when the administration comes down and says, “All right. This is exactly what you’re doing for your professional development and we need to see this form filled out, you know, every week for how you did it,” or something like that. That—that feels like a waste of my time. And again, it’s frustrating because I know that they’re getting it from somewhere else.
>
> You know, like the DOE is the bigger—the bigger piece that’s looking down and they’re saying, “Look, people don’t trust our teachers. We need to hold our teachers accountable. How can we do that?” Well, we have Danielson now and so we’ll use Danielson to hold them accountable. “Well, how do they measure on Danielson?” Well, we need these observations. Well, they have to do professional development. Well, how can we hold them accountable for professional development? Otherwise we don’t trust them, you know, and I think that trust piece is the part that really frustrating too because I know that there are bad teachers, and I don’t want to say all teachers are fantastic and all teachers are reflective, and all teachers are doing the things that I feel confidence in the steps that I’m taking as a teacher. You know, so I understand the need for holding teachers accountable. I think it’s just frustrating to – you know, one solution across the board is the only way to do it or every teacher needs to teach the Danielson way. That’s very upsetting.

Richard told me he worked hard and knew he was doing a good job. His affirmation was derived from student feedback and his sense of efficacy as a teacher based on his work with students, not from the observations and evaluations which he described as not-instructive. Vinz (1996) problematized how new teachers construct images of their selves that extend beyond “how we are constructed by others.” She posed the questions: “How will we carve out the beliefs we hold about ourselves? How will we construct ourselves as more than the mirror images of others' expectations?" (p. 19). Evie was able to construct herself as a social justice-oriented teacher with her students, but struggled with the passive, submissive role in which she was cast with the principal. And Amy was so overwhelmed with the various images she was pressured to conform to, all of which caused cognitive dissonance with her conceptions of herself as a teacher, that leaving mid-year was her only option. Richard adopted a somewhat defiant stance against the administrators. As I listened to Richard push back against people "trying to control him," I wondered if by being in his third year of teaching, he saw more abuses of power and was particularly sensitive to its effects.

Being in his tenure year, Richard was "stressed every time Administrators come into my classroom" and he was disappointed with the PD surrounding teaching evaluations as well as the school-wide PD that happens on a weekly basis. Richard explained:

> And I think part of the disappointment is I was rated effective my first-year according to Danielson, highly effective last year, and this is my tenure year so I am like sort of on edge and I do have more work because of the new class that I've—the new prep that I have to do. So, there's also this part of me that feels like a lot of what's being asked of teachers is—like I'm already implementing in a lot of ways. And so, when it's like, "Oh, we need to reflect on what's working at your assessment level or looking at the different thirds of your class to see what's working, what's not working," those sort of reflections, although it's not perfect for me yet by any stretch of the imagination—Yeah. Like it's a process, right? I still feel like I'm able to look at that on my own. When I'm reading, you know, thirty paragraphs, one from each student, or seventy essays as I collected an essay like I can see where they're at and I can see the big moves that need to be made and I will make those moves consequently. And I think I get frustrated when we have to spend forty-five minutes to an hour trying to figure out how to reflect on our own students and our own teaching when it's something that I'm already sort of doing on a day-to-day basis and I'm sure that's how other teachers feel too. But I also know like we have to have PD and we have to continue developing. That's all the day-to-day—rather I should say week-to-week stuff.

During the interview with Richard, I did not latch on to his statement, "…I know we have to have PD and we have to continue developing." But I did in reading the transcript, so I found myself talking back to the transcript, asking why. Why do teachers have to have PD that they have no input in creating? How is this developing? And what are they developing into? The norms that form the dominant school discourses establish PD as a given. PD is part of the way that power sustains itself in the school culture, framing how teachers can think and act. Normalization impacts how technologies of self can produce self-regulating behaviors, subjecting teachers to the regime of truths in which they are situated.

Richard and my conversation moved back and forth between his description of the actual PD that existed at the school, an ideal construction of professional learning he envisioned, and the impact neopositivist accountability had on his learning needs and PD experiences. The language that Richard used was bound by the discourse of schooling he experienced, so things and people were categorized by the binary of “effective” or “not-effective,” labels that Richard resented but used frequently.

“Gotcha”

Amy recounted the experience of having a surprise observation during the second week of school. She explained that the Assistant principal surprised her with an unannounced evaluation: “It was overwhelming.” The feedback Amy received from the evaluation was little more than checks in a box and the label “ineffective.” Evie deemed an unannounced evaluation during the second week of school as being “bothered” by Administrators.

In this age of testing, audit, and surveillance, there are any number of ways for a teacher to be measured and boxed. Richard explained that he had a surprise observation the Thursday before the winter break. As can be expected, he was “upset and disappointed.” Richard explained:

> The lesson was horrible. I had a half a lesson for doing group work and we’re about to go into break. I was missing kids; kids are checked out. But that’s a part of that feeling of the gotcha. Like they’re trying to catch us in bad positions. I don’t know if that’s intentional or not but that’s how it feels.

Yet, when Richard described his teaching, he spoke with confidence about his abilities and challenged the label of "Effective," which he received for the aforementioned observation. He attributed a mediocre lesson to students eager to go on vacation at the end of the term and not to his professional capabilities. His intense frustration lay in the fact that even with his self-awareness about the likely cause of a weak lesson, he still had an evaluation labeling him as "effective" rather than "highly effective" in his file during his tenure year.

Both Amy and Richard experienced ruptures in their expectations of what it meant to teach and to be supported professionally. Surprise observations and the subsequent classification with a number and label from the Danielson Framework have become normative practices within the two NYC schools in this study. The ways in which the discourses of audit, accountability, and evaluation constructed the identities of the four beginning teachers intrigued me—these were the moments where the data glowed. Practices of surveillance, regulation, and classification pervaded their school cultures. Yet, the four teachers in the study were still new enough to the system that, at times, they had the spirit and language to question what was happening to them. Regimes of truth comprise the norms and givens that an individual comes to accept as the only way it is or can be. But these teachers were in the space in between. They were still new enough to the profession and its dominant discourses, which shaped thinking to question things that did not square for them, but they were deeply embedded in school cultures that systematically defined and contained them. I went back to Richard's use of the word "effective" as an example. In any given interview, there were times when Richard overused the word "effective." I could not say, "Richard, how about we find a different word to make your point?" *That* would have missed the point. "Effective" had become more than just a word. "Effective" had become for him a way of thinking, a way of classifying himself and others, a way of knowing. And that is what terrified me. How insidiously and quickly dominant discourses can shape what is think-able, know-able, and do-able within a specific context.

“Retroactively Dysfunctional”

Here in her second year of teaching, Amy did not see any possibilities for professional growth to assist her in becoming the type of teacher she deemed worthy of being. She gradually lost confidence in herself and her teaching ability. She felt her authority hijacked by her coaches and co-teachers:

> It often feels that with so much constant feedback and criticism and so many adults present in the classroom, it is very difficult to form my teaching identity. I think in order to form my teaching identity, I have to be given time and space to explore and discover what practices, techniques, and teaching styles work for me. Of course, feedback and constructive criticism can be useful to a certain extent but when I am constantly receiving criticism and being told to implement different styles and techniques almost on a daily basis, it does not allow for the time and space to explore what works for me.

As discussed in Chapter II, the fragmentation of experience decenters teachers from their practice and makes continuous growth impossible. Amy’s professional learning experiences were fragmented by the negative and disparate feedback she received from her coaches and co-teachers. This dynamic was compounded by the damaging interactions she had with the administration. She explained:

> The only interactions I had with the AP were negative, he would come to me to ask me why I hadn’t finished my reports on the students with special needs. I had a pretty big number of students with special needs, and so there seemed like, every week, there was a new meeting and a new report that I had to write. And I really didn’t have any training on that. And so, he approached me a few times about that, either that I wasn’t doing them right or that I wasn’t doing them on time. And he was just like—a lot of the communication he would have with the teachers, like the e-mails he would send—it was just all very punitive and not encouraging or not recognizing what we were doing, so I felt kind of like I was being watched all the time and like they were just waiting for me to do something wrong. feel He would walk the halls and stop in your class, and if a kid had his head down, then he would correct them and then approach you about it.

In describing the audit culture that pervades 21st century American schools, Peter Taubman (2009) warned, “Teachers as a population are constructed as dysfunctional, in need of intervention. Disciplinary practices are introduced such that individual teachers come to apply to themselves technologies of self-regulation that render them retroactively dysfunctional” (p. 107). Applying this principle to Amy’s situation, she internalized the poor evaluations and criticism she received as a measure of her teaching ability and subsequently became more vulnerable to implementing the scripted teaching prompts foisted on her, or the teaching strategies that she deemed pedagogically unsound so as not to appear dysfunctional.

“You are pushing me into a very specific way of teaching”

Richard angrily described the impact that embracing the Danielson Framework as best practice had on teachers in his school:

> One of our teachers who his name is Mr. Ying, he worked last year. He was a Latin teacher. He was one of the most beloved teachers on the school’s campus. He was beloved by students, beloved by teachers, beloved by parents. He was not as beloved by the administration, but part of that was because he didn’t conform automatically to the Danielson expectations. For example, you know, tables and groups and the student center pieces that were always expected, you know, seventy percent of the class is student-driven or something crazy like that.
>
> He had his students in rows. He did a lot of rote memorization, but he had a lot of fun. The students loved him and ultimately his Latin results were like off the charts. They were winning silvers and golds on all the like high-end Latin tests. So, he’s effective. He’s highly effective by every measure of standard except the clear-cut written Danielson words. So, consequently he’s not there this year.
>
> I just love some interview quotes from Danielson herself who was like, “No, that’s not supposed to be a broad thing. No. It’s just like this is what I think some teachers could benefit from.” So, trying to use one brush to cover the whole school and think like a teacher has to do blank is the absolute worst approach. And it creates a lack of trust. It creates a lack of support because you’re not supporting me as a teacher. You are pushing me into a very specific way of teaching. It’s very frustrating—I think it demeans both me and a math or Latin teacher to suggest both of our courses could be taught the exact same way as long as we’re implementing these methods outlined by Danielson.

I was left wondering how much, if any, professional agency a beginning, non-tenure teacher has in a culture in which a veteran teacher is pushed out of the system for not conforming to the Danielson Framework as best practice. What message does this send to beginning teachers in terms of cultivating their own professional subjectivities?

Evie disliked the lesson plan templates which teachers were mandated to use and submit to administrators. She explained, “My view with the lesson plan format is that it’s really hard for me to just sit there and put the information that I’m going to do in a box.” For her, the lesson plan templates were part of a larger mechanism of power levied against teachers, whereby she was forced to “do paperwork to be accountable...they don’t trust us.” The metaphor of lesson plans as a device to measure and box is interrogated further in Chapter V. Diane Ravitch (2010) warned that “Accountability has become synonymous with punishment, and punitive measures discourage and demoralize both students and teachers” (p. 245). Evie perceived the unwieldy amount of paperwork forced on teachers as both punishment and control. Both Evie and Amy expressed disdain toward the lesson plan formats they were mandated to use. They felt the linear, boxed lesson plans were a form of regulating knowledge. The predictive nature of boxed, linear lesson plans forced teachers into a specific way of teaching and thinking where they must account for how to get their students from Y to Z. For beginning teachers such as Evie and Amy, they wanted to encourage questioning among their students, which frequently took a teacher off script. Additionally, when they could not get their students neatly from Y to Z as they indicated they would in their lesson plan, they felt demoralized.

Evie wistfully explained that if she was to go to another school, she would seek a school that would allow her to plan lessons in any format she wants: “I just want to feel trusted.” Thus the two—lesson plans and being trusted as a professional—are, for her, inextricably linked.

Technologies of power such as regulation in the form of prescriptive lesson plans is just one of the ways that dominant discursive practices shape beginning teachers’ subjectivities.

Normalization is another technique that serves to constrain agency. Amy was disheartened that, despite her inexperience with ELL and Special Education students, the school did not provide her any PD to ensure her success or that of her students. Amy explained:

> Over the summer, they asked me to create the curriculum for the tenth grade, so I started—I created it, and then I e-mailed the assistant principal and I said, "Look, I've been working on this curriculum, but I don't see any folders for me to start creating the curriculum for my senior elective class, so what's going on with that?" And she said, "Oh, you're not teaching that anymore. You're only teaching tenth grade now." And there was no explanation. And I said, "Oh, that's such a shame. I was really looking forward to teaching an elective course." She said, "Yeah, well, you're going to have an Honors section of tenth grade."
>
> And then, the week before school started, they gave me my schedule where it said what periods I was teaching. And my Honors section wasn't on there, so I asked the assistant principal, and he said, "Oh, yeah. We have to collapse your Honors section because there weren't enough students in it to warrant taking up a whole classroom." To supplement the fact that now I was only teaching four classes, instead of five, they gave me two sections of advisories, which had thirty students each in them. They presented it as kind of like career advising and talking about bullying and stuff like that, but I talked to teachers in the school and they said, "You don't do anything in advisory. You just sit there and basically make sure that they're not going crazy." I decided that, at that point, that was too much, I basically told the assistant principal that I wasn't willing to do that, that this had not been explained to me when I took the job. No one even mentioned the possibility of advisory. What they ended up doing was they took away my two advisories and they put me in as a co-teacher to an ESL class, which was fine, but I just, so many times, I just felt like a puppet. I didn't really feel like I was valued at all.

Amy was entering a new school as a beginning teacher. She had not yet been normalized to the given practices accepted in the school that formed the regimes of truth broadcasting that these practices were the only way it can be. Amy seem shell-shocked in our interview. She told me that the school has a literacy coach, an ESL coach, a Special Education coach, and co-teachers. She explained that all had worked with her in some capacity, but the co-teachers did not have English content backgrounds, and the coaches visited sporadically. Interestingly, the coach who successfully supported Evie at the school had the opposite effect on Amy. Amy wanted to ground her teaching pedagogy in an approach that looked at literature through various social/cultural lenses. The coach wanted Amy to ground her pedagogy in social justice teaching and incorporate texts to support that stance. This created a tension for Amy as she did not equate teaching with activism, but rather wanted to be an English teacher who exposed her students to a variety of texts so they can find truth and humanity as they unfolded to them. Amy described the constraining impact the literacy coach had on professional learning:

> The literacy coach comes into my class sporadically and she helped me develop the curriculum for the class. In the beginning, the idea was that we would formally meet once a week to go over my lesson plans for the week and exchange ideas. However, after a couple of months of these meetings, I realized that they were actually making me more anxious and insecure as a teacher, since many times I would end up changing my lessons to accommodate her ideas, which did not fit with my teaching style. We did not continue to have formal meetings, but she still pops into my classroom and sometimes takes over the classroom management by correcting students.

I was reminded of the wise words that John Mayher and Sheridan Blau shared with me in separate interviews about the professional learning experiences of beginning high school English teachers. Mayher (2014) explained, “We need to create an opportunity for teachers to be respected and valued. PD is raising questions, exploring alternatives, and potentially giving suggestions and so on in response to questions.” Andrew Delbanco (2012) premised his book about the purpose of college on the same ideal of teaching. Quoting Noah Porter (1870) Yale’s clergyman President, he advocated, “The most effective teaching is teaching by questioning” Delbanco added, “a pedagogical truth that has never been better demonstrated than in the Platonic dialogues composed some twenty-five hundred years ago” (p. 53). Amy, too, shared the vision of teaching and professional inquiry as being an open-ended dialogue in which questions served to inspire intellectual curiosity. However, her teaching and learning life was circumscribed in terms of what and how she should teach, leaving her feeling constrained and painfully inexperienced.

Blau (2014) also insisted that teachers need to learn to view themselves as experts in their own classrooms by trusting their own questions and confusions—which is not as simple as it sounds when the explicit public message is that teachers cannot be trusted. Ideally, if teachers are discussing students' thinking with their colleagues, then when the teachers are in the classroom with the students, they have a heightened interest in students' thinking because they have a place to go talk about it when something interesting happens. Moreover, Delbanco (2012) reminded us of the "Socratic idea that learning is a collaborative rather than solitary process…" (p. 53).

But, Amy was barred from that type of experience by coaches and administrators who gave her specific things to say, "like a script," and would observe part of a lesson, identify one aspect they thought she could improve, and then suggest she replan her lesson with the directive, "Instead of doing it that way, why don't you do this?" Instead of opening a conversation, "Tell me a little bit about why you've chosen to do it this way…"

Amy did not have anyone in the school to share her learning experiences—successes or failures—with even though there was always another adult present in her classroom. She explained that like the literacy coach, the presence of the Special Education teacher hindered rather than helped her:

> I had been having a really hard time because—well, first of all I didn't expect to have so many sections that were ICT classes and that was like an adjustment for me. And they're also pretty big. And the co-teacher that I had—the Special Education teacher—was making it kind of difficult because she's kind of like a mother figure to the kids: she has them separately in a class and she's like very nurturing and like very permissive and she was bringing that into the classroom and it was very disruptive. I was really struggling because I was trying to set high standards and expectations and we had very different philosophies and the kids would like try to avoid me because they knew I would ask a lot of them and they would go to her instead. She would kind of like hang back or like go talk to a different student even if one student was like going crazy and like kicking the lockers in the classroom—and she was closer to that student—I would have to be the one who handled it.

Amy went on to explain that the Special Education coach who came into her classroom "once in a while" was similarly unhelpful and made her "re-think what I thought being a teacher was."

> He came into my classroom one time and I have one section where I have—it's me, the co-teacher, the speech coach and the paraprofessional in the room—so there are four adults in there. And like his advice for me was that I should use all those people to like basically separate the class into four and have those three other adults teach different groups and then I would target one group. And that just—it didn't sit well with me. The speech coach doesn't come every day but the paraprofessional is always there. But it just seemed like such a strange idea to me because first of all my co-teacher did not have a background in English, the paraprofessional I don't think even has like a teaching degree, and the speech teacher is like she has her area of expertise but I don't think it's like English. I just feel kind of like he was telling me "Your job is to design a lesson and then let other people like take care of the class." It just—like I had to re-think what I thought being a teacher was.

Amy told me that "It never really felt like it was my classroom." With any number of coaches and paraprofessionals in her class on any given day telling her how she should teach, how could it feel like her own? This was a long way off from Peter Elbow's ideas (1986) about the benefits of teachers learning from each other. Elbow described this process as a powerful form of professional learning built on mutual trust, with the understanding that there is no one, best way to teach.

As I listened to Amy tell me about her experiences as a beginning teacher. I wanted to scream, "What the fuck?" I didn't. She was already so clearly beaten up. I was reluctant to say anything that could further turn her off to teaching. I wanted to tell her that none of this was her fault, although that was speculation on my part. I wanted to tell her that she was in a broken system that systemically gets worse because no one is looking out for the teachers. I did not say any of this and I wondered what she did not say. Even in an interview interaction between two people who have known each other for years and have a basis of trust, there is holding back for any number of reasons. Listening to the teachers describe their professional learning experiences and needs was like watching a tragic car accident happen in slow motion. My sense was that the teachers were also aware of the imminent collision. This was the space in between. We were all watching them racing toward a collision and we were all helpless in stopping it from happening.

Their ideals of being a human, laughing, thinking, imaginative teacher were colliding with a system fixed on standardizing and routinizing the act of teaching.

Openings

Kate appreciated the progressive curriculum that the English teachers helped shape. She valued the texts taught as well as the assignments constructed around them. She explained:

> We have a really cool curriculum. We read a lot of great books. A lot of books about race and most of the United States. So, we're reading right now *White Sargasso Sea*. We read *The Bluest Eye*. We read *Othello*. A number of great, important books. And basically my goal in the classroom and by senior year the goal is to get them to start thinking about not just how to analyze a text for the text's sake, but to analyze a text and think about its importance in the world and what it has to say about us and about—you know how we communicate. How we use our voices. How we, you know, interact with people in the world. So, that's kind of what the focus is. We talk a lot about like how we talk about, write about, think about other people's experiences in a way that is responsible and empathic. You know because they're having to have a lot of hard conversations in English class, also in the world. Especially these days. And so, kind of getting them to be able to have those conversations. The class is pretty discussion heavy a lot of the time, which is great when they feel like discussing and sometimes it's hard. Sometimes it feels like pulling teeth a little bit. And then in terms of writing, you know they do all the standard writing. The five-paragraph essay, whatnot. They do some creative stuff. And then this year in terms of assessment, we are focusing both as a department on the departmental level and then also like in our whole school, we're focusing on student inquiry projects and projects that have like public displays of some sort at the end so that they're like publishing their work in different ways. Which is awesome.

While Kate was burdened by the excessive paperwork and mandated PD forced on teachers, she was grateful for the freedom she had to teach texts she deemed meaningful and to not have to teach from a scripted curriculum. Another area that Kate considered a professional learning opening was her work with the literacy coach. The coach assisted Kate in developing her curriculum to align with the school-wide goal of writing for intention and creating an inquiry project:

> The unit we're working on I haven't yet gotten to with my students because we're working on a second-semester project. I teach seniors so part of what I'm working on is like ways to get my students motivated, or to kind of keep them motivated even when the

> grades don't feel as significant, so once they've gotten into college how do I kind of like keep them interested in learning?

Engaging second-semester seniors is an age-old teaching challenge, but for a new teacher close in age to her students, it can be especially daunting. The literacy coach supported Kate's efforts to design a project that stood the chance of interesting students who had already been accepted into college.

Evie's coach also offered openings in her professional learning experiences. Evie explained that her most valuable professional learning support came from her teaching coach, colleagues, and the internet. She and her coach had worked together for the past 2 years, but they met when Evie was in graduate school and her coach was her Instructor. They shared a bond of trust and a vision of educator as activist. Their beliefs about living and teaching were informed by a social justice orientation and mission. Even though she met with her coach much less this year than last year, her interactions were generative. There is substantial research to support the belief that learning in relationships as part of a social, cultural process is a valuable way to elevate the profession of education (Coburn & Stein, 2010; Farber, 1991). Mayher (1990) explained that a large part of PD happens if teachers are given time and space to work together. Moreover, Kallick (2014) insisted that collaborative work "elevates professional discourse as you think through issues together hearing more perspectives." What Evie described confirmed the above-cited research. Shared time with her coach taught her how to shape and articulate the learning objectives she wanted to address in her classes. Shared space with her colleagues taught her classroom management techniques to emulate and avoid.

Evie and her coach created a social action curriculum together during the summer. She explained the process whereby her coach helped her structure her course:

> She showed me an example and took me through a Google Docs that she made to document each unit and then the breakdown, and then the UBD of each unit and what it would look like. So, that was great and we squared away what books we wanted to order and teach. Yeah, so she helped a lot with that. She even helped me finish some of them so that we could send them to my principal because I was doing it a unit at a time and so I finished about fifty percent over the summer and then I would just fill in the rest of the overall unit plans about two weeks before each unit started. But then our principal just dropped on us, "I want all of these documents right now," and so he asked out of the blue for all these documents, and so she helped me finish them up, which was also super great.

Despite the unexpected rush to submit her curriculum, together Evie and her coach stayed true to Evie's mission to center learning around "social justice and the liberation of the mind." Evie described her most satisfying teaching experiences as those times when she and her students had "in-depth, important conversations." She introduced bell hooks to her students and seized a relevant teaching moment by connecting instruction to the Blue Lines and Black Lives Matter movements when the opportunity presented itself. Evie's students talked about social capital and were engaged in the learning going on in her class. One of Evie's learning objectives for her students was that they developed the ability to express their ideas about things that mattered to them in verbal and written forms. Maxine Greene (1978) taught that schools should provide "occasions for individuals to articulate the themes of their own existence…students must be able to encounter curriculum as possibility" (p. 18). Evie tried to live Greene's teachings in her English classroom. However, she had to squeeze this type of teaching in between Regents preparation, which was standardized instruction. Evie's small charter school in the Bronx was beholden to a system of high stakes-testing, which is part of a larger discursive field in contemporary America involving discourses of accountability and measurement.

In a different interview, Evie and I were on a Skype call. She was sitting in the front seat of her friend's car and talking to me through her phone. She was waiting for her friend to give her a ride home from work, but wanted to tell me about her National Honor Society's

GoFundMe campaign, so she gave me a call. Evie realized that the internet was a huge part of her students' identities and she tried to provide students with opportunities to use the internet purposefully so they could experience its range of uses.

> So, what I'm doing for the club I run which is the National Honors Society, we're trying really hard to fundraise for this conference in February. I'm so excited for it and hope we can do it. So, we started a GoFundMe, and we're just passing it around that way, and that's really the easiest way to fundraise, through crowd sourcing, and kind of begging your family and friends to donate for you and just throw you a bone a little bit. My students get that completely. They're like, "My aunts are on it."

Of the four teachers in this study, Evie was the only one who regularly used the internet as a source of learning. She had a large teacher network on Facebook with whom she shared ideas.

> I just read a lot in general on my phone. My friends post a lot of articles on Facebook that are just really interesting, so I'll open them up, and I read them, and make a connection, or think, oh my gosh, that really applies. I also am always on Edutopia, I think is what it's called, and the Teach Channel, and it's hit or miss. Sometimes you don't find what you're looking for or anything that's really interesting, but Edutopia has a lot of really good articles I think about progressive education. So, I like reading their articles. So yeah, I would say my outside personal professional development is just by reading on the internet. I'm trying to think and be more specific about how I go about finding different articles.

Evie exuberantly told me that she "couldn't teach without the internet."

With a teaching schedule comprised of AP Language and Composition, eleventh grade English, and a Shakespeare elective, Richard enjoyed the content he taught. He particularly enjoyed getting to shape his own curriculum and select which texts he wanted to teach in his courses:

> I am still teaching texts that I want to teach and I'm not held down at my school by, "It's got to be from an anthology." I'm not having to pull pieces from each generation of American literature to teach the whole course. I get to teach my text, my way. So, we do *Gatsby*, we do *The Things They Carried*. We read *Hamlet* because I love *Hamlet*. I get to sort of teach these pieces in a way I want to and they have been kind enough to give me the room to teach that as long as they find success on—and in this case I teach 11th grade—so the Regents and AP exams.

Richard explained that he could teach the texts the way he wanted to because the administration was “kind enough to give me room to teach as long as students find success” on standardized tests. The sarcastic tone was a recognition of the dubious freedom the teachers had. Richard was glad to not be “held down” by having to teach a scripted curriculum, prescribed texts, or in a mandated style, but that decision was based on standardized test scores that would likely be above the national norm, given that he taught at a school for gifted and talented students. The freedom to teach what and how would be stripped of all teachers in the school by June. In an interview over dinner together in May, Richard explained that all subjects, even gym, were mandated to allot a portion of each class session to writing in the argument genre. Supposedly, this was driven by a need to get the school ratings up to remain competitive to potential students.

When I asked Richard if he had experienced professional learning that he found useful in terms of the content and processes of his teaching, he described two off-campus professional learning workshops that he found useful. The first was hosted by the graduate school he attended. It was a two-day literacy workshop:

> There was sort of this mix between smaller breakout sessions of a lot of like remix pieces, little flash debates and then the larger piece was really just trying to get more meaningful writing and there were few practices that can be engaged to get that out of students. So, I enjoyed that mostly because it was really focused on what I teach. Even when we talked about the middle school stuff, I can augment that and apply it to my own teaching. I also—I felt more productive at this space even for things that I was like, “Yeah. I do kind of do that already.” I still felt overall it was more of a confirmation I suppose in many ways on the pieces I did do right. Like this is a good practice, keep refining that piece. Like that’s fine tuning, not like big adjustments.
>
> The other was because I’m an AP teacher I did in my first year go off school grounds for an AP like one day workshop. That was the first election day I went to. And again, a very focused professional development that helped me understand teaching AP, helped me understand some of the work that goes into scoring AP, but also I felt productive. This was really specific to me and what I needed.

Richard and his colleague Kate both longed for the opportunity to observe, discuss, and learn from fellow teachers, and to the extent possible given the time constraints imposed on them, they carved out time after work to talk about teaching.

Constraints

Amy craved professional learning opportunities that were applicable to her specific needs. She described the PD she received at her school as too general to have any relevance for her classes. Amy explained that her classes of 30 students had an extremely wide range of academic abilities and emotional/behavioral functioning. Most of her students were English Language Learners and had special needs, yet she was not given professional training by the school district to address their needs successfully. The lack of professional support she received was taking a severe toll on her:

> I can't keep living like this. I am just miserable every single day. I've just been feeling so overwhelmed that outside of school I kind of like want to just disconnect. I don't know what the solution is. I just feel like I need to find a way to—because a lot of times what happens—the reason I feel overwhelmed is because I feel like I'm not helping all of them because they have so many different needs and I don't know where to target—like where to take the class when some of them are at like a third-grade reading level and some of them are at like a twelfth-grade reading level.

Johnson (2006) studied the psychological features of the teaching environment that sustain or deplete teachers and found sources of sustainability derived from the meaningfulness teachers found in their day-to-day work, along with "opportunities they find for learning and growth" (p. 2). The lack of fulfillment and scarcity of learning opportunities caused major psychic struggles for Amy. It is important to note that the class schedule Amy agreed to teach when she was hired was changed by the Assistant principals without her knowledge or consent over the summer. The courses she was assigned were outside of her area of expertise, a point she raised multiple times in every interview we had.

Every time Amy apologized for her lack of expertise in teaching ELL and Special Needs students, I flashed back to her as a confident student in my English Methods class at a teaching college, where she was the only student in an 18-student seminar who could straddle teaching the poetry of Browning and Angelou. In a short 20 minutes, her teaching unfolded the arms of her classmates who used their body language to express that they had no interest in reading the poetry of a dead White male. Arms flinging across the large oak table to make their points, students heatedly discussed the poetic representations of oppression and defiance as represented across time and cultures. No, Amy did not have the expertise to teach ELL and Special Needs classes—that was not her training; however, she was on track to becoming a strong English teacher in 21st century America, and in her school, they simply bundled the three roles together, regardless of teaching expertise or a plan for teachers to attain that expertise.

Richard struggled to find the time to complete the excessive paperwork foisted on teachers to document the school's PD mandates while trying to complete writing college recommendation letters for students:

> A lot of the fall is taken up with writing these PD pieces, and so just kind of the basic standard PLC was tough for us to get into. For us—like particular allowances were made for the English department to have our PLC be focused on our work with our literacy coach but then the expectation shifted to where we were no longer just working with the coach and talking to each other about our particular work: we had to shape the notes that go along with our PLC work with the coach—we had to shape all of our notes to focus on responding to the expectations that our PLC would meet our theory of action which is about writing in the school—It's a lot of buzzwords. So, for some of these pieces—like the Monday afterschool time and the Tuesday Other Professional Work time was taken up a lot with PLCs that we were forced to do or with specific requests to our PLCs.

Richard explained that the extra work being forced on teachers served to isolate them from their colleagues. He stated, "There is so much extra work that I have less time to be able to even check in with other teachers." Richard felt that he was missing the learning benefits that could be gained by formal and informal discussion with colleagues. Dialogue-based learning can be especially beneficial to beginning teachers as they work through their teaching experiences together. Richard discussed with his department chair the idea of changing the schedule for first-year teachers to teach four classes a day of only one or two preparations and have the fifth-class period spent observing other teachers. This is similar to the teaching schedule I described in Chapter I, when I recounted my first year of teaching. The pedagogical value of this approach extends beyond collaborative learning; its merit also lies in experiencing job-embedded learning opportunities. Unfortunately, it was highly unlikely that the teaching schedule Richard proposed would be adopted. Even observing other teachers' classes posed a challenge as the school suffered from a shortage of substitute teachers, so every period that was not spent teaching was usually spent substituting for a class somewhere in the K-12 school.

To a certain extent, all the participants alerted me to the vast gap that existed between the PD experiences that beginning teachers received and the professional learning experiences beginning teachers reported needing, but none more so than Kate. This may because Kate was keenly aware of how the ways her learning needs were and were not being met impacted her conception of what it meant to be a teacher. Kate's conception of her teaching identity resembled the construction of teaching as a calling, described by Hansen (2011). Hansen explained, "To conceive of teaching as a calling, rather than as solely a job or occupation, elevates teaching to its proper place as one of humanity's most dignified and important social undertakings" (p. 4). Both of Kate's parents were professors and they instilled in her a love of learning and teaching. They also shaped her conception of educator through the image and identity they had as professors as well as their vision of public school teachers. Kate recounted:

> I was raised by stubbornly public school supporting parents. I was raised to believe that I should be teaching in the public-school system and felt strongly about that and I still do but it's hard under these circumstances. And it's hard not seeing good examples of how to teach in the New York City public school system even though I know they are

> here. I student taught in the New York public school system and it was great and the teachers seemed much happier than they are here. I know that it exists, but we don't really have a lot of models of it…. It's frustrating as a new teacher because we don't really get to see examples of teachers who like make it work and sustain a life in the department of education. Like all we see are teachers who get burnt out and frustrated.

The desire to have models of teachers who were expert and passionate was a refrain I heard from Kate over the year I followed her teaching. She explained, "It's kind of hard to be going into a profession where you feel like nobody is still feeling good about it in ten, twenty years." The teachers in the English department were "young—the oldest teacher is thirty years old and most of us are in our second or third year. One teacher has four years of experience." Kate seemed to know intuitively what she needed to further her craft; she wanted models and mentors who had English teaching expertise, which is why the opportunity to have the literacy coach work with her was promising:

> I think like our department is really close and I think we all really like respect each other and we are all there for each other and we run ideas by each other a lot, but yeah, it's nice to have somebody—like we talk—we're all sort of at the same level just in terms of the amount of time we've spent in the classroom, so sometimes we're all just like, I don't know how to do this and the coach is kind of a nice, older, more experienced person to have.

Kate explained that now that she has survived that blurry first year of teaching, in her second year she needed to think about how to "actually become a good teacher. It's not just about survival, there has got be something more. And that's a great thing to work on." The specific aspects of teaching that she wanted to work on centered around leading classroom discussions, running writing workshops, and classroom management. However, the PD mandated at her school had a different focus:

> A lot of our PD has been focused on getting us to do some research of sort of how inquiry projects work and how public display of work functions. How it can function in a school. So, that's a lot of what we're doing. And then we're working with the coach specifically in the English department. She's kind of helping us develop our curriculum in order to get to this inquiry project in English specifically. So, a lot of the PD feels like

> it's about sort of the development of curriculum and units. But not really as much about what's happening in the classroom.
>
> We don't talk that much about like we don't have PD that's about sort of how to teach within the class. Sort of even in terms of just like running discussions, or how to run writing workshops, or like anything management related we never have done that. So, that sort of thing. Which I think is the stuff that's most useful for second- and third-year teachers.

Kate explained how she wished for professional learning that dealt with what she needed instead of what she was receiving from the administrative school-wide PD initiatives, which "[don't] actually feel particularly relevant to what we're actually doing in our classroom." Kate wanted to visit her colleagues' classes so she could expand her repertoire of instructional techniques. Yet, during her free periods, she was tasked with being a substitute teacher for the lower grades in the school.

> We do have a couple of free periods a day, but we're having a lot of trouble with coverages. We don't have substitutes. We are having to cover other classes during the day. A lot of my free periods get taken up and I don't have a lot of time during the day to see other classes and I really wish I did. Because it can feel like you're kind of in a vacuum. Like you know you only have the experience of yourself in the room with these kids and you have no sense of how it's working anywhere else. And some things that come really naturally to some people just don't to me. And I need to kind of think through it more…but half the time we're covering a third-grade class and I'm not learning anything from that.

Ruth Vinz (1996) explained that teachers incorporate the images of teachers represented in pop culture and historically into their own personal teaching identities. Through ongoing reflection, they can conceive of new teaching identities for themselves. For novice teachers who are beginning the unending process of shaping their professional identities, observing fellow teachers can cast teachers and teaching in a more realistic light. Kate told me that she would "love to spend more time seeing how other people do this sort of thing…right now I see almost no teaching and that's kind of a shame, I know I'm in a school of wonderful teachers." However, observing colleagues was not part of the mandated PD and it was not something teachers can do during their free periods to enhance their learning because, as Richard and Kate explained, they were tasked with substitute teaching during their free periods.

Interestingly, one of the PD initiatives mandated at Richard and Kate's school was the formation of PLCs. However, Richard labeled the PLCs "the new buzzword" and Kate explained how the PLCs mandated at her school just served as another thing contributing to her feeling overwhelmed rather than furthering her professional growth:

> It just feels like stuff that we are supposed to be building for the administration and school to look good, and it's a lot of paperwork. Like a lot of filling out documents about various things. And we have that during all our outside of school work time and we have mandatory department meetings and things like that. It's a lot of other like bureaucratic stuff—like red tape stuff that just takes a stupid amount of time and a stupid amount of like paperwork, stuff like that—like DOE regulations and stuff—so that sort of thing.

The importance of PLCs being authentic communities of learning and not mandated PD cannot be overstated. When I asked Kate who exactly the administration was trying to look good for, she could not pinpoint a specific person or group of people.

Both Kate and Richard described the graduate school they attended as fostering the practice of being highly reflexive teachers. Kate was frustrated by the desire and need to be reflexive, but also being so overwhelmed with paperwork that she was robbed of the time and collaborative resource in the form of her coach to enable her to sort through her experiences. Kate was aware that such mindful reflexivity required time and she described a teaching moment when she was teaching the same lesson she taught the year before and noted that something in the classroom was not working. She then remembered that it also did not work the previous year:

> This is only my second year so I'm starting to teach the same lessons that I taught last year and that's the first time that's happened. And sometimes I'll get to a moment in the class that's not working and I'll be like, oh, now I just remembered that this also didn't work last year this time but I just didn't. I was like same stuff.

Kate did not have a repertoire of teaching experiences to apply to the current situation when she stood in front of her class and realized that she should not stick with the current lesson but was not sure what to do instead. Kate wanted to discuss the experience with her coach but could not because her time was allocated to ancillary work from the administration. She felt a valuable PD opportunity was lost to her.

“Okay, I really want to know about X”

Richard just had his dinner delivered and, in between bites, he told me that every Monday, there was a segmented amount of time at the end of the school day for some form of PD. Richard explained that he did not remember the focus of the PD his first year. All of the teachers in the study described their first year of teaching as a “blur,” with little recollection of the concrete details that collectively made up the school year. During his second year, the school got a new principal who tried to “give more focus and intention” to the PD. This year, there was a school-wide focus on collaborative student analysis of work and the Common Core Anchor Standard 1 for reading. Richard explained that focusing the same PD school-wide was not effective:

> So we started with this big idea on the day before we came back to school with the focus for the school community. So, whether you’re an elementary school student, a middle school student—or elementary school teacher, middle school teacher, or an upper school teacher, we’re all looking to improve this aspect of our school.
>
> What that has translated to most recently has been the, again, collaborative analysis of student work, the concept being originally was as teams we would get together, we would look at a few students from really the lowest third of the class, middle third, and upper third, you know, most of advance students versus the lowest students and see what’s working and what’s not working, trying to figure things out. Try to help augment the students. Once again, the struggles with that at our school has been really getting the same PD for every teacher in a K through 12 school doesn’t seem as strong. It’s not effective.

The original concept of the collaborative student analysis was that teams of teachers would look at student work from the lowest third of the class, the middle third, and upper third "to see what's working and what's not working." The high school teachers did not find the PD helpful since they did not have grade teams. Richard felt the PD initiative had not been implemented "effectively," yet since it did not have a process that built on itself in a consistent way, so it devolved into additional paperwork. Richard found it frustrating to spend 45 minutes to an hour writing up reflections about different thirds of his classes. He explained that he reflected on his teaching practice daily and would have preferred professional learning that focused on something very specific to his needs, "not necessarily something the school could offer across the board."

Researchers (Beach, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Daro, 2014) have cited the generic construction of dominant approaches to PD, which are based on epistemological beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how people learn as treating learning as a one-size-fits-all, episodic event that ignores the question of what knowledge teachers already possess. Richard explained that he wished he could have a PD "that started with him saying, okay, I really want to know about X. For example, how to grade these essays faster and more accurately." But this was not the approach his school took; rather, they offered PD in the form of one broad swath for K-12 teachers across all content areas. "We just have a very clear directive of what is expected of us from our administration, so we have to do what they are telling us for PD…which isn't the end of the world…but for those forty-five minutes, I kind of wish I was grading."

Evie explained that school-wide PD is mandated for teachers without their input or consideration of their learning needs, abilities, and interests. She explained:

> Well, last week and this week it will be a lot of preparing for Regents and talking about protocols and stuff like that but usually it's pointless in my opinion. It's just going over rigorous instruction and what that looks like. Sometimes we'll review each other's lesson plans but even then, it still feels like something I don't want to do. I don't know. It's just because there's so much to do that it sometimes feels like a waste of time. So, we have Mondays off from grade team but I don't know, I feel like we should have grade

> team like three times a week instead of four, or maybe even two. Unless there's something we really need to share.

The work Evie's students did in relation to the Black Lives Matter and Blue Lines movements were not valued as rigorous instruction, according to the dominant discourse of PD in her school. The learning outcomes derived from those experiences cannot be measured quantitatively. In accordance with the regime of accountability in her school, which was driven by getting an 87 on standardized tests, Evie's teaching was not counted as rigorous.

The two teaching content questions that Amy struggled with were: (a) how to conduct an English class when students' attendance is sporadic, and (b) how to conduct an English class when students do not read at home.

> Attendance is kind of sporadic. Like there are some kids who are always there and some kids who like—I don't know, like they just say, "I'm not coming to school tomorrow." Like, "I'm just staying home." So a lot of times it's hard because I teach a lesson that I think is going to be really important but then like half the class isn't there. The next day I try to teach like a similar lesson with like different activities or content. But it makes it hard.
>
> The other thing that's difficult is I realized in the first quarter that I was expecting them to read at home and they were not reading at home so a lot of the activities that I had planned—like I really wanted to do literature circles but they weren't reading the book so like it just bombed completely because they couldn't talk about any of it. But even if I have them do like independent reading maybe like ten of them will do it and then the rest of them will just be talking. So, what I do now is I read to them and that has helped like get them engaged in the book. they're at such different levels that I think some of them if I didn't read to them they just wouldn't be able to read the book.
>
> The parents in the community are not very involved. I called a lot of them last quarter—like I pretty much called every parent of the students who were failing—and I had a lot of students failing. And it just—like most of them said, "I'm going to talk to my son or my daughter and I want them to do well," but then when I met them at parent/teacher conferences it was like kind of eye-opening because they're just like—they are very lenient and like they were—I don't know, the demeanor was kind of surprising to me because like a lot of those kids are failing but the parents were like, "Yeah, you have to do your homework," like just very, very soft tone and not very concerned about it. I don't think they want their kids to fail but I think maybe it's because they feel like powerless over it and that's why they respond that way. I think the kids, they don't really see, "Well, what's going to happen if I fail?" I think a lot of times since they're allowed to go to summer school they just say, "Oh well, I'll go to summer school," and that's it.

Areas of teaching process that Amy identified as learning needs were classroom management and the successful differentiation of learning, and for her, the two were intertwined. Amy wondered how to differentiate learning when there was such an extreme range of ability levels and needs:

> It's been tough. It's been really tough, because the percentage of kids with learning disabilities are pretty high and I think like a lot of them when they're struggling they act out, and like I've been trying to find a balance—like a way to teach to all the different levels in the class—and then there's also a bunch of English language learners, so I don't know, I just feel like sometimes I'm not sure like where to—what level or like what group to cater to.
>
> But I think it's part of why they act out sometimes because like it's either too difficult for them or too easy. And—I don't know, it's not just the English language learners and the students with disabilities, it's just—it's been hard to like be able to keep the whole class engaged and the whole class focused and on task at once. Some days it feels like I just spend the whole day trying to manage the class and nothing really happens. Other days, yes, I am able to like get through the content, although what I have noticed is that like when I plan my lessons it usually takes me like two or three days to do one lesson—sometimes, I manage to get them to do something, but the majority of the time, I just feel like a police officer.

Realizing that she was not getting the professional learning support she needed at her school, and commenting that "there is a shared sentiment among teachers that no one is getting much support," Amy sought professional learning experiences elsewhere:

> I think a lot of the professional development experiences I've had have been—like I think they're implicitly trying to address some of the obstacles that you face as a teacher but a lot of it is like very theoretical and not practical. Like I went to—on Election Day I went to a professional development on English language learners. And a lot of what they were saying was like focused on one student and what I kept thinking was "How do I do this when I have thirty students in the classroom? Like how do I keep track of every single student's development and all the different needs when there are thirty in the classroom and I have five sections?" And just like some of the strategies that they had seemed really good but it just doesn't seem realistic when you have so many students. And the other thing is like the way they were talking about the schools. They had a panel in the beginning of different educators and there was one woman who was the coordinator for English language learners at her school and it just seems like a lot of those schools have a lot more like support already embedded within the school, so I felt kind of like—I don't know—I'm not sure how useful this is going to be for me because I don't have any of those things in my school.

The toll that teaching in this school, with its lack of meaningful professional support, was taking on Amy's psyche was profound. She was increasingly feeling helpless in a system she perceived as indifferent to the needs of her and her students.

Richard envisioned having the freedom to select PD to meet his specific needs when he needed it, not the mandated hour every Monday after school:

> That space is there, it's built into the system, and the administration could say, "We need you to complete, you know, twenty hours at the end of twenty weeks," you don't have to follow our big thing, but you have a very specific request or even if there were like different skills online that was just like essay grading and it was like five hour, five, you know, individual lessons. And then there was another piece that would be like, "Getting your kids to read closely," or, you know, something that was really specific to me as an English teacher that I could continue to sort of expand and refine my practice while simultaneously not feeling like I'm wasting my time, would be really productive and really helpful. And whether I did it in that hour where I graded in that hour and then, you know, next week when I have a little bit less grading or I don't have all essays I spent two hours doing the work I needed to do an hour in school and an hour on my own time. If I had a very specific, you know, requirement and the room to do it, but also the space for my own pacing that would be extraordinary as a teacher who's already busy.

Richard imagined focusing his learning on essay grading or close reading in a space and at the pace that worked for a busy teacher. This approach addressed more than just a logistical need; Richard talked about "continuing to expand and refine my practice." Richard and I imagined a veteran teacher cloud where he had someone, even videos, that involved a master teacher who could say, "All right guys, I know you're struggling getting your kids to get excited about those first ten pages of a book. Here's what I have been doing and here's why it works for me." Richard explained that his English department was composed of "young and fresh teachers," which was great in so far as they had a shared philosophy of teaching and deep friendships, but there were no veterans to turn to for advice about the content and process of teaching English, and that was something Richard would have found very helpful. Interestingly, Richard's vision was in line with research centered around teacher-focused professional learning.

The areas of teaching content that Richard identified as needs were curriculum development and differentiating writing instruction for students who had different writing challenges. The literacy coach working with the English department assisted Richard in unit development:

> We don't have a lot of teaching experience in our department. I think I feel that way generally for the school. On that note, the literacy coach has acted in many ways like a mentor, particularly with really specific unit development, which is what she's been working on us with. But I don't have a lot of teachers here thinking about who I could go work ideas through with or like check in with the experience; so, having the coach—not just have the experience but like really specific English teacher experience has been quite helpful.
>
> The coach has helped me design my *Great Gatsby* unit, it's a unit that I've done the last couple of years—I'm very excited, I love it—and we ultimately—my project at the end is a film unit and she really helped probe some of the questions as to like what I was trying to get out of the students while we did this unit, not just to get them read a book but at the end of the unit what is their takeaway?

Richard appreciated the knowledge he gained by working with an experienced English teacher/coach. Unlike the one-size-fits-all PD approach offered by the school district, the coach had the expertise to tailor learning to Richard's goals and needs, which made the experience meaningful. Unfortunately, time did not permit Richard to work with the coach on differentiating writing instruction to all learners, so this was an unresolved teaching dilemma for him.

> And this is really my struggle as an English teacher is well, I have a hundred fifty students and every student needs to learn a different piece of grammar or like a different—they all struggle with a comma but in every different way.
>
> So, it's like I know we need to work on this, but it's hard because each kid needs to work on something different and trying to apply one lesson to all of the students on some of these really basic skill pieces doesn't seem to work as well. So, when I'm doing these PD's like I wish I could just do a professional development that started really like with me being like, "Okay. I want to know how to grade these essays faster and more accurately."

Kate also wanted to work on writing with her coach, but what she reported wanting most was time to work with her colleagues to observe each other's classes. Kate described professional learning that would be meaningful to her:

> I think it would be like just being able to see a model. Like seeing different forms of in class instruction in different ways. Either through video. Though just going into other classes and watching through even like creating lessons for each other. That kind of seems like it could be cool. You know just to kind of explore the different ways we get to different ideas and work through it together. That sort of thing. You know and then to see like expert teachers do it as well. None of us totally know what we are doing. Not that maybe you ever know what you're doing. But you know just like the more modeling—the better.

Kate identified the gaps she saw expanding in her professional learning. Along with the other participants in the study, Kate noted that texts and course work in graduate school which focused on leading discussions and classroom management, while highly interesting, were theoretical when read prior to teaching. But now that they were teaching, there was a struggle to apply the principles in the absence of models and collegial conversation. Kate and I discussed the possible benefits of videotaping classes as a form of professional learning. Kate explained that she would welcome the opportunity to be videotaped and discuss the class with colleagues and her coach.

Kate wanted additional support in teaching writing. She sought formulas for breaking the standard writing formulas that were ingrained in students as early on as elementary school.

> I think teaching writing is something that I have struggled with. Again, partially because I'm teaching you know the kids who tend to not be the strong English kids. Because the strong English students are in AP. And I was also a strong English student. And I was an English major in college so I had become very comfortable with the essay form. I know how to break down a thesis. But teaching it in a way that allows them to write a well-crafted thesis essay. You know, five-paragraph essay but that doesn't like take away all of the imaginativeness that should go into that or all the sort of creative complexity that should go into is really hard for me. Like I can get them to write a basic thesis and that's fine. But it's like not super interesting and they don't get excited by it. And then I can't like get them to that next place. And so just even hearing how different teachers have done it or having presentations on how different people have done it might be cool.

Kate explained that the school district will assign teachers a book to read periodically, but the selections have not addressed her professional needs. "Once in a while we'll get assigned a book in school to check out. But again, it's mostly about developing curriculum and not about classroom stuff. I mean like management stuff and I don't even mean like you know this school is by no means a difficult school management wise." The other area of teaching content that Kate identified as needing professional learning support in was leading lively classroom discussions. Kate described the terrifying feeling she had when a discussion was "clearly stagnant and no one is talking." She explained how as a new teacher, she was attached to her plan. Driven by the need to get the students to a specific place, she was reluctant to let go of her plan when students were not "latching on" because she did not have a different plan. Kate reported that she was slowly getting better at rethinking questions on the spot. Without a repertoire of teaching experiences to draw on in those moments that require shifting gears in response to the students' learning needs, Kate explained that sometimes she froze, then then she thought about what she was trying to achieve:

> It's terrifying when you can't get a discussion going and I don't know what to do. But I've gotten a little bit better about like being able to sort of like adapt and rethink questions on the spot when you know things are clearly kind of like stagnant and no one's talking. But it's terrifying and it can be really hard for me. And especially because I think when you're early on in your teaching career you get attached to your plan. You're like I got to get to this place. And then as soon as it feels like nobody's latching onto that, you're like now I don't have another plan. We don't get enough PD about classroom discussions—I haven't had a lot of professional development about discussion. I mean that's what I think is kind of at the heart of a good English class. Sometimes I don't know what to do when the discussion doesn't take off and then I really freeze. But I think it's kind of a matter of like in my head I'm like okay, what am I trying to get them to ultimately. And then like is there another version of this question or another path we can take. But then it's just like that path tends to be a little bit messier. Or the other thing I do, which I don't like and I would like to avoid, is doing a lot of like kind of front loading or like leading questions in a way that are like too leading. Because I'm just like trying to get them somewhere. And so you know I'll start with these really like strong open-ended questions and then if they don't get there I'm like okay. I just kind of try to lead them. Which I don't like because I think ideally I like watching them do most of the work. But sometimes that just doesn't work.

Kate was displeased with herself when she had to resort to leading questions to achieve her lesson's learning objectives. She had an ideal vision of herself as an English teacher who led stimulating, not stagnant discussions, and had the students do most of the exploratory thinking.

The biggest challenge in the area of the teaching process that Kate experienced was classroom management. Again, Kate instinctively knew that if she could engage her students, especially her second-semester seniors, in stimulating discussions, then classroom management would follow. However, in the absence of learning from experienced teachers or professional learning that focused on management, Kate and her colleagues were left to grapple with how to be an authority figure in the classroom without being authoritative. She explained:

> With seniors especially, I think like kind of figuring out ways both balancing like how to keep them engaged enough that they're not getting distracted. But then also how to kind of keep them in line when they are getting distracted. It's a tricky space with seniors. They're so adult in certain ways and you want to give them kind of like agency in the classroom. And you want to treat them like adults. And then also they will kind of take advantage of that. They're seniors. And so, kind of like figuring out how to be I don't know like an adult presence and also to give them their presence in the room and we did very little with management in graduate school. We did very little with like how to actually kind of like control a classroom. And it feels so abstract. And then you go in there and you're like okay, I am now creating a safe space. Let's go. And they're like, no. No.
>
> I think it would be helpful to watch classroom management happen from experienced teachers. Because I do think that's another thing that you can learn and then it becomes more intuitive—after you've done that for a while.
>
> You know a lot of us go into teaching, especially English teachers, because we love discussing literature. We enjoy writing. And we like having conversations. And usually when we're having conversations, they're conversations, they're not debates that we need to win. And the subject really doesn't lend itself to that. You know it's not like it revolves around answers that we have and they don't. It revolves around the idea that they have the answers too. And so then it's like importantly it's supposed to feel equal. But then there are times that it shouldn't feel equal. So, it's hard. It's weird. We are the youngest department. There are a number of young teachers in the school and I think that's because you know keeping teachers in the Department of Education is tricky. Teachers leave and so there just are a lot of young teachers. But none that are across the board young like we are.

It occurred to me as I was listening to Kate that even if there were veteran teachers in the department, she and her colleagues would not have the opportunity to observe each other's classes since they were tasked with substituting during their free periods.

Teacher Attrition

There were moments with her students when Evie realized the kind of teacher she could be. She was also acutely aware of how scarce these moments were, as most of her time was spent preparing students for Regents exams. Evie weighed the benefits of continuing to teach in her current school against the benefits of leaving:

> I am torn between my students and myself. This is only my second year. Luckily, it is my second year at the same school. Unfortunately, I am teaching juniors, so I really want to see them graduate. We love each other. And, I am doing really important work with them. I am lucky in the sense that I was able to create my own curriculum. The other English teachers and I created a solid set of elective courses centered on social justice and the liberation of the mind. The students look forward to our classes. Also, I am essentially able to get any materials I could ask for—it is easy to put in a request for a few things from Amazon or Staples and get it within the week. These are major perks that make my job as a teacher less stressful, because I know I can count on having the materials I need to make my classroom function; I've heard horror stories of schools with not enough room in the budget for such things, and even though I do spend a lot of out-of-pocket money on my classroom, I know it isn't anywhere near what some teachers are spending in some schools. In the beginning of the year I was sure I would not come back. I made a vow to myself, and made my best friend swear to me that she wouldn't let me go back there in the fall of 2017.

Later in the year, another variable would impact Evie's decision to teach in a different school, and that would be her desire to have colleagues in the English department with more than 3 years of experience.

Evie learned from her colleagues. She asked questions about classroom management and shared her teaching insights readily. This took place informally with the teachers with whom she shared a classroom. Evie was grateful for these impromptu PD opportunities with her students and colleagues:

> Doing is how I learned best: talking with my students to see how I could be better, watching teachers I admire work their magic with the same students I had…. A teacher I love teaches in my classroom on my prep period, and I am lucky that there is nowhere else for me to go during that time, so I stay and observe all the time. I am thankful she allows me to do that.

However, there was a high teacher turnover rate at the school, so colleagues came and went quickly—despite teachers being able to create their own curriculum as opposed to having scripted curriculum, and having a plethora of classroom materials available to them. The students were impacted by the high rate of turnover. Evie described a conversation she and the AP had with the students in her National Honor Society club. They were discussing what students liked and disliked about the school and what they would tell to prospective students. The students were most upset that "teachers always leave and that means they can't do their clubs." She recognized that they have "had so many teachers in their lives and everybody needs a little continuity." Evie thought to herself, "Damn, I wanted to leave. I am torn between my students and myself." For Evie, to leave would be to abandon her students, but to stay would be to abandon herself. The massive turnover the school experienced yearly positioned Evie, who was in her second year of teaching, to be a veteran the following year. Evie was concerned that if she stayed into her third year, she would be forced into a role of mentor in a hostile environment:

> Yeah, and that's another reason why I really don't want to stay 'cause I don't want to be put in a position where I have to care for others or guide other people through—Yeah, and I'm sure I could say I don't feel comfortable doing this, it's just not easy to say no to these two White dudes who don't have any idea—Yeah, they have no perception of other people and how they may feel, or maybe they do and they just don't care.

The climate at the school was not collaborative, and that caring stretch might be to the detriment of one's own survival. While Evie acknowledged the learning benefits she derived from watching her colleague teach, she was not prepared to be in the position of senior teacher at the school and was uneasy with what the administration may ask of her in that role. Anderson and

Olsen (2006) investigated early career urban teachers' perspectives on and experiences in PD. The findings of their study cohered with Evie's experience: "Little support was provided and high rates of turnover meant that few veteran teachers were present to act as mentors or school leaders. Newer teachers felt pressured to take on leadership roles and found themselves giving rather than receiving support" (p. 366). As a teacher in her second year, Evie was reluctant to take on the role and responsibilities of a veteran teacher. This dynamic contributes to the cycle of teacher attrition, whereby beginning teachers leave the school or profession within their first few years of teaching, creating a dearth of content and institutional knowledge to support new teachers.

High teacher attrition among beginning teachers is a phenomenon that has been well-documented (Hancock & Scherff, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001, 2003, 2006) in educational research. It may be useful to ask beginning teachers why they are leaving the schools. How much of their leaving is due to power relations circulating within the schools at the micro and macro level? Is flight the only form of resistance available to beginning teachers if they refuse to be regulated by the dominant technologies of power circulating?

Kate explained that she did not have the bandwidth to seek out additional professional learning; however, she was able to give and get support from her colleagues in the English department and that helped to sustain her. By the spring, the English teachers looked to each other daily for moral support. When I asked Kate and Richard what they did to hold it together, Kate told me, "We cry. One person cries a day"; Richard explained that "We share shoulder pads. We all buy a shoulder pad and today's my shoulder pad day so she can cry; tomorrow we will switch." The weight of the administrative demands was so great that Kate and Richard told me that they might leave this school, despite their “love for the department, students, teachers.” Kate confided:

> And that’s what’s very frustrating, I think about leaving and because of this administration I do want to leave but that sucks because like we’re so close to our department and I love our department and I love the teachers and I love the students, and like those seem like the things that should matter, and then it just stinks to feel like you have to leave a place when those things are so good, because I can’t really imagine going to another place where those things were that good but the administration makes it bad enough that it’s not worth it and that sucks.

Richard did leave the school at the end of the school year, but Kate stayed on because she wanted more experience before seeking a new position.

Even though Erica loved her students, the constraints placed on her by administrators driven by numbers and test scores were great enough that she sought openings. She reopened her Teach application. She interviewed at Consortium schools, which are Regents-exempt and portfolio-based, so she would not have to teach to a test. She landed a new job at a Consortium school, which prided itself on an egalitarian model of leadership, and had teachers who had 6-plus years of experience in the English department. She was hopeful that in the new school, she would not live in fear of being bothered.

Amy was so profoundly bothered at the Charter school in the Bronx that she did something she never dreamed she would do—she left her teaching position mid-year. On a cold, Sunday morning in December, I checked my email to find the following message:

> *Dear Beth,*
> *I hope this email finds you well. I’m writing because since the last time we spoke, I have continued to struggle with the environment at my school and am strongly considering leaving. I tried to take your advice and stay until the end of the school year, but the situation has reached a point where it has started to affect my health.*
> *I was wondering if you would be able to talk on the phone or Skype sometime this week so I can ask for your guidance?*
> *Thank you so much.*
>
> *All my best,*

Amy

My heart sank as I remembered back 3 short years earlier when Amy joyfully and insightfully led her fellow graduate students in a reading of Robert Barrett Browning’s poem, “My Last Duchess,” analyzing it through a feminist lens. Here was an English teacher who seemingly had it all: deep content knowledge, progressive pedagogy, and passion.

I immediately emailed Amy back and told her I was available to talk any time she wanted. My phone rang. The voice on the other end was exhausted. Drained. Broken. “I can’t do this anymore. I’m having panic attacks. I’m getting sick. I dread going to that place.” I had no intention of trying to convince her to stay. What she had shared with me over the past 5 months was a story of the de-professionalization of a teacher. By leaving, Amy seized the only opening available to her.

When I spoke to Amy again in late January, she explained that the month away from school had given her perspective. She realized that the situation had made her “pretty severely depressed.” With the assistance of a therapist, she was gradually regaining her self-confidence and feeling stronger. When I asked Amy if she would consider teaching again, she replied, “I’m not sure anymore. I’m hoping that if I have a good teaching experience, I will be more enthusiastic about it again, I don’t know. Right now, I just need time to recover because it really affected me emotionally.” I was heartened that she was on a path to regaining her health and I tried to have faith that she would not leave the profession.

In May, Amy and I met for dinner. The color in her cheeks had returned, the dark circles under her eyes had vanished, and her smile was radiant. She excitedly told me, “I took a teaching job at a private school…you know, smaller class sizes.” The following December, half-way through the academic year I received the following email from Amy:

> *Dear Beth,*
> *I hope your dissertation is going well, and that I was able to provide some insights. My teaching position is great! I am working at a school in Westchester and I am really enjoying it. I'm teaching tenth grade English and a college-level writing class and have wonderful students. I am eternally grateful to you for encouraging me to stay in teaching after the difficult experiences I had over the past two years.*
> *Again, I hope you are well and that I may get a chance to read your dissertation in the near future!*
> *All my best,*
> *Amy*

While the public schools lost a potential star, the teaching profession did not, and that would have to be enough.

The teachers in my study had a clear idea of the professional learning experiences that were and were not valuable to them. They could also imagine professional learning that pushed and stretched their knowledge in meaningful ways that aligned with their learning needs.

The openings of opportunities to learn that were impactful to them arose from authentic collaboration; from deriving their agency through teaching experiences in the classroom and with colleagues and, in some cases, coaches; and from feeling an active belonging within a professional community. In the absence of those learning experiences, the teacher did not experience a void. They experienced being surveilled through "gotcha" moments. They experienced the pressure of having to be paperwork-compliant without understanding the purpose for the excessive documentation. They experienced being classified and categorized numerically. They experienced normalizing discourses and practices bearing down on them and shaping their sense of "self" as a teacher. They experienced haze when there was slippage in their discourse, when there was a dim awareness that questioned the regimes of truth established in their respective school contexts, that whispered to them that this was not the only way it was or could be. They were young and bright. So, three out of four of them left hoping to situate themselves in school cultures that were more authentic, elastic, and democratic.

The next chapter examines how dominant school discourses circulating in the participants’ schools and in education-at-large in the social, cultural, historic moment the study took place construct teachers’ subjectivities, their sense of selves While Chapter IV sought to situate the reader to the teachers and their school contexts, Chapter V offers a reading of the interviews through a Foucauldian framework.

CHAPTER V: POWER/KNOWLEDGE RELATIONS

> There's a world of difference between truth and facts. Facts can obscure the truth.
>
> –Maya Angelou

This chapter maps ideas and questions from the teachers' interviews presented in Chapter IV by analyzing the power relations in the participants' professional learning experiences, as informed by Michel Foucault's work related to studying the functions and effects of power/knowledge relations. I examine how the discourse surrounding professional learning organizes a way of thinking into a way of acting in the social and cultural context of four beginning high school English teachers in 21st century New York City public high schools. While the academic focus, process of admission, and availability of resources were different at the two schools included in the study, the culture of schools collapsed in with the same message: teachers are not trusted professionals, they need to be watched and surveilled; therefore, PD needs to be prescribed and mandated by administrators. Both schools delivered the same message, but the emphasis was different, creating a fabric of culture around the teachers. The relations of power that comprise each of the school's cultures included exercising such technologies of power as surveillance, normalization, classification, and regulation. Both schools exercised all of the technologies, but each school relied more heavily on one technology than the others, subsequently establishing the dominant discursive field. Each of the four participants in the study were situated as satellites within the culture of the school, and power circulated in their relationships working in and through them. Each of the teachers dealt with the school culture and power relations differently. How technologies of power shape and are shaped by technologies of the self is what differentiated the seemingly common experiences of the participants as they created new subjectivities as beginning high school English teachers.

Theoretical Frame: Michel Foucault's Relations of Power

Michel Foucault's work about the ways knowledge/power circulates serves as a theoretical frame to analyze the functions, effects, and possible transformation of self that power relations can produce. Foucault (1977) acknowledged that power is not used solely to repress. Rather in arguing for the productive aspects of power, he noted:

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (p. 119)

Foucault's work lacks a prescriptive methodology and he encouraged researchers to use his work as "gadgets" and "thinking tools" to examine their unique studies. To that end, in my reading of the stories of beginning high school English teachers, I identify the multi-functioning uses and manifestations of power relations in their practices and discourse. Foucault (1982) posited that power relations can happen only in situations where there are possibilities of openings. There needs to be an element of freedom on the part of the subjects to constitute resistance. This resistance can and, in the case of Amy, did take the form of flight. Foucault's point is that power moves in, and through subjects involved in power/knowledge relations, they are "vehicles of power" (Foucault, 1977, p. 98). Looking at dominant discourses from a social, cultural, historical perspective enables an examination of how discursive practices come to form what is considered the norm in a particular situated context, and how this norm acts and shapes teachers' subjectivities is the focus of this chapter. The analytic question I pose is: How do power/knowledge relations and practices shape the participants' subjectivities as they enter into the teaching profession as beginning high school English teachers?

Flight as Resistance: Amy's Experience

In Amy and Evie's school, surveillance, classification, and normalization were the dominant technologies of power in circulation within and through the people comprising the school culture. As Huckaby (2011) explained, "technologies of power focus on what determines individuals' behaviors, what submits individuals to particular types of domination, and the objectification of the subject" (p. 175). As mentioned previously, each participant, even within the same school, functioned as a unique vehicle of power, circulating and articulating its effects.

Amy's conception of herself as an English teacher prior to coming to the school involved facilitating lively discussions about literature, both classic and contemporary, with her students in a safe classroom environment; however, what she was initiated into was vastly different than the expectations she had for herself as a teacher and for the school as teaching community. She was not prepared for the surveillance rampant in the school. She was anticipating a lending hand, not a watchful gaze. For Amy, the experience of being watched enveloped her entire being, first constraining her physicality. Amy explained that on given days, there were four adults in her classroom: a special education coach, a co-teacher, a speech coach, and a paraprofessional. They entered the classroom, sporadically offering "feedback and criticism" which stemmed from their respective areas of expertise, but none had a background in teaching English. Amy felt intruded upon by the other adults in her space, but when the special education coach recommended that Amy split the class into four sections and have one of the adults teach each of the sections, the suggestion exceeded her notions of what it meant to be a teacher. She recounted, "I had to re-think what I thought being a teacher was." Her self-formation of her teaching identity was being shaped through practices of the self within power relations. The dominant discourse of schooling in this context established teaching norms that were not accepted as givens to Amy—or at least not yet, as a newcomer to the school. Foucault (1980) described mechanisms of power in “its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives” (p. 39). The particular ways in which power was kept on the move in Amy’s school propelled her to constantly doubt her own teaching abilities, and she longed for “time and space to explore and discover what practices, techniques, and teaching styles work for me.” However, the school culture was one that sponsored surveillance. With four teachers in and out of Amy’s classroom scrutinizing her teaching moves and an Assistant principal roaming the halls “trying to catch teachers doing something wrong,” she struggled with and against power relations, herself becoming a vehicle of power.

Foucault employed Bentham’s Panopticon to illustrate the visible and invisible mechanisms and effects of surveillance. He explained, “So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary…the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers” (p. 201). As it related to Amy’s experience, her awareness of possibly being watched at intermittent times and the anxiety it produced served as its own surveillance. She recounted that she forbade herself to experiment with the progressive pedagogy she embraced in graduate school for fear of exceeding the teaching norms the Assistant principal sought in his observations. Amy attempted to adopt the PD suggestions her teaching coach gave her, even when the pedagogy and teaching style were not her own. Amy found herself increasingly estranged from the teacher she wanted to be as she painfully self-monitored and regulated her every action in an attempt to be classified as at least “effective” and fit into the normative educational discourse that pervaded the school.

“I fucking burned them”

Along with surveillance, the technologies of power that were dominant at Amy’s school included classification and normalization. In Amy’s school, teachers were classified in a couple of ways: (a) teacher evaluations labeling them along the continuum of ineffective to highly effective—the Danielson Framework, and (b) being paperwork-compliant. The discursive field that prevailed at Amy’s school measured and evaluated teachers according to their teacher observations, so Amy who was subject to a surprise observation the second week of school was categorized as “ineffective” almost immediately. Unfortunately, the evaluations offered skeletal feedback of her strengths and challenges, so she was unable to apply any new knowledge gleaned from the evaluation to develop further as a teacher. The evaluation-driven culture of Amy’s school produced power/knowledge practices that circulated through the school and through Amy’s subjectivity and, ultimately, resistance.

The popularization of the Danielson Framework as an evaluation tool is one of the practices in NYC public schools that has become part of the dominant discourse and classification technique utilized in PD. While its use has become far more punitive than instructive, in a short time labeling a teacher a “2” or “3” has been normalized throughout the system and the larger sociopolitical context in which we speak about education. Patti Lather (2004) in discussing the “evidence- based” movement of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 explained that “Naming, classifying, and analyzing: all work toward disciplining through normalizing” (p. 24). NCLB, Race to the Top, and teacher evaluations that are tied to high-stakes standardized tests are all mandates that have become part of the dominant discourse in American public schooling over the past 16 years. The effects of the discursive field of surveillance and evaluation on Amy subjected her to a particular way of understanding herself in relation to others, including her students.

For 5 months, Amy internalized knowledge derived from power relation practices at her school that constructed an image of herself as an ineffective teacher. She kept power on the move by resisting the practices established at her school, dictating the pedagogical approach she was told to take into her teaching. She sought professional learning outside of her school in an effort to use knowledge to transform herself into the image of teacher she strove to be instead of being regulated by knowledge produced from teacher observations and evaluations labeling her "ineffective." Amy tried to leverage her deep content knowledge of literature to establish her teaching authority and competence; however, it was a challenge with so many students at different reading levels with different special education needs. To meet the challenge, she needed professional learning to support and guide her in making sense out of her learning experiences so she could use them constructively. Thinking back to my first year of teaching, I similarly had a large class of students with a variety of learning needs. I was tasked with teaching them British Literature, my content area of expertise. When I struggled to differentiate learning successfully to reach a wide range of student abilities, styles, and needs, I had a department of master English teachers willing and ready to think through my classroom dynamics with me so I could talk through my various understandings of my experiences.

Amy was disheartened that her teaching observations were administered by a vice principal who lacked expertise in her content area and was unfamiliar with her teaching biography and the learning backgrounds of her students. The feedback Amy received was boxed into evaluation forms that Taubman (2009) characterized as providing "neutrality, objectivity, and impersonality. But what exactly would be observed?" (p. 120). Feedback was reduced to numbers in a box. Observations were designed to classify and normalize Amy and the other teachers in her school. When Amy and I met for dinner in May, she told me she destroyed her teacher evaluations. Amy burned the evaluations that were a physical manifestation of a teaching identity she found damaging.

Amy refused to be contained and her impulse to learn was strong enough to resist the labels attributed to her in teacher evaluations that had to burn. And, like the mythical Phoenix, a version of herself had to burn so that she could rise from its ashes reborn.

Amy was being disciplined in the form that Foucault (1978) described as discipline that "normalizes" and "of course analyzes and breaks down; it breaks down individuals, places, time, movements, actions, and operations…. It breaks them down into components such that they can be seen, on the one hand, and modified on the other." (Lecture from series Security, Territory, Population, p. 56). These normalizing practices localized in Amy's power relations with(in) the school shaped her thinking and behavior in such a way that she was forced into the position of regulated subject. Amy was assessed by her students' ability to demonstrate proficiency on performance standards that, by design, standardize learning into component parts devoid of the holistic coherence that once marked a humanities course. Amy's deep knowledge of literature was not valued in the school, and she was left feeling forced to transform into a teacher who was disassociated from her very identity. The competing discursive fields that Amy experienced left her with the only option that could preserve the teaching identity she wished to forge, and that was flight.

Refusing to Be Contained

Amy's flight mid-year disrupted the relations of power between herself and the administration, taking the form of one of the facets of power defined by Foucault (1980) as "a process of struggles that transform, strengthen, or reverse the relations" (p. 53). Amy kept power on the move by residing in the space in between that struggled with the dominant discourses at the school. Amy came to understand herself in relation to others and that knowledge constituted how she was shaping her sense of self as a teacher. The way dominant discourses were impacting her was not a deliberate attempt on her part to shift part of her core identity; rather, it was an explosion of the excess that overflowed from administrators, colleagues, and coaches who tried to contain Amy by classifying and normalizing her.

Janet Miller (2005) wrote, "what is repressed in educational discourses and practice returns, nevertheless, as excess" (p. 112). Amy's decision to leave her teaching post mid-year was an explosive reaction to the norms that were established as social regulation at her school. Amy refused to conform to the teaching and administrative norms constituting the regime of truth that prevailed at her school. It would be months until Amy gained her strength and the perspective to understand the extent to which her notions of what it means to be an English teacher conflicted with the culture of measurement and surveillance that prevailed at the school. Since the discourse and practices at the school were so ingrained in the culture, they were seemingly invisible. Distance away from the school enabled Amy to piece together some of the fragmented learning experiences she had and to revisit the teaching identity that was aligned with her personal and professional values. Amy would take a teaching position the following fall at a private school that was not beholden to the standardized tests, which are designed to treat students and teachers as data. Foucault (1996) explained that power is capillary and net-like in organization. Accordingly, Amy's leaving destabilized Evie's grounding, but did not impact the localized norms of conduct for the administration after she was gone. This was evidenced in a conversation between Evie and the principal. During one of the many times Evie was forced to listen to her principal's monologues, he blamed Amy's leaving on her poor "classroom management" skills. Evie thought to herself, "She was totally unsupported and never received positive feedback from anyone." Amy's leaving made Evie realize how vulnerable she was at the school. Her voice shook as she described the quicksand on which she stood; "in terms of my relationship with him [the principal], I received a "Highly Effective" on my lesson that he observed. It sort of means nothing coming from him but it's still nice to say." It was unnerving for Evie to realize her professional validation was derived in the form of a label, which represented an evaluation system she despised, from a principal she distrusted.

Collision of Cultures: Evie's Experience

Shortly after Amy left, Evie found herself in a conversation with the principal, who attributed Amy's leaving to poor classroom management skills. Evie knew better but questioned whether the principal did. The principal was quick to classify Amy as "an ineffective teacher who couldn't handle the students." Amy knew that Evie did not receive any professional support. Amy told Evie that in her exit interview, the principal tried to turn the situation back on her and categorized her experience at the school as "a classroom management thing you have to work on." In the wake of Amy leaving, Evie felt vulnerable and exposed. She had witnessed a talented colleague, who received the same graduate education she did, quickly break down in a broken system. Evie politely listened to the principal classify Amy as ineffective and she reassured herself by telling me that the principal "trusts me. I received a highly effective on my lesson." Foucault (1983b) discussed the dividing practices that exclude, separate, and classify groups and individuals from each other as part of the process of establishing a norm. When the principal ranked, labeled, and classified the two teachers as "ineffective" and "highly effective," he employed the discourse of classification, which formed what was accepted as the discursive regime of truth in his school and within the larger New York City school system in this historic moment.

The impact on Evie and Amy of being classified and ranked was formative in terms of how they constituted their subjectivities through knowledge/power practices. Resistance to such classification for Amy required a rupture: she had to leave to preserve her sense of what it means to be an educator. Amy's leaving unmoored Evie. Evie was embarrassed by the charade she had to play with the administrators in her school, and she was left wondering how much freedom she had to enact the teaching principles she valued. The same way that surveillance can become normalized to the point of self-regulation, so too can classification, and Evie found herself classifying colleagues and herself into behaviors she deemed both acceptable and unacceptable.

Evie described an excessive teaching moment one of her colleagues had viewing it from multiple perspectives—that of her own, her colleague, and the administration:

> …But the teacher who is in her first year here, there are a lot of areas where she can use help and just work on, and for better or for worse, it's helping me understand what I want to do, what I don't want to do, and in that sense it works. I feel bad for her because she's having a really tough time, but there's definitely some things that she's doing that I would not do. She's having a really tough time. She came in so excited, and energetic, and great. Yeah. But I don't know much about her, so I don't really know where her flaws or whatever come from, but she had a really not good moment the other day which we all have, but I don't—this was on kind of another level. She was like really frustrated at one of the students who said, "I can't find my book. It's in my backpack somewhere." She said, "Well, let me help you" and she dumped out the backpack. Yeah, so it was kind of bleak.
>
> It was rough, but on the other hand—she's been reaching out about this student and this class period in general. She logged one item into our Dean—it's called the Dean's List, Dean's List is just a system we use to log and record student behavior, and detention, and submit referrals for a counseling session or whatever. So, she apparently logged one call to home, and nothing else, but I know she's called home more than that, it's just that she hasn't logged it. So, when it comes to facing administration, they said, well, how did it get to this point? You only logged one call.
>
> She hadn't brought this up to our assistant principal, our AP, who we share, this one I told you about. She didn't really communicate any of that to her. She communicated it more to the dean, and in the structure of the dean's office, as much as I love them, it's kind of—I mean they make judgment calls all day. So, part of it, if a kid gets kicked out

> of the class and has to go to the dean's room, it's sort of like, what's going on? Shake it off, cool down, all right. Go back ten minutes before class ends and get yourself together. So sometimes that works, but sometimes it doesn't because we've talked about this at length, in grade team, especially after that happened yesterday—we talked about how if a teacher sends a kid out of the room, that's like the ultimate—they can't be there anymore, for whatever it is. Even if the teacher just needs a break from you, you have to leave. You have to exit. So, by the dean sending some students back when that happens, it is a judgment call, and sometimes they have to decide, did he just need to walk? Did the kid just need to get a break or are they really disrupting the class for good, and is this a larger issue? So, I understand that sometimes judgment calls are made, and with this particular student, that's what has been happening. They were just giving him the benefit of the doubt, because he does want to do well, and I've even had conversations with him saying like—not even really—just like having him in my space with the upperclassmen, and he's really intrigued by the upperclassmen and what we do in my class at least, so he's definitely not a bad kid at all. He's great. His heart is good, but he's just not clicking with this teacher. I mean, I feel like I'm even still doing classroom management.

Evie was both inside and outside of this situation insofar as she recounted an incident in which she was not directly involved, but was impacted by nonetheless. Evie explained that the struggles her colleague was having were informing her understanding of what she considered acceptable behavioral interactions with students. Dumping a student's backpack exceeds normative behavior to Evie, the students, and the administration. However, in reflecting upon her interactions with her students, Evie explained that she used sarcasm as both a form of classroom management and as an outlet for her frustration:

> But I feel very sarcastic, too, with them and I'm thankful that I can be because sometimes there's a little bit of truth behind it. If they are being a little bit annoying, I may have a sarcastic response. It's not totally inappropriate but okay, and then they get it and then we laugh about it and it's fine.
>
> So, I want to try to change that a little bit but for now it's working and we do have really good—I think it's working because we have a good relationship. It didn't start out that way; I started out very calm and a little bit more serious. Now I think they understand that I'm being sarcastic and they get that, and they're like, "She's ridiculous." They tell me all the time.

While Evie stated that she wanted to try to change her use of sarcasm, it was still within the bounds of what was considered normative behavior at the school.

Teaching as a Political Act

Increasingly, Evie was struggling with her own feelings of being caught in a collision of cultures. Evie's epistemological stance was grounded in critical pedagogy and the values of a fluid, progressive, globalized world. Evie lived and taught with the beliefs of critical pedagogy. Deeply influenced by the work of Paolo Freire, she saw teaching as a political act which had the potential to liberate students. Evie knew that her students cared deeply about the real issues they faced in their day-to-day lives. When a friend of Evie's placed a Black Lives Matter sign in the window of a community center and was asked to take it down by the town's police commissioner, Evie shared the incident with her class.

Evie taught her students about social capital. She took class time to study the Black Lives Matter and Blue Line movements. She explained that people could use their voices to effect social change as her friend was doing on Facebook and by organizing a panel discussion. Evie's class wrote letters that were read at the panel, which was livestreamed. She watched the video with her students in class and saw the look of pride and amazement on their faces as they heard their letters read out loud in a public forum. Evie knew that her students had engaged in critical thinking and argumentative writing in an authentic way, and yet, she kept hearing her principal's voice in her head, frantically imploring teachers to "push students over an 87 on the standardized tests." She quieted the voice as best as she could and stayed true to her vision of teaching by introducing her students to zines.

Zines are shortened magazines that are created by folding 8.5 x 11-inch paper in such a way that they turn into six pages. Evie told her class that Zines came out of the punk movement as a quick and inexpensive way to spread awareness about a social issue. She asked her class if they wanted to pick a social issue of their choice and create a zine. Her class voted unanimously in favor of creating zines. Evie wanted the zines to have an impact that extended beyond the class, so they organized a zine fair and used social media to invite family and friends to attend. The students showcased their zines and told guests about the social issue they cared about and shared information about how to help the cause. Evie's goal was for her students to see that they "can really do something and it's not as hard as they think it is to actually make change in their community." That was the kind of teaching Evie wanted to do and the kind of teacher Evie wanted to be. However, the dominant discourse in her school was one of measurement and classification, which were designed to box and shackle, not open and liberate.

Measured and Boxed

The lesson plans required at Evie's school functioned as both a literal and metaphorical reminder that her teaching identity was standardized around the normative practices and discourses of the school culture. Evie told me:

> My view with lesson plans, it's really hard for me to just sit there and put the information that I'm going to do in a box…I have my own way…the next school I want to work with will definitely appreciate any style of lesson planning. That's what I would love, for a school to just allow me to do my lesson plans in the format I want.

Evie went on to explain that she tried to engage her students in questions related to their ever-changing, lived reality. She could not fill linear boxes with exactly how and where her lesson would go in advance. Her teaching was dependent on the vantage point of her students, their actions and reactions to their world, each other, and her. Maxine Greene (1973) explained that the purpose of her book, *Teacher as Stranger*, was for the reader to expand his consciousness to resist the normalizing mechanizing routines that mark Western culture. She implored the reader "…in the face of mechanizations and controls—to create—himself as a human being, as a teacher capable of freeing other human beings to choose themselves" (p. 21). Like Greene, Evie saw teaching as a liberating act, impacting herself and her students, which by necessity required a degree of spontaneity to wonder and question in authentic discussions. She "despised being forced to do paperwork to justify my actions" and found the lesson plans functioned as a form of control that regulated and restricted teaching and learning.

When Evie struggled with and against technologies of power that involved regulation and surveillance, she was an active vehicle in the netlike organization of power operating throughout the school and larger school system. Her resistance to the format and advanced submission of lesson plans mandated at her school shaped her subjectivity and led her to classify herself as a teacher "who is not good with paperwork." As a beginning teacher, Evie relied on her instincts to understand her negative reaction to being paperwork-compliant. However, she was unaware of the larger socio-political dynamics at work that "through the micro practices of disciplinarity, individuals and their modes of thinking are reshaped in ways that align them with rules, procedures, and regulations promulgated by the State" (Taubman, 2014, p. 107). Lesson plans were collected weekly and, as Evie acknowledged, "She has solid proof that they were never read" by the school's administrators. The practice of regulating the weekly submission of lesson plans was part of a larger power relation in which the administrators were themselves surveilled by those in control of the school's charter, who in turn were surveilled by the Board of Directors, and so on up the hierarchy.

Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) recounted Foucault's example of Bentham's plan for the Panopticon to explain how the design of the mechanism was multipurpose and multidirectional in that it control/led the surveilled as well as the surveillant. "Those who occupy the central position in the Panopticon are thoroughly enmeshed in a localization and ordering of their behavior. They observe, but in the process of so doing, they are also fixed, regulated, and subject to administrative control" (p. 189). At Evie and Amy's school, surveillance at all levels harkened back to an industrial model approach of paperwork-compliance and administrators making surprise visits to the classroom and school to promote efficiency and standardization.

Professional Learning via the Internet

The world from which Evie drew her most valuable professional learning experiences was elastic, globalized, ever-changing, and connected because of advances in technology. “The way I grew up learning, a huge part of my identity was the internet…I don’t know how I would teach without the internet. It’s a huge part of who I am.” Evie connected with other teachers on Facebook and on online teacher networks. It was through these connections that she developed an organic curriculum of online professional learning for herself that was aligned with her teaching beliefs and needs. Evie’s day-to-day world at her school was guarded in a closed system; however, through the online communities she participated in, she engaged in a public sharing of ideas with like-minded teachers. The tension created between Evie and administrators who functioned as “big brother” watchmen at her school propelled her to seek professional learning through democratic, exploratory, collaborative approaches that she accessed through the internet. In this way, the power relations in which Evie was enmeshed at her school had a productive effect in that she gained the strength to resist becoming a teacher whose charge was to teach to the test. Evie would not accept the ready-made standardized system that served to normalize teachers in her school. Greene (1973) explained, “If the teacher agrees to submerge himself into the system, if he consents to being defined by others’ views of what he is supposed to be, he gives up his freedom to see, to understand, and to signify for himself” (p. 270). While Evie loved the students in her school, she had to leave. She would take a new teaching position at a Consortium school in the fall, which was exempt from the standardized tests that measured and boxed.

What Constitutes Normative Bounds of Discourse? Richard's Experience

Meanwhile, at a school for gifted students in Manhattan, Richard and Kate were enmeshed in the dominant discursive culture at their school, which exercised most heavily such technologies of power as classification, regulation, and normalization to regulate the conduct of teachers, administrators, and students. While the power relations among the three groups were unequal and unstable, power was kept on the move through their relations with each other, which were always in tension. In a series of lectures delivered at the College De France entitled "The Courage of Truth: The Government of Self and Others II," Foucault (1984) posed questions about subject/truth relations and offered an alternative form in which to problematize ways discourse affects how the "truth about the subject can be told." He proposed an analysis of practices of the "discourse of truth which the subject is likely and able to speak about himself" (p. 3). A study of modes of veridiction requires an analysis of how the ways of thinking are bound by normative discourse. The questions I pose in this section include: How is power exercised? How is the subject constituted? What discourses are available to think about oneself?

Richard explained that he was under tremendous pressure because he was rated "effective" in his first year of teaching, according to the Danielson Framework, "highly effective" last year, and now in his tenure year, he "is on the edge." Richard told me he "works hard and knows he is doing a decent job." For a moment, Richard's way of knowing resisted the dominant discourse in his school as he challenged the Danielson classifications. For a moment, Richard constructed subjectivity through knowledge produced by his own experience with his students. Yet, his worldview was bound by the discourse surrounding education at a particular time and in his localized space. He went on to imagine observations and evaluations that were administered by "veteran teachers who were rated effective or above." He believed teachers observing other teachers would be more instructive than administrators "who are trying to catch us doing someone wrong. It feels like I've gotcha." Richard explained his vision of useful observations:

> I think if it were me trying to construct what observations would truthfully look like it would—it would look like a few things. It would be—One, it would honestly be run by veteran teachers, so again like tenure teachers, people who have been in it for five more years, something along those lines—and veteran teachers who are rated effective or above. I would have it be more along the lines if they teach four classes and one class they observe. Like if we have five preps one of those preps for an observer or an evaluator would be that observation. I would have them truthfully come in either once a week to somebody's class, so it's just like every Monday they're coming into observe—With the confirmation of that regularity as well as, "Okay. In six weeks when I observe you on Monday just so you know like that's going to be an evaluative." Just sort of that—I—I don't think it has to be as informal as it always is because that's a very—it feels more like, "I've gotcha," step. I would—I would add regularity to it. I would add—I would make teachers do it. I think just hearing teacher from teacher as opposed to, you know, the boss man coming down on you.
>
> And it's—it's encouraged to go observe other teachers to like improve your own craft or help them improve their craft, but as a function on top of all the rest of our teaching it's not reasonable. If there could be a way to implement that into the schedule that—that would be the ideal for me. That's not gonna happen any time soon, but that's—that's sort of the problem I see especially as administrators become more and more removed from their teaching history and more and more into, you know, the defined rubric of Danielson in this case or—if it were No Child Left Behind or whatever the next step is going to be and if they read and interpret line by line, maybe misinterpret it, but like their expectations as opposed to understanding what a classroom looks like. I think that makes it more difficult as a teacher to see them as instructive. Observations should be instructive. It should be an opportunity for another teacher even if it's like your mentor teacher coming into your classroom to help out.

Even in imagining a new approach to observations, the vision is bound within a normative discursive field. The gold standard of a teacher's worth in this particular historic-political moment is the numeric rating attached to a teacher as evidence of his teaching ability e.g., 4 = highly effective. For teachers, the pressures of the regime of numbers defines "a whole field of new realities" (Foucault, 2009, p. 75) and the pertinent space within which and regarding which they must act. Schooling as a process is rendered into an input-output calculation (Ball, 2013, p. 104).

The specific ways power/knowledge relations and practices shaped Richard's subjectivities as he constructed his teaching identity centered around tensions between being objectified through evaluations and a desire for meaningful learning experiences. Richard recounted an incident having to do with his principal's observation of him which would inform the tenure process:

> This year is my tenure year. Some weird things that have happened to me on the note of evaluation: last year I was designated as a highly effective teacher which meant this year I had the option to choose just having three informal observations. However, after I signed up to have three informal observations because it's my tenure year they said that I couldn't do that, that the principal had to observe me and had to have a formal observation, which I'm not sure that that's entirely true but I don't really have the means to fight it so it's fine. I signed another sheet that said, "Okay, I'll do one formal and three informals."
>
> Traditionally the way a formal observation has worked in the past—and I think is supposed to work—we would decide on the date either together or I would decide on the date and he would make sure that the time is available so that he could come in. And this year myself and several other tenure teachers – or teachers who are up for tenure just were told that our formal was happening on X date. Then he came in, I had the observation, we had the pre-ob meeting where I brought my lesson plan, had the observation, a few weeks later he finally got back with—maybe not quite a few weeks—but a couple weeks later he gave me a draft, then for me it was kind of odd because we were supposed to meet for post-ob, something came up to where he couldn't—it was like an emergency with a student—and so I didn't have my post-ob for another three weeks, so at that point I didn't really have the opportunity to gain anything in response to my lesson. On top of that he, in my post-ob, hadn't completed the observation notes because he didn't have anything from the pre-ob, so from—by that to say he's supposed to have like planning and prep and one other piece—I think 4-E, whatever that is—for one section and then we have the actual action.
>
> He did have notes from the physical observation, the performance of the lesson—those notes were inaccurate, he did later fix them—by inaccurate I mean he wrote notes that suggested I was highly effective and gave me an effective.
>
> After that I spoke to him about those and another piece. He corrected the one because the notes explicitly had highly effective language so he had to change that one, but in response to another section that I have traditionally done well in that I got an effective—which is a good—it's like that's great—it's not great, it's good—when I asked why I was effective, thinking that this would be the opportunity for me to understand how to improve or at least how to improve the show he said, "Well, you know, I was there, I was in the lesson and I just felt that it was effective." That was not very helpful, it also was quite discouraging because it did not lead me to believe that there was any objectivity toward the lesson. And I mean I'm glad he felt it was effective and didn't feel it was developing but also there's not really an opportunity for me to grow in that way.

> And so, when I'm looking at like are they helpful or are they supportive I have not changed or grown as a teacher since my observation, nor do I know how I would have; hence I am more pessimistic toward the system after it. So, that sucked.

I read Richard's frustration as having a lack of agency as a beginning teacher who wanted actionable feedback from his principal so he could improve his teaching. Richard was aware that in the absence of genuine insights about how to develop professionally, at least he wanted to "improve the show" so the labels attached to him did not hurt his chance of earning tenure. Richard was a vehicle of power and he kept power on the move through relations of power that were always in tension, despite being unstable and hierarchical. Richard pushed back on the ratings he received, which he felt were inaccurate, causing the principal to change one of the ratings. Foucault made clear that power is embedded in relationships and there must be a field of possibilities open for people to react and resist within the relations. The incident with the principal did not render Richard powerless; rather the incident propelled Richard to disrupt the relation of power he had with the principal. However, other than one number changing on his evaluation report, nothing changed. The normative practices were still in place. The dominant discourses still formed regimes of truth in the school. The teachers were still subject and made subject to an audit culture.

The knowledge Richard gained from the principal's observation and evaluation fell short of what he was hoping to learn about how to improve as a teacher. He was left "more pessimistic about the system as a whole," but perhaps more knowledgeable and realistic about his expectation that at least in his school, observations are evaluative and not instructive.

Richard had several thoughts about what effective professional learning looked like, and it certainly did not include observations without meaningful feedback, nor did it entail excessive documentation and forms to fill out for the "DOE who is looking down and saying, people don't trust our teachers. We need to hold our teachers accountable." Richard viewed the accountability movement as a critical threat to his learning and a constraint on his growth. He articulated his understanding of the educational system as he saw it. He explained that the DOE responded to the outcry by people that teachers need to be held accountable. The Danielson Framework became the mechanism by which teachers could be held accountable. Danielson would be used to observe and measure teachers. PD would be mandated to regulate the behavior of teachers, which could be monitored during observations. Finally, layers and layers of documentation would hold teachers accountable for the mandated PD.

What I found most startling about Richard's analysis was not the systematic demoralizing and de-professionalization of the teacher, but rather the normalization of discourse which endowed the DOE and a nebulous group of people with the power to set the mechanisms in place. Foucault (1972) explained that "It is only if we grasp these techniques of power and demonstrate the economic advantages or political utility that derives from them in a given context for specific reasons, that we can understand how these mechanisms come to be effectively incorporated into the social whole" (p. 101). Ravitch (2010) offered a comprehensive analysis of how government mandates were punitive to teachers as they relied on standardized testing as a measure of a teacher's worth and success. Further, she argued that despite evidence that standardized tests "reflect family income, over which teachers have no control" (p. xxv), the scores of such tests were used to fire teachers and principals, shut down schools, and widen the achievement gap. All of this was done in the name of accountability; however, what drove the standards and testing movement was financial profit. "Under NCLB and Race to the Top, standardized testing became a multibillion-dollar industry. Its lobbyists were stationed in key state capitals and in congressional halls to make sure that it remained so" (p. xxiii). For the beginning English teachers in this study, the regime of truth that formed the dominant discursive field in the United States since the 1980s created a gap between their understanding of what being an English teacher entailed and the standardized practices they were held accountable to following. The four participants noted that the lack of veteran teachers in their schools created a dearth of expertise from which to draw when they had questions about teaching to a test and the impact that mandates had on constructing their subjectivities.

The frequency of high-stakes testing has distorted a learner's (whether teacher or student) view of self as a participant in a community of knowledge. Lave and Wegner (1991) explained that where there is "no cultural identity encompassing the activity in which newcomers participate and no field of mature practice for what is being learned, exchange value replaces the use value of increasing participation" (p. 112). While Mayher (2014) pointed out that "the corporatizing of America's education is really a disaster," he was quick to explain how "professional development that really respects teachers as learners and respects them as professionals" is indeed possible, even in a culture of standardized testing and surveillance, if teachers choose the professional learning that they identify as needed, rather than be subjected to PD they are told they need.

Surveilled and Classified

Richard struggled with negotiating the demands of excessive paperwork, teacher observations, and the restrictions of attending outside professional learning workshops. Another way the teachers were normalized at the school was through the regulation and surveillance of what knowledge circulated throughout the school. This was controlled to an extent through the approval or rejection of requests by teachers seeking external professional learning. The administrators at Richard's school discouraged teachers from seeking outside learning. There were occasions when people applied to attend PD off campus on Election Day or on a PD day and were denied. “They were actively discouraged and told they were supposed to stay here and develop as a team.” Richard explained that a couple of teachers did get to leave this year, but he was worried about looking like the person who was trying to go somewhere else. This conversation with Richard invoked Foucault’s (1977) idea that “the power of normalization imposes homogeneity…it is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish” (p. 186). Access to outside knowledge is controlled through punitive actions on the part of administrators through their approval or denial of outside PD opportunities. Those teachers who attempt to attend outside PD are “marked” because they represent the inverse of normalization. Foucault “refers to exclusion as a technique for tracing the limits that will define difference, defining boundaries, setting zones” (Gore, 1998, p. 238). Dividing practices classify teachers into “good teacher” and “bad teacher” categories, which objectifies the subject as a representation of what happens to those who exceed the bounds of normal in a given culture. The message Richard received was: The schools’ PD mandates count as knowledge and the administrators mandating the PD have the knowledge that counts.

Classification at the school took many forms and its effects were circulated among teachers, students, and administrators creating normalizing judgments through comparisons. Teachers were classified as ineffective, developing, effective, or highly effective, according to the Danielson ratings, as already discussed. Students in the school were tracked and classified into different ability levels of classes. While all of the students in the school had to meet the admissions requirements to enroll in a school for the gifted, a hierarchy was established among the student body based on levels of classes they took. For instance, students enrolled in Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes held a higher position on the hierarchy than students enrolled in Regents-level classes. Similarly, a teacher's position on the hierarchy is connected to the classification of type of class he or she teaches. A sense of worth is connected to the ability level of classes taught, as indicated by the participants' description of the classes they were assigned. Richard explained that he taught an AP class and, with that, came status as well as the freedom to attend the Advanced Placement training required by the College Board for those who teach AP courses. Richard deemed the College Board PD among the most valuable professional learning experiences he had. Since the College Board PD was required, administrators at his school were forced to approve his attending. The power/knowledge relations at work among AP regulations and the schools who taught AP moved through Richard producing his subjectivities as a beginning English teacher who became part of an external professional community. The College Board's professional learning sought to expand his understanding of teaching and learning, as opposed to the PD offered at his school which he felt served to contain him.

Further, administrators held a higher position on the hierarchy than teachers, and for the English department this posed a problem. Richard explained that his department chair tried to advocate on their behalf to have less paperwork and more autonomy over the PD they were required to do, but administrators did not listen to her. Richard explained, "I know other schools have a legitimate department chair who is this sort of intermediary between the administrative team of APs and the principal and us as teachers—she plays that role but she's a teacher…and first and foremost, she's a teacher." Richard was entrenched in the school's discursive field, which was a language of classification. He attributed his department chair's lack of power to her classification as a teacher, a position lower on the hierarchy than administrators, and judged her role as illegitimate, compared with other department chairs. In terms of shaping his subjectivities, his embeddedness in the dominant discursive field at work in his school involved him in the dividing practices circulating throughout the school culture. Accordingly, he classified his chair as “not legitimate” and, in turn, perpetuated the hierarchical power relations that existed. Richard, like the other teachers in his school, were vehicles of technologies of power that were exercised throughout the school.

In terms of shaping his subjectivities, Richard struggled to push back on the systems of regulation that existed in his school. In an interview with both Richard and Kate, they described the lack of transparency surrounding the demands imposed on teachers in the name of accountability and the feeling teachers have of being dispensable. The two speculated about who was driving what the teachers deemed an excessive concern with accountability manifested in paperwork and documentation.

> *Kate:* The superintendent. It’s not the parents. It’s the superintendent. It’s our district and the superintendent and that’s where like the transparency I think comes into play. We are not sure how much of it is our principal.
>
> *Richard:* Or how much is even above him. Like how much is the principal—either way it’s about the superintendent but either it’s that our principal is putting all this ridiculous stuff on us because he wants to impress her because he’s new or she’s putting it on him and so it’s trickling down and affecting us and we can’t quite figure out which way that’s going. It’s seems like she’s not actually asking him to do all this but that he is like—he wants to like look good in her eyes so…. And I think it’s in many ways feels like a misinterpretation of what could be happening or expected. Like the expectations for us as teachers up for tenure, you know, there’s like a letter that the superintendent sent out that’s like, “Here’s what I’m expecting to see in your tenure portfolio,” and it breaks it down and at one point on this letter it says things like, “Up to eight artifacts to show your support of students and how you’re learning—or how they’re learning and how they’re growing,” and then those eight artifacts turned into following six students and showing growth over some time period for those six students with several pieces of those—like several artifacts for each one—several demonstrations of it. So, you know we’re looking at now four pieces—four homeworks, four assignments, four assessments for six different students—
>
> *Kate:* Over four units.
>
> *Richard:* But that then multiplied even greater to what was originally just this crazy eight to twenty-four assignments—sorry—eighteen to twenty-four assignments for these like six different kids total—now we’re looking—they were explaining to us we need four units. So, we have six students showing growth in four different units with four pieces of evidence –

Kate: Assignments per student per unit.
Me: Who's reading this?
Kate: Great question. No one.
Richard: Ideally this would be read by our principal so that he knew whether or not he should be recommending us, although I think he should know that without our binder—but he would look at it to recommend us and then once we have been recommended or even not recommended the binders would then go to the superintendent who would then look over them and assign tenure or not.
Kate: Right. So, this is coming from the superintendent maybe giving our principal at one point a suggestion that he should—that we should be having more assessments—
Richard: More assessments. It came from the QRT.
Kate: It came from one of our quality reviews. And we've been doing really well in our quality reviews and it was like during a quality review and he was like, "You know, everything was really successful. The one suggestion she had was that maybe there should be a little bit more in-class assessment." And so then clearly his way of dealing with this was forcing tenured teachers—like the teachers who are up for tenure who can't say no to do this thing that he's been saying he will not sign off on the tenure binder unless we have that. And I know for a fact that's not a DOE regulation—that tenure thing—because none of my friends have to do it.
Richard: But that's why I was thinking it seems very much like—the superintendent has been maybe a little bit vague but has asked for a specific requirement but then that requirement is then reinterpreted as a lot more work by our administration that we are expected to do. So, it's kind of hard to tell but it feels like he's thinking, "Well, to impress her I'll do everything."

There were several teachers who left at the end of last year—teachers who our colleague calls institutions, and I think that's fair for a couple of them—like teachers who have been around for a long time who get extraordinary results and who felt unhappy here and they left and it should be a sign—like that should have been a sign to say like, "We may have made a mistake somewhere." But there are no signs of regret and there are no signs of "We're going to make some changes to ensure that we don't lose teachers like that anymore." It is very odd for me because I do—I feel overwhelmed by the number of students I have in general with a hundred sixty-two right now, but I don't feel that that is what is pushing me towards burnout, that's not what's pushing me towards being disappointed in teaching.

I mean I have plans to not be here next year, but I think that's what they're pushing all of us as teachers here in this environment to do which is to find somewhere else to work. It seems much more along the lines of "If you don't want to work here that's fine: we don't want your type to work here either," whatever the reason might be.

When the principal demanded that third-year teachers include an unwieldy number of assessments in their tenure binder, Richard felt pressured. The teachers' perception was that “there’s no way to say no to doing this thing.” The principal would not approve the tenure binder unless there were 24 student artifacts and assessments. The discursive field dominant in the school was one of classification, which informed Richard’s language use as well as his ability to negotiate power/knowledge relations. Discourse organizes a way of thinking and can serve to normalize how a “subject” is constructed in a particular culture with its available discourse. In Richard’s case, language defined and constrained him. He felt bound by the discursive field of accountability, assessment, and evaluation, which produced labels that he believed unfairly measured him and shaped his subjectivity.

Angles of Analysis

In considering how to analyze Richard’s stories, I heard Ruth’s voice (1997), “Form shapes meaning…” (pp. 59, 64). How can a purposeful reconstruction and juxtaposing of ideas enable me to see more than a linear ordering of ideas permits? Mimi Orner, Janet L. Miller, and Elizabeth Ellsworth (1996) discussed and enacted the use of juxtaposition as a rhetorical device as “one that invites inconsistencies, ambiguities, ambivalence, and it emphasizes the fact that there will always be ‘unspoken themes’ that cannot or will not be interrogated” (p. xix). To this end, I attempt to look at Richard’s stories both in terms of ways Foucault talked about how discourse orders knowledge along lines that produce subjects as well as juxtaposing ideas “… to provoke viewers and readers to make associations across categorical, discursive, historical and stylistic boundaries—associations never intended or sanctioned by the interests that construct and require such boundaries” (Miller, 1996, p. xix). In the following section, I layer Richard’s stories with ideas from Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* (1977) to alter the use of language to make new angles of analysis possible. The ideas from interview transcripts with Richard are represented in italic font and ideas from Foucault’s text are represented in bold.

The major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power…the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if discontinuous in its action…the inmates should be caught up in a power situation in which they are themselves the bearers. (p. 201)

That's a part of that feeling of the gotcha. Like they're trying to catch us in bad positions… As a teacher when an administrator comes in you never know if it's instructive or evaluative…I will never know so I am nervous, that sort of stress of being evaluated every single time.

In this form of management, power is not totally entrusted to someone who would exercise it alone, over others, in an absolute fashion; rather, this machine [panopticon]is one in which everyone is caught, those who exercise this power as well as those who are subjected to it. (p. 156)

It seems very much like—the superintendent has been maybe a little bit vague but has asked for a specific requirement, but then that requirement is then reinterpreted as a lot more work by our administration that we are expected to do. So, it's kind of hard to tell but it feels like he's [the principal] thinking, "Well, to impress her I'll do everything." It feels very much like a decision that was made at the top and that was then passed down so that we all now have to do it.

The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgement. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them. (p. 184)

After I signed up to have three informal observations because it's my tenure year they said that I couldn't do that, the principal had to observe me and had to have a formal observation, which I'm not sure that that's entirely true but I don't really have the means to fight it so it's fine. Part of the disappointment is I was rated effective my first-year according to Danielson, highly effective last year, and this is my tenure year so I am like sort of on edge…

The distribution according to ranks or grade has a double role: it marks the gaps, hierarchizes qualities, skills and aptitudes; but it also punishes and rewards. It is the penal functioning of setting in order and the ordinal character of judging. (p. 181)

He [the principal] said, "Well, you know, I was there, I was in the lesson and I just felt that it was effective."

…power should be visible and unverifiable. (p. 201)

When the administration comes down and says, "All right. This is exactly what you're doing for your professional development and we need to see this form filled out, you know, every week for how you did it," or something like that it feels like a waste of my time. And again, it's frustrating because I know that they're getting it from somewhere else.

Like surveillance and with it, normalization became one of the great instruments of power…a whole range of degrees of normality indicating membership of a homogenized social body but also playing a part in classification, hierarchization and the distribution of rank….In a sense, the power of normalization imposes homogeneity. (p. 184)

By that I mean we're not—we're not actively discouraged but there have been a few occasions where people applied for leaving campus to another campus for professional development on like election day or on—or on sort of teacher professional development days who were denied and actively discouraged and that they were supposed to stay here and develop as a team, which by the token of like where do you look elsewhere it's kind of a hard thing when now the sense is even looking elsewhere doesn't work. A couple did get to leave this year but I still remember when that happened so I feel the sense of if I leave I will be—I don't want to say marked—but I will be looked as the person who was trying to go somewhere else sort of deal.

Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those which are charged with saying what counts as true. (p. 131)

The DOE is the bigger—the bigger piece that's looking down and they're saying, "Look, people don't trust our teachers. We need to hold our teachers accountable. How can we do that?" Well, we have Danielson now and so we'll use Danielson to hold them accountable. "Well, how do they measure on Danielson?" Well, we need these observations. Well, they have to do professional development. Well, how can we hold them accountable for professional development? Otherwise we don't trust them, you know.

Lastly, the disciplines have to bring into play the power relations, not above but inside the very texture of the multiplicity, as discreetly as possible, as well articulated on the other functions of these multiplicities and also in the least expensive way possible: to this correspond anonymous instruments of power, coextensive with the multiplicity that they regiment, such as hierarchical surveillance, continuous registration, perpetual assessment and classification. In short, to substitute for a power that is manifested through the brilliance of those who exercise it, a power that insidiously objectifies those on whom it is applied; to form a body of knowledge about these individuals, rather than to deploy the ostentatious signs of sovereignty. (p. 220)

Effective…highly effective…Danielson ratings…tenure… "I've gotcha" …Observations…Evaluations…Tenure binders…eighteen to twenty-four assignments for these like six different kids total –we need four units. So, we have six students showing growth in four different units with 4 pieces of evidence…. Ideally this would be read by our principal…the binders would then go to the superintendent who would then look over them and assign tenure or not.

The purpose of juxtaposing Foucault's ideas about the subject and power with Richard's experience was to explore the question Foucault (1982) posed, "What happens when individuals exert (as they say) power over others?" (p. 217). I chose to represent Foucault's ideas in bold font to illustrate visually how power is exercised and its effects on the objectification of the individual—in this case, Richard, who is represented in italic font. The heavy bold signifies the pressure and weight bearing down on the subject. Foucault (1982) explained the objective of his work:

> My objective…has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects. The first is the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences…. In the second part of my work, I have studied the objectivizing of the subject in what I call "dividing practices." The subject is either divided into himself or divided from others. Finally, I have sought to study…the way a human being turns him—or herself into a subject. (p. 208)

Richard was made a subject through the impersonal mechanisms of governmentality, the organization of the conduct of conduct. Richard's colleague Kate was also embedded in the fabric of culture that relied on the technologies of power involving surveillance, classification, and regulation to normalize; however, she dealt with the school culture and power relations differently, subsequently acting as a unique vehicle of power within the school.

Storm of Energies: Kate's Experience

Kate was a part of a network of relations in which power was multidirectional, moving from below, above, and through her as she shaped her subjectivity as a beginning English teacher. Kate taught seniors, many of whom were 18 years old, and she was not much older than her students. She struggled with how "to be an adult presence in the classroom and also give students their presence in the room." She was also learning how to navigate her way in a politically charged school whose dominant discourse centered around accountability and assessment. As a second-year teacher, she was learning how to construct her teaching identity. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983), in discussing Foucault's proposals regarding power and truth, stated, "Power plays a directly productive role; it comes from below; it is multidirectional, operating from the top down and also from the bottom up" (p. 185). The circulation of power being moved around and through everyone and everything in her school created a cauldron of forces that Kate strove to identify and work.

Energy From Below: Students

Kate taught the non-AP track students in her school which, as explained in Richard's section, placed her and her students lower on the school's hierarchy. However, power relations require negotiation, regardless of one's presumed place and status on a hierarchy. Kate's power/knowledge relations with her students contributed to the production of her multiple subjectivities as a beginning English teacher. The points of tension Kate felt most involved her age, experience, and authority.

As a young, beginning teacher, Kate struggled with the question of how to create authority without being authoritative. She explained that "she tries to avoid being authoritative at all costs but then sometimes that means I lost my hand. I feel like I have lost my authority too." Kate's conception of the image and identity of herself as a teacher was informed by her original desire to become an English teacher:

> A lot of us go into teaching, especially English teachers, because we love discussing literature. We enjoy writing. And we like having conversations, they're not debates that we need to win…and so when we're placed in a position where I have to control these people instead of just speaking with them it feels weird. The subject doesn't lend itself to that. It's not like it revolves around answers that we have and they don't. It revolves around the idea that they have answers too. Then it's important that it feels equal. But then there are times that it shouldn't feel equal. You know so it's hard.

Kate's image of an egalitarian classroom was an anomaly in a school whose social architecture was hierarchical. Students in the school expected a teacher to exhibit all of the marks of authority and that included having all the answers. The power relations at work among Kate and her students produced a powerful resistance in Kate, one which was productive insofar as it created knowledge about the self as she was forming her teaching identity. Foucault (1977) explained, "Power …traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression" (p. 119). Kate held onto her conviction that her students respected her knowledge of the subject and she worked to navigate her "adult in the roominess," but she refused to compromise her vision of an egalitarian classroom that was based on pedagogical principles.

Energy from Above: Administrators

Kate experienced dissonance between the purported and actual learning experiences she had in the school. The administration mandated PD that was accompanied by endless paperwork which teachers were required to complete to prove they participated in PD. Kate explained that this created a feeling of just generating documents for administrators who were being surveilled by their higher-ups. The dissonance was formed by Kate's knowledge that the layers of people writing and reading these reports to document the PD taking place in the school created an illusion that the school's culture was one of collaborative learning. However, she described her everyday experience in the classroom with her students as being divorced from colleagues, which created an alienated and isolated culture. She explained that "It feels like you're in a vacuum. Like you know you only have the experience of yourself in the room with these kids and you have no sense of how it's working anywhere else." Kate described the kind of professional learning that she would find valuable as being given time to observe and work with her colleagues to "…explore different ways we get to different ideas and work through it together…and see expert teachers do it as well…. None of us totally know what we are doing." Such intellectual wandering requires the confidence to believe that sometimes those messy moments are the most generative, and through reflection on them, teachers can expand their ways of knowing. However, fragmented learning experiences in the form of episodic PD workshops may prevent beginning teachers from perceiving their own teaching experiences as the basis for authority, subsequently marginalizing their sense of agency and professionalism.

Energy From Within: Kate

Mayher (2014) explained that not much is around that says to a new teacher that he or she is a professional. Mayher criticized "the public attitude which suggests that teachers need to be controlled and be told to do things every day." Kate experienced what Mayher described as she struggled to reconcile the conflicting feelings of becoming increasingly adept in the classroom while receiving the message that she was not a professional from administrators. She explained that she

> feels anxious about whether or not she is a good teacher and it feels like it's coming from a lack of trust…while I am with my students I feel more comfortable but then all of this outside stuff makes me feel insecure. You never feel sure you're doing the right thing and you never feel like you are doing quite good enough. You can always be caught, like they are looking to catch you.

Kate explained that an additional layer of frustration stemmed from not having models of teachers who "make it work and sustain a life in the department of education…all we see are teachers who get burnt out." Both Kate and Richard were aware that they taught in a high-performing school, rich with resources including a coach who came to the school to work specifically with the English department. It was this realization that made them question if it was possible to stay in the profession for 20 or 30 years to become an experienced and still passionate teacher.

Kate was a satellite in the school circulating power through her students, the administration, and herself. As such, she was produced as well as transformed by her power/knowledge relations. Her resistance to becoming an authoritative figure was in tension with having authority in her classroom. She had to navigate how to establish boundaries that fit her conception of what it meant to be an English teacher while negotiating her students' image and role of a teacher, both of which were disrupted and changed by the power relations between Kate and her students. Kate realized that her age could also work in her favor. Her students related to her and she forged a trust with them that enabled her and them to push their boundaries and expectations of "English teacher."

It was in re-reading Kate's interview transcripts for countless times that I noticed how frequently she used images of sight to describe action. It was the binary meanings embedded in her images that struck me: observing others vs. being observed; seeing others vs. being surveilled; watching others vs. being watched. In Kate's cauldron was a storm of energies from above, below, and within. They swirled with visions—of hope and despair—but all worked to construct her subjectivity through the discourses available that "systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1971/1972, p. 49). The words used to construct the following poem are entirely Kate's. They were taken directly from her interview transcripts and presented as a poetic representation. There are a couple of reasons I chose this form to analyze Kate's story. First, I attempted to express the notable change in her tone over the course of the year that possibly only poetry could convey. Laurel Richardson (1992) explained that she chose to "breach the norms that govern sociological interview writing" (p. 126) when she wrote *Louisa May's*

Story of Her Life. Richardson wanted to see nuances in sociological issues and in her participants' stories that prose did not always permit. She explained, "Writing up interviews as poems honors the speaker's pauses, repetitions, alliterations, narrative strategies, rhythms, and so on" (Richardson, 1994, p. 522). Second, poetry compresses ideas into their essence. I hope the poem provides insights into the importance the image of sight had for Kate's construction of her subjectivity.

Sightlines

The project I'm creating for my students,
asks them to look at the needs of their community.
Getting them to see outside of their school worlds,
To see how they can impact the world outside.

I don't have a lot of time during the day to see other classes,
and I wish I did.
I would love to spend time seeing how other people,
do this sort of thing.

Just being able to see a model,
seeing different forms of in-class instruction
in different ways.
To explore different ways to get to different ideas,
To work through it together.
I see almost no teaching and that's kind of a shame.

To see myself teach,
having other people see me teach through video
that
would be useful.

You're in a vacuum
You have only the experience of yourself,
In the room with these kids.
You have no sense of how it's working anywhere else.

We don't have subs,
We have to cover other classes during the day.
Half the time we're covering a third-grade class
They're not learning from me,
I do not know how to teach

third grade.

Surveillance makes you feel more insecure,
You're never sure you're doing the right thing.
You never feel you're doing quite good enough.
You could always be caught,
They're looking to catch you.

The lack of transparency
How much is our principal or the superintendent?
He wants to look good in her eyes.
Our principal is putting all this ridiculous stuff on us,
We can't figure out which way that's going,
Either way it's trickling down
on us
and affecting
us.

Stuff we're building for the administration
To look good.
And for our school
To look good.
A lot of paperwork,
A lot of filling out documents.

As a new teacher,
We don't see examples of teachers who make it work,
And sustain a life in the department of education.

All we see are teachers
who get burnt out and frustrated.

I hope the poem accomplished my goal, which was to convey Kate's initial optimism and vision for her students in creating a project that stretched their sightlines beyond their current scope. I found it interesting that Kate was insistent throughout the year about her need to see other teachers teach to improve her own craft. Yet, she was denied this organic professional learning opportunity because she was tasked with coverages, or watching other teacher's students. However, the administrators who narrowed her professional worldview freely observed she and her colleagues creating a culture of surveillance throughout the school.

The technologies of discipline that were in play in Kate's school largely relied on regulation, classification, and surveillance, which all served to normalize activities and behaviors. Like Richard, Kate was troubled by the use of the Danielson Framework as an evaluation tool. She explained, "All of the observations are evaluative, not instructive in nature. It feels super high-stakes and not necessarily the most useful, just punitive." Kate had to constitute her sense of self as a beginning teacher in a culture of assessment laden with a discourse of accountability. While Kate was bound up in the normative practices in her school, she relied less on the dominant discourse when interrogating the fabric of the school than her colleague who also participated in the study. Kate described herself as having a "self-deprecating teacher personality," yet when she questioned her teaching ability, she pointed to specific areas of content and practice that she wanted to work on improving, not moving categorically from being an "effective" to a "highly effective." Both Kate and Richard were subject to technologies of power intended to subject them to normalizing discourses and actions. However, their power relations were unique and power/knowledge was exercised differently as they produced their own subjectivities as beginning English teachers.

In this chapter, I sought to explore the participants' professional experiences and learning needs through a Foucauldian theoretical framework to examine how the discursive fields in which beginning teachers are situated can construct subjectivities through power relations working in and through subjects.

CHAPTER VI: PROVOCATIONS

> A teacher in search of his/her own freedom may be the only kind of teacher who can arouse young persons to go in search of their own.
>
> Maxine Greene, *The Dialectic of Freedom*

Provocations

In an earlier draft of this dissertation, the quotation I included to open Chapter VI was by Elizabeth St. Pierre explaining, “Your task is not to resolve tensions but to understand the tensions.” Something about that sentiment did not sit well with me, but I did not strike it. Yes, research study upon research study has deepened our understandings of the complexities of teaching and that, in itself, is significant. But it wasn’t until Randi Dickson read the manuscript with the original quotation in it that I saw the flaw—understanding tensions is not enough. Sitting next to me, Randi read the quotation and turned to me to ask, “Then who is going to resolve the tensions? Who is going to look after these teachers?” Questions I still cannot answer.

The teachers in this study were situated in two distinct school contexts. The schools differed in terms of the composition of the student body and available resources. One school was comprised of highly-driven, academically competitive students whose focus was “on getting into a top college.” At this school, parents were actively involved in the school and learning experiences of their children. Academic excellence was the expectation they had for their children and for the education the school promised to deliver. This school was a specialized public school that admitted gifted and talented students and boasted of “being consistently ranked in the top NYC schools based on standardized test scores.” The school was resource-rich in terms of classroom facilities and materials. Student attendance was in the 95th percentile and behavioral problems were rare.

The professional learning initiatives offered to teachers were aligned with research that demonstrated the effectiveness of PLCs (Coburn & Stein, 2010; McDonald, 2013), coaches (Tiesco, 2004), and looking at student work (Baxter, 2010; NCTE, 1985; Taubman, 2014). Yet, despite many variables seemingly in place to support teachers' professional growth, the two teachers in the study experienced profound constraints on their professional learning. These constraints were not insignificant. They impacted how Kate and Richard were able to constitute their sense of "self" as teachers—how they could think, act, and, of course, teach. The dominant school discourse shaping the culture overshadowed the many positives they had in a resource-rich school.

Both Kate and Richard experienced the mandated PLCs and endless paperwork accompanying it as a constraint that circumscribed their professional learning. The paperwork imposed on them, without explanation of purpose or knowledge of who authored the directives, created a lack of agency for them as professionals. The paperwork served to regulate the behaviors of teachers—it was a way to control their time. Time was spent filling out lesson plan templates, writing reflections about mandated PLCs, creating massive tenure portfolios, and documenting reports about students, which both Kate and Richard felt were never read. And if they were read, no one ever provided instructive feedback on any of the paperwork. They struggled to feel like creative professionals, not routinized bureaucrats.

Kate and Richard wanted to say, "I want to know about X," as an approach to professional learning; instead, the school put an elaborate PD initiative in place that, due to the size and structure of the school, did not "make sense at the high school level." Teachers did not have input into the learning opportunities offered to them, nor was there transparency about the origin and rationale behind the PD initiatives. The teachers in this study felt the PD was put in place to “make the school look good.” The distrust and de-professionalization this caused were impactful enough to negate the learning experiences that may otherwise have transpired. In this way, the possibility of professional learning devolved into mandated PD.

Students at the other school were frequently absent, had a fair share of behavioral problems, and there was little parental involvement in the school. Some of the professional learning opportunities available to teachers came in the form of mandated PD workshops that followed the drive-by model discussed earlier. Time set aside for team meetings addressed the directives of the administration and not the professional learning needs of the teachers. They were also accompanied by excessive paperwork to document that “learning” happened. This left the teachers feeling disempowered and resentful of spending time on what they perceived to be hollow initiatives.

As discussed in Chapters IV and V, the relationships the coach shared with the two teachers were extremely different as described by Evie and Amy. Evie and the coach enjoyed a warm, collegial relationship based on their shared commitment to emancipatory teaching. Evie felt comfortable calling and texting the coach with professional questions as she experienced them. Evie explained that they had many late-night conversations that helped to sustain her when teaching felt overwhelming. For Evie, the coach was a trusted confidant, professional mentor, and like-minded activist. In a school culture that pitted teachers against administrators, Evie felt she had a powerful ally in her coach.

However, Amy had a much different experience and felt further alienated by her relationship with her coach. For her, the coach was another outsider entering her classroom and “correcting” her teaching. Amy explained that the sporadic nature of the coach’s visits and their different mission of teaching served to “add to her insecurity” rather than alleviate it. I wondered what the impact on learning could be if beginning teachers were paired with coaches who shared a similar vision of teaching. A beginning teacher who feels surveilled and scrutinized by administrators may benefit from at least one relationship where she feels a shared sense of what it means to teach. Interestingly, as Amy increasingly felt judged by coaches and administrators who challenged her conceptions of teaching, she was forced to interrogate social and culture power relations and how her teaching identity was being constructed. Amy left the school mid-year as a form of resistance against the regimes of power that circumscribed her learning.

Hansen (1995) described teaching as a vocation through the words "*active, engaged, outward-looking,* and *imaginative*" (p. 5). The four teachers anticipated teaching to be such an endeavor. They explained that their graduate school encouraged progressive pedagogy, reflective practices, and meaningful learning. Their visions of teaching were not routinized, standardized, and bureaucratic. They were not prepared for the school cultures that sought to make teaching an assembly-line, predictable job. These four young, talented teachers could have pursued a variety of professions, yet they chose to teach because they conceived of teaching as a valuable vocation. However, they each experienced tension between their expectations and experiences. Evie could not accept the boxed lesson plans she was mandated to fill out weekly because she sought the unpredictable in teaching: The questions from students she did not anticipate; The tangential comment that shifts the direction of the class discussion; The unknown and unknowable aspects of human interactions that cannot be predicted and scripted in advance. Amy would not conform to the conception of teacher forced upon her by administrators, coaches, and specialists. She was aware that she was not able to reach and teach every student in her class and that haunted her. She derived validation from her ability to teach her students. She struggled when she could not find professional learning experiences to assist her, leaving her disempowered. Kate could not reconcile her ideals of teaching with the culture of distrust and surveillance that pervaded her school. She sought authentic professional learning and was disheartened to experience PD as a charade involving extensive documentation and paperwork. And, Richard constructed an understanding of how teaching evaluations were being misused within the larger social/cultural context surrounding schooling at this historic moment.

In one of my first interviews with Richard, he explained that "trust is a real barrier to authentic PD." This observation would prove true for all four teachers in the study. They all shared experiences of not being trusted by and not trusting their administrators. This lack of trust was manifested in explicit surveillance, contributing to their feelings of not being treated as professionals. There is much about this noticing that is problematic. For beginning teachers entering the profession to receive the message that they are not trusted as professionals shaped their subjectivities in unique ways. Amy resisted the damaging teaching identity that was foisted upon her through flight, while Evie held fast to her belief that teaching was a political act. Her ideal of emancipatory teaching enabled her to identify with a larger professional community that did not question her authority. Further, she created an organic, globalized teaching network for herself through the internet. Richard, a self-declared "rebel," constructed an image of himself as anti-hero to oppose the forces of standardization and accountability pressuring him. And, Kate tried to stay committed to her call to teach by reminding herself of the moral reasons she chose this profession, along with her passion for literature.

In Chapter V, I examined the interviews through a Foucauldian framework to study the functions and effects of power/knowledge relations. By examining how the discourse surrounding professional learning organizes a way of thinking into a way of acting in the social and cultural context, I was able to gain an understanding of how beginning teachers construct their subjectivities. Both schools utilized such technologies of power as surveillance, normalization, classification, and regulation to establish the school's dominant discursive field. Within the schools, each of the four participants in the study was situated as a satellite circulating power in and through their relationships. Each teacher dealt with the school culture and power relations differently. This speaks to the unique qualities of teaching in general, and teachers in particular. The teaching experiences the teachers in this study constructed were not interchangeable. The teachers each constituted their sense of "self" through the discourses available to them in specific social, cultural, historical contexts. How technologies of power shape and are shaped by technologies of the self is what differentiated the seemingly common forces acting on and through the participants as they constructed new subjectivities as beginning high school English teachers.

In mapping power relations, I delved into the question "How does this happen?" by examining the discourses participants used and the dominant discourses that sustained power in their school culture, all producing the regimes of truth that were taken as normative language and practice in the broader social, cultural, historic context. Reading the interviews and participants' writing through a Foucauldian framework enabled me to contend with the ways that dominant discourses constitute what we can think and how we can act in situated contexts. I tried to focus on the spaces in between, those moments when there was a slippage from the dominant discourse forming the norm and an echo of another discourse questioning if this is the only way it is or can be.

All four of the teachers cited constraints to their learning stemming from the mandated PD that was foisted upon them by administrators, who sent teachers the message through language used so frequently that it has been normalized and behavior that harkens back to the

Industrial model that teachers were not trusted professionals. In these two schools, knowledge was regulated by the type and access to PD made available to teachers. I could not help but wonder how much the anti-intellectual movement that exists in our country has contributed to the debasement of teachers' knowledge and authority. And, for how long? I was also left wondering how thoroughly administrators considered the implications, beyond budgetary decisions, that the age distribution of teachers has changed dramatically over the last 10 years, and subsequently the teacher population is comprised largely of 20-something, beginning teachers whose knowledge is different from and who have different ways of knowing than their more senior counterparts. Additionally, there are fewer seasoned teachers still in the school system to mentor and guide the novice teachers, creating a void for organic, just-in-time learning about what is happening in the classroom that could otherwise transpire as a valuable form of professional learning.

Over the course of the study, one of the questions that haunted me was "how can we ethically prepare beginning teachers?" How, if at all, can an awareness of the dominant school discourses (audit, accountability, and high-stakes testing) manage expectations without squelching visions of teaching? The teachers in my study did not enter the profession doe-eyed and naïve. They were well aware that the Danielson Framework was (mis)used as an evaluation tool in NYC public schools. The expectations they held about teaching and support of their professional learning were largely based on their student teaching experiences. The four teachers all had successful student teaching experiences in NYC schools. When I asked them to describe their responsibilities as student teachers they all stated that they planned their lessons, taught them, and then received immediate feedback from their teaching supervisor. They had the expectation that this experience would continue once they became full-fledged classroom teachers. However, their expectations were dramatically different than what they faced. They were mandated to use rigid lesson plan formats and submit their plans to their Assistant Principals at least a week in advance. As noted in previous chapters, they didn't receive feedback on the lessons they submitted and feedback on their teaching took the form of evaluation not instruction. A further disconnect between their expectations and the reality they faced in their schools had to do with the excessive paperwork which they were saddled with completing. Student teachers are not made to be paperwork compliant. In fact, the teachers in the study didn't consider that paperwork would serve as a regulating mechanism to control their time, thought – process, and sense of efficacy.

I don't want to suggest that teacher education should encourage pre-service teachers to lower their expectations that would be a pernicious compromise to their professional potential. Rather, I wonder what would happen if the curriculum in teacher education included information about the realities facing teachers in NYC public schools. Can it be possible to strengthen teachers' resistance? Can realistic expectations build teacher agency in the face of the institution of schooling which is currently bent on deprofessionalizing teachers?

Interestingly, the four teachers in my study had a clear and precise sense of the professional learning that would support their growth as English teachers. Some of their desired ideas about professional learning were not fundamentally dissimilar to the initiatives that were sponsored in their schools. For example, the teachers repeatedly expressed the professional need to discuss classroom teaching with colleagues. Sadly, the PLCs mandated in the schools were adopted wholesale with the technical parts superimposed on the process and practice, stripping the PLCs of authenticity. Both Kate and Richard explained that they resented having to spend hours documenting the "learning" that took place in the PLCs. The fact that the PLCs were mandated and accompanied by layers of paperwork, which they believed no one read, robbed them of a learning opportunity. However, the teachers were desperate to talk to their colleagues about teaching so there was a double sting to having mandated PLCs. What could have been a professional opening to learning became yet another constraint. I was left wondering about what resources exist which can enable beginning teachers to form and sustain a critical stance. I was also left questioning whether sharing the realities of teaching would better prepare teachers or drive away potential teachers.

The teachers in my study were strapped for time and energy, yet they made time and found energy to talk to me over the course of an academic year about their professional learning experiences and perceived learning needs. I often wondered what my research study was for them? Of course, I listened to them. I attended to their ideas closely and carefully which in itself validates one's experiences as meaningful. But I also wonder if being part of a research study in some way made them feel like a professional who is part of a larger professional community of teaching. Did they grow in awareness as they discussed their professional learning experiences? Were there more disruptions to dominant discourses as they discussed the openings and constraints to their learning?

Toward Further Inquiry

Additional research into forms of resistance may enable teacher educators to prepare teachers for the dominant school discourses and practices that pervade NYC public schools at this time. I would like to build on this study to further explore the ways teachers can/do resist, regulate, and perpetuate dominant school discourses. This line of inquiry may shed light on how resistance to 'regimes of truth' in schooling can be strengthened.

Additionally, I am interested in learning about the professional learning experiences and learning needs of the teachers who went to private and consortium schools. I am curious about the ways, and through what means, their learning needs are being addressed or not. Three out of four teachers in this study left to work at schools that were not driven by high-stakes standardized tests connected to teacher evaluations and the ranking or survival of their school. I wonder if the discursive field at these schools enables the teachers to construct subjectivities of themselves that are aligned with the conception of teacher as always in the making, rather than on a developmental trajectory whereby they are classified as numbers. Foucault taught us that discourse enables what is say-able, do-able, and think-able. Further inquiry can explore the discursive field and power relations in Regents-exempt schools to explore their impact on the learning experiences and needs of beginning teachers. It would be interesting to research the extent to which dominant school discourses in 21st century America impact those schools which adopt an alternative approach to standardized testing. Is it possible to create a discourse of schooling outside of the one set by the metanarrative of schooling? If so, what does it look like and how do teachers constitute their sense of teaching "self" in that context? What types of teachers and students would such a school produce?

Additional inquiry can address the professional learning and needs of administrators as it relates to supporting beginning teachers. The principals at both schools in my study were in their second year and driven by statistics. Upon entry into their leadership positions, they created a culture of accountability and standardization that manifested in PD mandates, which functioned to circumscribe, not expand learning. They were also circulating power from above and below their own positions and were likely circumscribed in their own professional learning.

Foucault's work investigated historically how mechanisms of power sustain themselves and function through a "net-like" organization involving everyone they touch. It is important to interrogate the political and economic forces that have led us to this rather bleak place in education today as well as to continue examining the dominant school discourses which produce norms that de-professionalize and demoralize teachers. Randi's question "Who is going to look after the teachers?" is one that demands an answer. I hope this dissertation adds to the scholarship about the professional learning experiences and needs of beginning high school teachers so we can responsibly and ethically answer that question.

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Appendix A

Invitation Letter to Potential Participants

Dear Potential Participant,

I am currently earning my Ph.D. in the English Education department at Teachers College, Columbia University. I am writing to request your participation in a research study I am conducting for my dissertation. I am researching the professional development experiences and learning needs of novice high school English teachers. I am using the definition of novice that is recognized as standard in education, which is three years or less of teaching experience.

Your participation in the study would include three semi-structured interviews (each under an hour) in-person or via Skype. These interviews will take place over a four-month period of time. A small amount of reflective writing about your professional development experiences and learning needs will also enrich the study.

I believe that your participation will help contribute to the understanding educators and policy makers have about the formal and informal professional development experiences of novice teachers along with their learning needs. I also hope that your participation in this study will support and strengthen your teaching practice.

If you are interested in participating in my research study, please email me at bag14@tc.columbia.edu or call at (917) 670-5283 and I will be happy to share more details about the study with you.

Best regards,

Beth Semaya

Doctoral Student, Dept. of English Education
Teachers College, Columbia University
Ph:917.670.5283; Email: bag14@tc.columbia.edu

Appendix B

Interview Protocol and Informed Consent

Interview #1

1. How long have you been a high school English teacher?
2. Can you describe your school district for me? Your school? Your department? Your classroom?
3. In terms of professional learning, what do you feel you need?
4. What are you getting support in?
5. What are you not getting support in?
6. Where and/ or with whom do you find your best support right now?
7. Where do you seek out some of your own learning? Is what you are seeking out helping you? How do you know?

Interview #2

1. What are some key things central to your teaching work?
2. Did something come up that you want to talk about?
3. Have you/ do you reach out beyond the school for support?
4. What are some of the other supports you use for content and process of teaching?
5. What are the systems of support you put in place for yourself?
6. Who are you in communication with that is helpful?
7. What have/do you read that is helpful?

Interview #3

1. Consider the different people who are in your teaching network (colleagues, coaches, administrators, etc…) in what ways are your interactions with them supportive of your teaching practice in the following areas:
    - Instructional practice (lesson planning, pacing, classroom management)
    - Help with teaching writing
    - Help with leading class discussions
    - Formation of your teaching identity
    - How do you name and frame problematic situations? Are there colleagues who provide dialectical discussion to extend your thinking? Who and in what ways?

Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, NY

Informed Consent
Permission to Use Audio Recordings and Written Reflections

Dear Participant-

I understand that Beth Semaya, a doctoral candidate in English Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, is conducting research about novice high school English teachers' professional development experiences and learning needs. I further understand that she will be writing about her research in her doctoral dissertation and reporting on her research in presentations to teachers and scholars at professional conferences, and that she plans to publish scholarly and professional articles in which she discusses her research findings and analyzes, quotations from, and reprints samples of her interviews for her research project.

To assure confidentiality and protection for you, I promise that:
- Data will only be used for educational and research purposes.
- You may request that your work not be shown to any others.
- You may request that your work not be used in the study.

I hereby agree to serve as a participant for Beth Semaya's research project, and I grant permission to Beth Semaya to make use of any of our conversations and reflective writing about professional development in her scholarly and professional writing and in her publications and presentations. This permission is granted with the further understanding that no use of my words will compromise my privacy or in any way reveal my name or identify me in any way that might reveal my identity as an individual without further consent. Furthermore, I grant this permission freely and without coercion and with the understanding that I may withdraw from participation as an informant at any time.

Yours,

Beth Semaya
Teachers College, Columbia University

Participant Consent Form

Signature: ____

Name: ________________________________Date: ______________________________