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Exploring How Second-Career Teachers Construct a New Professional Identity: A Narrative Inquiry Study

Bethany Pflug

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EXPLORING HOW SECOND-CAREER TEACHERS CONSTRUCT A NEW
PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY STUDY

By

Bethany Pflug

FACULTY RESEARCH COMMITTEE:

Chair: Scot Headley, Ph.D.

Member: Susanna Thornhill, Ph.D.

Member: Karen Buchanan, Ed.D.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative, narrative inquiry explored how second-career teachers constructed their new professional identity as a teacher. Through personal, in-depth interviews, the study analyzed how each participant constructed their professional identity. Four common themes were found among the participants in how they constructed their professional identity: professional identity shaped by identity as a parent, professional identity as shaped by personal identity, professional identity as shaped by prior professional skills and experiences, and professional identity as shaped by social context. In addition to these themes, each participant had unique ways in which they constructed their professional identity as a teacher which did not fall into one of the themes. Their unique experiences were an important aspect of how they understood their constructed identity as a teacher. The participants were in their first or second-year of teaching, they were still constructing their understanding of their teacher identity. The study formed a snapshot of the development of their identity as a teacher during their first or second-year of teaching. The results of this study point toward a need for further research into how second-career teachers construct their new professional identity as a teacher. Second-career teachers, teacher education programs, school districts, and teaching teams would benefit from learning more about this process to better support this unique population as they enter the teaching field.

Keywords: narrative inquiry, second-career teachers, career changers, identity formation, professional identity

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Changing careers can be a multi-faceted and complex process with repercussions for state economies and school districts. For school districts, this could create a constant state of hiring new personnel, which would impact student learning and the school system financially (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Forty-four percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Ingersoll, et al., 2018). Switching careers happens when teachers both leave and enter the field. Of those who enter the field of teaching, 37% were career changers (Marinell & Johnson, 2014). In educational research, this group of people is referred to as second-career teachers (SCTs) or second-career entrants.

On average, an adult changes jobs 11.5 times in their lifetime (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019), which is largely based on gender and age. Statistically, women tend to have more career fluidity as they are generally the predominant caretaker of children and return to careers later in life. Younger adults change jobs more frequently than older adults (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). While the statistics addressed gender, an examination of age cohorts reveals interesting trends. A recent Gallup report stated that only half of millennials planned to be working with their current company a year from now (Adkins, 2016). In addition, in 2018, 40 million people in the United States voluntarily left their jobs (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Millennials accounted for half of the 40 million, Generation X represented 25% of the total, and Baby Boomers represented 19% (Maurer, 2018). Millennials were interested in finding work that was worthwhile, engaging, and challenging (Adkins, 2016), while Generation Xers were cited as leaving the workplace for job promotions and to change careers (Maurer, 2018).

Second-career teachers (SCTs) are a growing proportion of educators represented in the teaching field. They bring unique perspectives to their new profession, as well as their prior professional experiences and skills. Part of this unique perspective is based on their prior career identity and how their prior professional identity influences who they become as a teacher. When a career change occurs, one's perspective of self changes based on new social groups and context (Oyersman, et al., 2012). The ways professionals form their identity, specifically how SCTs construct their new professional narrative, provided the motivation for this research.

In my role as an assistant professor in a Master of Arts in Teaching program, I have seen an increase in the number of SCT teacher candidates. As I have taught and supported these teacher candidates, I found they brought rich experiences and skills to the classroom from their prior profession. Those coming from the business world brought time-management, interpersonal, and entrepreneurship skills (Marinell & Johnson, 2014). SCTs from STEM fields brought real-life experience in the subject-matter, resilience, the ability to be flexible, and good communication skills (Grier & Johnston, 2009). From these experiences, I was curious how this group of teachers construct a new professional identity. The research on identity formation, both personal and professional, offered insight into the complex and continuous process of forming an identity.

Background on Topic

Identity Formation. Research on identity formation suggests that identity is not ontological, but is a process that continually developed during and over one's whole life (Beijiaard, et al., 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2012). The concept of identity and understanding one's identity is continually evolving and shifting. Recent definitions of identity emphasized the role of social relations, environmental factors, and group dynamics (Olsen, 2012; Hogg, 2012,

Oyerman, et al., 2012). Identity can be described as, “the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is” (Oyerman, et al., 2012, p. 69). Identity is also understood in terms of group associations such as race, class, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, language, and physical ability (Olsen, 2012). Identities come to the forefront in a person’s life when a major life event occurs. One major life event that brings identity to the forefront is a career change (Ryan & Deci, 2012). As people change careers and become teachers, they merge their past and previous identities.

Second-Career Teachers’ Identity Formation. Changing careers is a significant life event which brings identity and the formation of a new identity to the forefront (Ryan & Deci, 2012). Research on how SCTs formed their professional identity is limited. Studies on SCTs mostly focus on motivations to change careers.

Studies on the identity formation process of SCTs have found that they benefit from support in developing a new sense of self and identity as they changed professions (Wilson & Deaney, 2010). Mentors can be a big part of the support role for SCTs as they reconstruct a new professional identity (Jorissen, 2003; Wilson & Deaney, 2010). Mentors can do this by helping SCTs make sense of their new identity, and help them maintain realistic perceptions of themselves and their new career (Wilson & Deaney, 2010; Jorissen, 2003). As identity formation was a continual process, SCTs need continual support in understanding who they are as a teacher.

This study adds to the limited body of literature on SCTs identity formation process. Using narrative inquiry, the research study explored how SCT constructed a professional identity as a teacher.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to discover how SCTs constructed a new professional identity as a teacher. Through in-depth, personal interviews, I examined how participants constructed a new identity as a teacher. I did this by analyzing the themes in the constructed narratives and re-created narrative accounts for each participant (Riessman, 2008). Professionals who work with SCTs could benefit from the findings of this study as they support and work with SCTs in schools and teacher preparation programs.

Research Design

This narrative (Creswell, 2013; Clandinin, 2006) study enabled an exploration of how identity was formed (Creswell, 2013). The process of narrative inquiry establishes a framework for understanding how people tell stories about certain topics and make sense of them. In narrative inquiry, there are four steps in a narrative process: living the story, telling the story, re-telling the story, and re-living the story (Clandinin, 2013). Participants of this study were asked to tell, retell, and relive their stories of identity formation. The ways participants told their stories brought to light how they viewed themselves and constructed that view of themselves (Clandinin, 2006). The use of story helped participants articulate this process and was a meaningful experience for participants and researcher.

In narrative inquiry studies, methodologists recommend a small number of participants. The smaller sample size allowed me to conduct in-depth interviews and a detailed analysis of the results (Creswell, 2013). For the purpose of this study, I interviewed three participants who were SCTs, who had a teaching license, and were currently in their first or second year of teaching. In-depth interviews occurred in which participants were asked questions to guide the story, with supplemental, open-ended questions to encourage the telling of their story (Creswell, 2013). In

narrative inquiry, the goal of the interviewer is to follow the interviewee down their trails, not to guide them down the trail (Riessman, 2008). This meant that I allowed the participants to guide the data I collected. Since the nature of the study was to collect, understand, and analyze the stories of people, it was important to allow participants to guide and shape the research.

Research Question

The research questions for this study were:

- How did second-career teachers construct a new professional identity as a teacher?
- How did participants describe their process to become a teacher?
- What was their personal view of themselves in their first career?
- How did their prior career identity influence who they became as a teacher?

Key Terms

- **Second-Career Teacher**—A teacher in which teaching is not their first professional career.
- **Career changer/switcher**—A person who decided to leave a career to pursue another career. Research suggested that career changers held degrees, or were trained on-site for their previous career (Wilson & Deane, 2010; Watters & Diezmann, 2015).
- **Career**—The definition of a career experienced significant change in the last 82 years. For the purpose of this study, a career was defined as having received training, acquired skills, knowledge, and/or education in order to complete the work (Mulhall, 2011).
- **Identity**—Identity consisted of traits, characteristics, social relations, roles, and group relationships, roles, and group memberships. It was viewed as self-structured

and impacted by one's immediate context (Oyersman, et al., 2012; Vignoles, et al., 2011).

- **Identity construction/formation**—The process in which a person formed, transformed, constructed, and/or evolved, their identity.
- **Narrative**—For the purpose of this research study, narrative was defined as: a story the participant told which connected events into a meaningfully and organized sequence that was constructed for a particular purpose and audience (Riessman, 2008).

Role of the Researcher

In narrative inquiry, the inquirer is a character in the story, whether that is in the role of a participant, interviewer, or co-constructor (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006). As the inquirer, I entered into participants' stories by relating to their stories, sharing similar experiences, and by allowing myself to be open in the inquiry process (Clandinin, 2006). The experience of storytelling was a connecting piece between the one telling and the one listening to the story. As the researcher, I gave an account of who I was in the inquiry and who I was in relation to the participants. In narrative inquiry, I could not be removed from the research, I had to acknowledge myself in every aspect of the narrative inquiry process.

I became part of the story by engaging in autobiographical narrative inquiries, writing my own process of identity formation and experiences with the topic of inquiry throughout the research process (Clandinin, 2013). For the purpose of this study, I began by examining my experiences with second-career teachers and sharing it below. The story started during my own teacher preparation program.

Graduate Student

After completing my bachelor's degree, I immediately entered a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program. I assumed everyone would be like me. Freshly graduated, with a bachelor's degree, seeking the next level of education to become teachers. I was pleasantly surprised when there were other students in my MAT program who were not my age; they were parents, corporate managers, engineers, and artists, all changing careers to become teachers. Once I graduated from my master's program and began my role as a teacher, I did not think about SCTs until I was part of a hiring committee.

Middle School Teacher

During my second year of teaching, I was on a hiring committee, and our potential hire was a first-year SCT. Mrs. B, (pseudonym used for confidentiality) had managed a health food store for ten years before she became a teacher. She and I ended up sharing a wall between our classrooms. The way she would weave stories from her work and life experiences was so interesting to me. I valued her professionalism, her ability to have hard conversations and think out of the box. She was pedagogically sound, creative, intelligent, and supportive of all of her students. She would sometimes become frustrated with administration, but only when she perceived they were not managing their people well. She was an advocate for her students, her colleagues, and herself. I still hold Mrs. B. in the highest regard as a friend and teacher, even though we no longer share a classroom wall.

Instructional Coach

When I became an instructional coach, I was able to help develop professional learning opportunities and create a mentorship program for new teachers. One of the other instructional coaches, Mr. P., was new to our school district and had entered teaching as a SCT ten years

prior. His first career was in the military. As we worked together to design and deliver professional development, he would often tell stories and make comments in reference to his time in the military. The way he supported, taught, and collaborated was greatly influenced by his time in the military. Even the stories he would tell from his time as a teacher were influenced from how the military trained him to be professional and to collaborate.

Mr. P., impacted my work as an instructional coach in his mentality about team, his humility, and attitude. He saw us all as a team working towards the same goal. Although he had more life experience than most of the group, he was humble and willing to learn from everyone. His attitude was always positive and he did not speak negatively about other people. I remember wondering how much his career in the military had impacted his professionalism, his team-centered focus, his humility, and his positive attitude.

Assistant Professor

When I became an instructor at a local university, my first cohort of teacher candidates included two career changers. In their previous careers, one student had been a wildland firefighter before coming into education, the other, a biologist who took care of monkeys. The experiences and skills they brought from their prior careers were sometimes helpful and sometimes not as helpful. The biologist found lesson planning to be very difficult as it was a very new idea for him. In his prior career, he never had to think about engaging an audience, as most of his time was with animals or in a lab. The other teacher candidate found his work as a firefighter gave him stamina and perseverance, but not much support when it came to practicing classroom management. The former biologist struggled with balancing student teaching, class work, and the licensure assessment. They both did great work as students and as teachers in the classroom, but they needed support in different areas and in different ways.

Over the past two years, I had the opportunity to work with many teacher candidates who were career changers. I had great experiences with a number of these and really enjoyed the unique experiences they brought to the classroom. There was one candidate though, with whom I had a rough experience. The story behind this candidate was difficult as it was a struggle to support her. Mrs. T. struggled with knowing what were appropriate and professional interactions with others. I was her instructor for multiple courses and her field supervisor. Due to these roles, I had to intervene often and not for the reasons one wanted to intervene. Not only was it a difficult experience for me professionally, to mediate conversations between Mrs. T. and her cooperating teacher, but I was also reflecting on these issues as I researched and wrote a draft of this study. As I was writing, I was unaware of how my perspective and feelings of the situation I was in were translating to the paper. My writing reflected a negative perspective of SCTs. Thankfully, when this was pointed out to me, I could reframe my perspective, allowing the research literature to frame the study and rather than my personal experiences.

In my last cohort, I had four SCT candidates who I enjoyed working with and supporting. They each needed support in various ways, and through the experience with Mrs. T, I gave more support to these four candidates than I did with prior career changers. Part of the support they needed was in how to transition from a being professional, a student, and then a student teacher. These four candidates brought unique needs to the learning environment and were assets to their current classrooms.

True to narrative inquiry, this was the start of my autobiographical narrative inquiry, which was used as field text for the study. According to Clandinin (2013) the autobiographical narrative inquiry is an essential part of the process of narrative inquiry. In telling of my experiences with SCTs, I placed myself in the midst of the research. Being in the midst of the

research required me to be aware and take extreme caution as I discuss next in the ethical considerations for this study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in narrative inquiry required special attention in the study. The relational nature of the methodology meant that I, as the researcher, needed to consider how I would build relationship with the participants that would support elicit authentic responses. It was for this particular reason that I asked former students to participate in this study. Since our relationship was no longer authoritative in nature, we were able to dive deep into the questions from the beginning, rather than spend time building a new relationship. Another ethical element was how I interpreted the stories told to me, and how I re-created those narratives. To ensure validity and trustworthiness, Clandinin (2006) recommended co-construction of narrative accounts. By allowing the participants to read through, and make edits and suggestions on their re-created narrative accounts, I worked to ensure the intent of the story stayed true to participants' meanings.

Prior to finding participants, I completed the Institutional Review Board Form and sought university approval for the research investigation. When approval was granted, I sought out participants for the study and obtain a signed letter of informed consent during the interviews. To maintain confidentiality, I used pseudonyms in the study. I was aware of the inquirer-participant relationship, respecting and honoring our relationship and the story told. I sought feedback and assistance from participants to ensure their narratives were accurately represented.

I reflected on ethical matters related to how the interviews were conducted, permission forms, and explicit acknowledgement of my former role in the participants' lives. All of the participants were former students of mine, which made for an easy transition to the conversation

as there was already a relationship between us. However, this also meant I had to acknowledge my past position in their lives. Our interviews occurred during the COVID-19 shut down. Due to this, all interviews had to be conducted via Zoom, an online video meeting platform. Thankfully, participants were confident with technology and this was not a problem. Only one participant did not have the means to immediately sign the consent form at the start of the interview and they instead gave verbal assent, on the recording, follow it later with written permission. During all of the interviews, I acknowledged my past role in the participants' lives and they all appeared comfortable discussing the topic with me. During the narrative inquiry, I was aware of ethical considerations as they arose and maintained related records in the field notes.

All field texts, letters of informed consent, interview notes, autobiographical narrative, transcriptions, video recordings, were locked in a password protected file. Participants were given a letter of informed consent prior to participation in the study (Appendix A). A copy of the signed form was given to participants digitally. Materials will be kept for three years; at the end of the three years, I will personally destroy or delete the information. No personally identifiable information was used in the study to ensure participants' confidentiality.

Organization of Remaining Chapters

The following chapters discuss the literature, methodology, findings, and discussion of the findings. Chapter II is a review the literature regarding identity formation and second-career teachers. Chapter III is an explanation of the chosen methodology and how it is designed for this particular study. Chapter IV is an analysis of the findings from the field texts collected by theme. Chapter V discusses the results regarding the topic of study.

Chapter II:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

For the purpose of this study, literature was reviewed in the following areas: identity formation, professional identity formation, second-career teachers (SCTs) professional identity formation, and SCTs needs in changing careers and becoming a teacher. To understand identity formation, a brief definition of identity is needed to establish the direction of the study.

Identity is defined in many ways, and more recently, it includes a socio-cultural context that cannot be removed from the understanding of a who a person is at their core. Vignoles, et al., (2011) defined identity as “the confluence of the person’s self-chosen or ascribed commitments, personal characteristics, and beliefs about herself; roles and positions in relation to significant others; and her membership in social groups and categories” (p. 4). For the purpose of this study, when identity is mentioned, it refers to the combined elements of a self-structure and emphasizes the impact of immediate context on identity formation.

Identity Formation

Erikson’s (1968) seminal work of identity formation, or development of the ego, has been the basis for identity and identity formation research for decades. Erickson often used identity formation and the development of the ego interchangeably. However, for the purpose of this study, identity formation will be used, except when referring to Erickson’s foundational work. Erickson (1968) described the process of ego development as categorized by eight states of identity development: trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and ego integrity versus despair. These phases were chronological, and

ideally, during each phase there was integration of the developing individual within social contexts. According to Erickson (1968), identity development was not done in isolation but in interaction with the social environment. However, it was still an experience that occurred at the core of an individual. Erikson believed identity was not something innate, but was developed over the course of one's life (Beijaard, et al., 2003).

Identity research defined three levels of identity: individual, relational, and collective (Vignoles et al., 2011). Individual, or personal identity, refers to aspects of self-definition at the individual person level. These encompass, but were not limited to, an individual's goals, values, philosophical beliefs, standards for behavior, decision-making, self-esteem, and self-evaluation (Vignoles et al., 2011). The relational identity refers to how an individual understands and fits into structures of formal and informal relationships. And, collective identity refers to an individual's identification in social groups to which they belong, including: ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, family, and work groups.

In the psychological and sociological literature on identity formation, multiple frameworks guide the discussion of the process of identity formation. Developmental psychologists view identity formation as a long-term process (Vignoles et al., 2011). A socio-psychological approach to identity formation focuses on the short-term contextual fluctuations in identity. A person's view of themselves is directly affected by their social context and can ebb and flow accordingly. Constructionists view identity as being built by the person (Vignoles et al., 2011). This mimics a basic biological growth: people's identities will naturally develop as they are exposed to more of life's experiences. It is up to the individual to work to discover their developing identity. Some perspectives emphasized the personal construction of identity and others emphasized the social construction of identity (Oyersman, et al., 2012; Olsen, 2012).

Hogg (2012) found that the groups people belong to influenced not only how identity was formed, but also how people viewed others. Groups gave people a sense of identity. Identities were formed in three categories: the past, who someone was; the present: who someone is; and the future: who someone is becoming (Hogg, 2012). Identity formation is complex and constantly developing.

One of the more well-known concepts of identity formation is Marcia's (1966) concepts of four identity statuses. Based on Erikson's seminal work on identity formation, Marcia (1966) conceptualized a model of identity development. This model included four statuses of identity formation: identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and identity diffusion. These statuses, unlike Erickson (1968), were non-linear stages of development; they were descriptive labels. A person with an identity achievement status was viewed as focusing on important issues in their lives; they were flexible but not easily swayed by external influences. They had the ability to understand the experiences of others and could consider differing opinions reflexively and without becoming defensive (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Overall, this status was the type of person who knows who they are, listens to other opinions, and were willing to grow and adapt as needed without losing a sense of their identity. Persons in the moratorium status struggled to define themselves. They were morally sensitive, conflicted, and engaging. They pulled others into their formation plight to help them figure out their identity. If they could work through it, they moved on to the identity achievement status. If they did not work through it, they could live in a vacillation phase; moving between various identities seeking affirmation from others in hopes of solidifying a sense of self. Those in the foreclosure status appeared as solid and strong as those in the identity achievement status, but there was an underlying fragility in them. They struggled to consider alternative ideas and could be defensive. People in the identity diffusion status were

non-exploratory in their identity. They were influenced by whatever the current trend was, which made them continually look to others for external validation of their identity. People in this stage were unaware of the need to grow in their understanding of their identity (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). These four statuses of identity development were used to understand where someone was in their identity formation process.

Another major identity formation process was the work of Berzonsky (2008). Berzonsky's approach, which could also be referred to as styles, was focused on the process of forming an identity. The model categorized the process into three groups: informational, diffuse-avoidant, and normative. Informational processing orientation categorizes individuals who intentionally seek out, process, and evaluate identity relevant information. They were self-explorers, open to new ideas, willing to suspend judgement in order to reexamine self-constructs. Individuals in the diffuse-avoidant processing orientation were reluctant to confront and work through, and could choose to strategically avoid, conflicts and issues with identity. The normative processing orientation were individuals who had firm goals, commitments, and sense of purpose. However, they could come to those perspectives mindlessly and pre-maturely. They tended to have a low tolerance for ambiguity and a high need for structure. Individuals in the normative processing orientation strove to maintain self-views and guarded themselves from information which appeared to threaten their view of self. They were resistant to change and known as dogmatic self-theorists (Berzonsky, 2011). Berzonsky's (2011) identity processing styles referred to "the strategies that individuals characteristically use or prefer to utilize when dealing with identity conflicts" (p. 59). Both of Marcia and Berzonsky's identity formation models gave a process-oriented perspective of identity formation.

Identity and the formation of an identity were not bound by time. Erickson (1968) contended that identity was not something someone had, but was instead developed over their entire life. Research since the work of Erickson (1968), stated that identity was not a static, once-formed-never-changing entity. Identity was dynamic and influenced by relationships and context (Blustein & Noumair, 1996). Hogg (2012) found that identities could be thought of in three spaces: past selves, present selves, and future selves. Each identity of an individual was in constant negotiation, with periods of renegotiation, as it related to identity formation.

Berzonsky, et al., (2011) studied the associations between identity styles and value orientations, using Berzonsky's model of identity formation. The study proposed that identity styles would be systematically linked with different value orientations during times of identity conflicts. The study found that those in the informational approach were more independent, focused on others, and not hedonistic. Those in the normative approach associated with values of conformity, commitment, and responsibility. Those in the diffuse-avoidance approach associated with values of self-interest and personal pleasure (Berzonsky et. al., 2010). This study was important in understanding that people, depending on the identity style they held, tended towards certain values. Consequently, the results of the study helped in understanding the tactics used in dealing with conflicts based on identity style.

Identity formation was not a simple process nor was it done in solitude (Hogg, 2012; Beijaard, et al., 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2012). Researchers seemed to agree that identity and identity formation were inextricably connected. Identity was constructed in social, cultural contexts (Schachter, 2005; Marcia, 1966; Erikson, 1968). Identity formation was a complex process. The development of a professional identity was also complex as identities were restructured during major life shifts.

Identity Formation in Careers

A career identity can be defined as “a dynamic multiplicity of personal, in contrast to social and cultural, positions or voices regarding work” (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012, p. 157), and was based on interactions with social and physical contexts. Research suggested that individuals with a solid understanding of their career identity, navigated disruptions of changes in careers better than those who did not have a solid understanding of their career identity. Ibarra and Obodaru (2016) suggested that when it comes to careers, it was better to leave career identity open-ended as the idea of a career was a fluid concept.

The process of career identity formation, similar to the development of a personal or individual identity, was not done alone. Multiple studies affirm that career identity and personal identity development were done in social contexts (LaPointe, 2010; Hogg, 2012; Blustein & Noumair, 1996; Meijer & Lengelle, 2012).

Blustein and Numair (1996) proposed the concept of embeddedness as a means to enhance understanding of the interplay between self and identity in career development. Embeddedness encompassed both relational and cultural influences in career identity formation. It required the self-development of identity and embedded that development in the context of relational and cultural factors. By acknowledging and placing the relational and cultural aspects of an identity construct in the process of career identity formation, cultural and social aspects became part of the process. This continued to support the notion that career identities were not formed in isolation but in relation to the individual’s interrelationships, and the environment of the workspace (Meijer & Lengelle, 2012).

Identity Formation of Teachers

Teaching was viewed not merely as a role, but was a complex, personal, and social practice concerning the whole person (Olsen, 2012; Goodson & Cole, 1994). Olsen (2012) found a teacher's identity to be dynamic, both a continual process and a product; situated in relationships among professional, historical and cultural contexts. Goodson and Cole (1994) found a teacher's identity to be rooted in societal and personal interpretations and expectations of what a teacher did and who they were in the community. It was both personal and professional, a continually developing process, and influenced by factors inside and outside of the school.

Both Goodson and Cole (1994) and Olsen (2012) found a teacher's identity to be dynamic, influenced by social and historical contexts. They believed it to be different than a role one holds or a job to fulfill, but not quite separated from a personal identity. Both included aspects of the local community in their definitions. Similar to the formation of personal identity, the teacher identity was a continually developing process (Beijaard, et al., 2003; Goodson & Cole, 1994, Reynolds, 1996). These researchers emphasized the context, or landscape, in which a teacher develops their professional identity. Both definitions emphasize an inextricable and inseparable connection between the teacher as an individual and as a professional. To understand how a teacher formed a professional identity one must understand their personal and professional strata. A teacher's professional identity was deeply connected to the communities in which they taught, as well as their interaction with colleagues, families, and students (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). A teacher's professional identity was found to continually shift over the course of their career.

Avalos (2011) found that one period crucial to teacher identity formation was when they first started to teach. During this stage of professional identity development, it was important for

teachers to shape their teacher identity. Further research found that a teacher identity may be reshaped during a time of reform, or when new technology was introduced (Vahasantanen & Etelapelto, 2009; Shelley, et al., 2013; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). A teacher's identity was dynamic, involving both the individual and the context, and continually shaped and re-shaped over the course of a teaching career (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

Similar to the formation of a career identity, the formation of a teacher identity was not self-developed, but done in context, social groups, relationships, and culture (Beijaard, et al., 2003; Blustein & Numair, 1996). It was continually evolving as shifts in schools, pedagogy, new technology, and policy occurred (Colliander, 2018). Similar to personal and career identity formation, a teacher's identity formation was developed over time (Erikson, 1968; Flum & Kaplan, 2012; Oyersman, et al., (2012). The work environment, both emotional and physical, were an important factor in career identity formation.

Identity Formation of Second-Career Teachers

Studies on the identity formation process of SCTs found second-career teachers benefitted from support in developing a new sense of self and identity as they changed professions (Wilson & Deaney, 2010). Mentors could play a huge role in supporting SCTs as they reconstructed their professional identity (Jorissen, 2003; Wilson & Deaney, 2010). Mentors could do this by helping SCTs make sense of their new identity, and help them maintain a realistic perception of themselves and their new career (Wilson & Deaney, 2010; Jorissen, 2003).

Wilson and Deaney (2010) studied the formation of career identity in people who changed careers and entered into teaching. Recommendations were made to career changers, and those working with them, to help support the development of their new professional identity. They concluded that SCTs needed support in developing an awareness of their sense of self as

they were reshaping their career identity. Wilson and Deaney (2010) reported that SCTs with a strong sense of self and self-efficacy were able to adjust to their new professional identity well. Meijers and Lengelle (2012) also found those with a strong sense of their career identity were able to navigate changes in their careers better than those who did not have a strong sense of career identity. Being open-minded, consistent, and having a realistic perception of one's identity as an educator were important characteristics to have when reshaping a career identity to that of a teacher.

Grier and Johnston (2009) studied how professional traits translated to teacher identities, and if career changers would benefit from a separate credential program specifically tailored to their needs as career changers. Grier and Johnston (2009) found the six participants had altruistic reasons for changing careers – giving back to the community, working with youth, and instilling a passion for science/math were some of the themes discovered. Three female participants found the shift of identity from a prestigious career in the STEM field to that of a teacher was challenging. This challenge seemed dependent on the support they received from friends and family. Common traits found among these career changers were enthusiasm, resilience while in the preservice program, the ability to be flexible, and the ability to communicate well. Grier and Johnston (2009) noted how all of the teachers expressed that they expected to enjoy teaching and believed they would feel good about their contribution to society. Additionally, the career changers felt confident about their STEM work, life experiences, and their ability to make connections to the real world for their students. Moreover, half of those interviewed mentioned finding their identity as a student again was the most challenging task for them. The participants described their identity as a teacher as a combination of rediscovering who they were as a student

and learning their identity as it pertained to engaging in the teaching community through their student teaching placement.

In their continual work with SCTs, Grier and Johnston (2012) discovered five areas in which the participants could be categorized in how they created their identity as a teacher: personal background, drawing from previous identity, concerns about being a student again, finding support, and their views on student learning. Since all of the career changers left their previous careers, they had a different perspective of themselves which aided in the process of transition in career identities. All four participants expressed how they had supportive families and mentors, and found the education community to be very family friendly, which were notably different from their previous careers.

Jorissen (2003) studied an urban school in the United States during a time of teacher shortage where alternative certification programs were created to attract second-career entrants. The focus of the study was specifically on two aspects of what SCTs experienced during their preparation program: beneficial elements and key relationships during the program. Jorissen (2003) discovered that developing competence and restructuring of one's identity were critical tasks for career changers to undergo while transitioning careers. Mentors were found to be vital to the process of restructuring one's professional identity and in supporting the career changers development and adaptation to a new career.

As career changers transition and reshape their professional identity, time to reconstruct who they were as a professional was found to be an important part of the process of the formation of a teacher identity (Jorissen, 2003). Those who had a solid understanding of themselves as a professional, were able to reshape their professional identity better than those who did not (Hoyer & Steyaert, 2015). Overall, multiple studies on SCT's identity formation

found mentors to be vital to the development of a new career identity (Jorissen, 2003; Wilson & Deaney, 2010).

Unique Needs of SCTs

An emerging theme in the literature regarding SCTs were the unique needs of SCTs. Researchers have found that during the SCTs preparation program, there were needs that could be addressed which would benefit the SCTs and their transition to becoming a teacher. In Tigchelaar, et al., (2010) review of the literature regarding the differences between first-career and second-career teachers, they recommended four design principles for teaching and working with SCTs. In this specifically-designed curriculum for SCTs, preparation programs and school districts, Tigchelaar, et al., (2010) recommended addressing expectations, challenges of the transition to teaching, transfer of previously learned skills and experiences to their classroom, and developing a realistic theory of practice. In Cuddapah and Stanford's (2015) study on SCTs, they found it was beneficial to have people who changed careers explore their ideal teacher images and ideas of teaching. They found that SCTs ideal teacher images impacted the type of teacher they aspired to become without ever having deconstructed and re-understood their ideals. The need to deconstruct and re-understand their ideal images would benefit SCTs so they could become aware of potential practices or ways of teaching that were no longer beneficial or realistic.

Researchers on SCTs have found SCTs needed specific support in transitioning from their first career to their new career of teaching (Wilcox & Samaras, 2009; Fry & Anderson 2011). Some common themes among these studies were discovered in the areas of difficulties experienced, surprises encountered, extra pedagogical training, setting and fulfillment of professional goals, and support in how to connect prior skills and experiences to teaching.

(Wilcox & Samaras, 2009; Watters & Diezman, 2015; Laming & Horne, 2013). From these themes, researchers recommended the need for SCTs to have more hands-on learning experiences during their teacher preparation program, specific mentorship during their first-year of teaching, a network of non-traditional licensed new teachers, and university support as new SCTs move into their first classroom (Wilcox & Samaras, 2009; Bullough Jr. & Knowles, 1990; Laming & Horne, 2013). Researchers found assumptions were made regarding SCTs due to their age and previous career experiences.

Administrators and induction programs assumed because SCTs were experienced and older than the traditional first-year teacher, they would know how to transition and adjust to the professional role (Laming and Horne, 2013). Research has found that this is not an organic process, mentors were needed to help SCTs in both understanding the school culture and culture of the teaching profession (Laming & Horne, 2013; Fry and Anderson, 2011).

SCTs were found to have other unique needs beyond the design of preparation programs and induction programs. Mayotte (2003) conducted a case study involving four SCTs during their first-year teaching. The themes that emerged revealed different needs of the SCT. They found that SCTs desired specific recognition for the skills developed through a previous career and how the skills transferred to teaching; acknowledgment of how the content knowledge they possessed had been enriched by working in a previous career, and an understanding from others of how their work in a previous career influenced teaching philosophy (Mayotte, 2003). The SCTs had clearly defined justifications and purposes for changing careers, and readily applied their previous experience and knowledge in applicable ways in the classroom that enriched curriculum and instruction. What they needed was professional affirmation and acknowledgement in their work as a SCT. In Newman's (2010) study on career changers, they

also found people who changed careers and went into teaching desired to have their previous careers and skills acknowledged by their peers, administrations, and university instructors.

SCTs were found to need supports specific to their unique situation (Fry and Anderson, 2011). They needed explicit support in adapting and connecting their previous experiences and skills, to their developing teaching skills (Chambers, 2002; Wilson & Deaney, 2010; Anderson, et al., 2014). And they needed recognition and affirmation for the skills, experiences, and level of professionalism they brought to their new profession (Varadhajan, Buchanan, & Schuck, 2018; Newman, 2010).

Summary

Identity formation is a complex, multi-faceted, dynamic, and life-long process (Erikson, 1968; Blustein & Noumair, 1996; Meijers & Lengelle, 2012). Research showed that a career identity shifted based on the individual experiences, and was constructed in context and in relation to the social groups one finds themselves working (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012; LaPointe, 2010). A teachers' professional identity and development has become a separate field of research (Colliander, 2018). Research focuses on a broad array of topics, from how they form their professional identity as a student teacher and a new teacher, how their identity was affected during times of reform, how their identity was impacted by new technology, and SCTs unique needs as they become a teacher (Vahasantanen & Etelapelto, 2009; Shelley, et al., 2013; Tigchelaar, et al., 2010). Overall, the educational literature on how SCTs form a professional identity is limited. The purpose of this study is to investigate, and potentially add to the limited existing research of how SCTs construct their new professional identity.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry sees story as a source of knowledge and a way to understand lived events (Clandinin, 2013). Narrative inquiry is a relational methodology. The nature of the methodology requires the inquirer-participant relationship to be authentic and real, since narrative inquirers become part of participants' lives (Clandinin, 2013). The relationship developed over the course of the study was essential in helping me navigate the ethics of the study and understand how the inquirer-participant relationship impacted the ways I interpreted their stories. Instead of the researcher attempting to remove oneself from the study, narrative inquiry acknowledges the complexity of the research relationship and gives credence to how participants and researchers make sense of the stories.

In narrative inquiry, justification for a study is found in the researcher's personal, practical, and social reasons for conducting the study (Clandinin, 2013). For practical reasons, narrative inquiry is a research design that can be used to understand identity formation (Creswell, 2013). As shared in Chapter I, I had previous experience with second-career teachers and currently work with pre-service teachers who are career changers. From experiences with both colleagues who were SCTs and now students who changed careers to enter into teaching, I was curious about how SCTs reshaped their professional identity as they became a teacher. Narrative inquiry fit my personal desire to understand how participants would tell the story of their professional identity formation as a teacher.

In addition to personal and practical justifications for this research design, there were also social ones. Social justifications could be thought of through theoretical justifications, social

action, or policy justifications (Clandinin, 2013). The social component of the study built on theories of professional identity formation. The study has the potential to advise teacher preparation programs, mentor and induction programs, SCTs themselves, and people who work professionally with SCTs to support this growing population as they begin their new career.

For this study, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews that were used as field texts. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by gotranscript.com. The interviews were conducted as conversations, which supported the process of storytelling (Riessman, 2008). Participants gave part of their past history, as it related to how they constructed their professional identity. Oral history interviews are a common interview formats in narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I took notes during the interviews and while I re-read the transcripts. I also maintained an autobiographical narrative inquiry, as was essential in narrative inquiry to stay aware of my own story in the midst of the research (Clandinin, 2013). Any text the participants and I created were became field texts for this study.

Research Question

The research questions included:

- How do second-career teachers construct a new professional identity as a teacher?
- How do participants describe their process to become a teacher?
- What was their personal view of themselves in their first career?
- How did their prior career identity influence who they became as a teacher?

Sampling

I interviewed three SCTs who were in their first or second year of teaching and held a teaching license. Participants were all SCTs and were not limited by endorsement area, grade-level taught, or location. Only one interview took place, as relationships were already well

established prior to the interview. All of the participants were former students of mine. This allowed for the narratives to be in-depth. Each interview lasted an hour and a half to two hours, so that participants could re-tell and re-live the narrative in its entirety. The small sample size allowed me to more deeply examine and analyze how the participants constructed the narrative of their professional identity formation (Riessman, 2008).

Participants

Noah, Participant #1, was a white male who was in his mid 30s. He was a single dad sharing custody of his children with his ex-wife. In his former career, he was an animal technician and held other similar jobs within the field of biology. During the time of the interview, Noah was in his second year of teaching middle school science and health. His bachelor's degree was in biology with a focus on animal science and he held a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT). Noah had been in my first cohort during my first year at the university. He was a critical thinker, passionate about science and learning, and during the program he experienced difficulties in his personal life. Of the three participants, Noah indicated he had the most difficulty in constructing his identity as a teacher.

Marie, Participant #2, was a white female who was in her late 30s. She was divorced and had since remarried. She was a mom and shared custody of her children with her ex-husband. Marie was a former manager at a winery, a position she held for many years. During the time of the interview, she was in her first year of teaching kindergarten in a small town about twenty minutes from where she lived. Marie's bachelor's degree was in horticulture and she held an MAT. Although Marie was only in one intensive course I taught, Marie and I connected during that time. She had been a leader for the class and was professional, respectful, and reflective. During the interviews, Marie articulated that in becoming a teacher, she was able to be herself

and found her personal identity again. It was a powerful moment when she realized that teaching allowed and encouraged her to be her authentic self. Her construction of her professional identity was a story of her coming home to who she was as a person.

Hannah, Participant #3, was a white female who was in her early 40s. She was a widow with three kids. In Hannah's former career she was a paramedic, a career she held for 16 years. During the time of the interview she was in her first-year of teaching 4th grade at an elementary school in her city. Hannah's bachelor's degree was in archeological anthropology, and she held an MAT. The courses I taught for Hannah were tough. Her cohort and I got off on the wrong foot and due to that, there were some struggles with the group. However, Hannah was always respectful to me. She was a good student who was ready to become a teacher. Of the three participants, Hannah constructed her identity the most through social relationships and contexts.

Data Analysis Procedures

In narrative inquiry, there are various ways field texts can be analyzed. Narrative methods used for analysis can be thematic, structural, dialogic, or visual (Riessman, 2008). For the purpose of this study, I chose to analyze the field text using thematic analysis. This process allowed me to see the common ways in which each participant constructed their professional identity as a new teacher. During the interviews, I took detailed notes of the conversation. When an interview was finished, I wrote my personal reflections in my narrative autobiographical inquiry field text for each of the participants. I read over the transcriptions multiple times in order to piece together the narrative accounts, coding for the three commonplaces of narrative inquiry so I could re-create each narrative account. I used the interviews and the narrative accounts to discover the common themes in the text. Those themes are presented in Chapter IV of this study.

The three commonplaces, or the places and spaces in which narratives occur, are used to categorize and understand the narrative in narrative inquiry. They include temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin, 2013). Temporality refers to the past, present, and future of the people, places, things, and events under study. Sociality refers to both the personal and social condition of the participant and of the story. The third commonplace were the physical places in which the story occurred as well as where the interview occurred (Clandinin, 2013). Through the lens of these three commonplaces, the narrative was re-created and then analyzed for the themes, and rebuilt for the purpose of retelling the participants' stories.

Role of the Researcher

Essential to the process of narrative inquiry is to define the role of the researcher. Every narrative inquirer role is different depending on the design of the study. For the purpose of this study, I was the interviewer and narrator of the retold stories. Narrative inquiry dictates that the researcher to part of the study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). By analyzing and writing an analysis of the story, I became part of the narrative inquiry process and acknowledged my role and perspective. I asked for participant feedback through the re-constructed narratives I created to ensure that I accurately interpreted their stories.

I had an important task of creating a space for relationships to be rekindled, stories to be shared, and all voices in the inquiry process to be heard (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Riessman, 2008). I intentionally spent the first 15 – 20 minutes of the interview catching upon life with each of the participants. This was to re-kindle the relationship I once had with participants. The relationship between myself and the participants enabled all voices in the inquiry process to be heard; through shared stories, the interviews became a conversation in which we authentically told and retold stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry acknowledges that all

people involved in the study influence how a story is told and how it is analyzed (Clandinin, 2013). By acknowledging and positioning oneself into the research, I built credibility within the study.

To ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings, I had to actively make sure that I was only communicating each participant story from the interviews, and not from any prior knowledge I had of them. This struggle occurred the most as I was re-creating the narrative account for Noah. This was not as difficult for me to do with Hannah and Marie, as I did not know a lot about them personally. Noah had been in my cohort, which meant I had walked alongside him and the rest of his cohort, closely during their MAT program. During that year, I knew a lot about all of my students. Noah was no exception. Since I already knew about Noah's experiences with his academic, professional, and personal life during the year he was in my cohort, I had to actively ensure that I was telling his narrative from the perspective of the interview and not from what I remembered during his time in my cohort. I had to be very intentional during this part of the process. Of all of the participants, Noah had the most feedback and suggestions for me to make on his narrative; it made me question how much my prior knowledge of him influenced what I wrote. Thankfully, the process of member-checking allowed Noah to give feedback and make corrections. This was important in order to ensure that I was using his words accurately and not including my prior experiences with him in this study.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

In this study, trustworthiness of the data reported arose from member-checking and feedback from the participants on the written narrative of the field texts. I asked participants to give extensive feedback and corrections to ensure the accuracy of the re-created narrative. Riessman (2008) stated that co-constructed narratives might be done to ensure the story was

accurately communicated and expressed. Although I did not have participants co-construct their narratives with me, I made sure that every participant had opportunity to read, analyze, and give feedback on the narrative I pieced together. Part of the trustworthiness in narrative inquiry is related to the relationship between the inquirer and the participant. During the interviews, I was intentional to create an environment that built on my previous relationship with participants, which I sense allowed them to be authentic in what they shared.

As part of the narrative inquiry process, I remained reflective throughout the entire process. I used my autobiographical narrative as field text to show how my analysis and retelling of participants' stories were impacted by my personal experiences. This allowed me to be transparent with the topic and with the participants' stories to reveal how I was both affected by and affecting the story.

Conclusion

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative method used to capture lived, told, relived, and retold experiences of individuals. It is both a method of study and a study of phenomenon. Creswell (2013) added that narrative inquiry is useful for telling of individual experiences, understanding identities of individuals, and understanding how people view themselves. Narrative inquiry pays close attention to ethical considerations during the whole process of the inquiry, starting with the relationship built between the inquirer-participant to the interpretation and rewriting of the stories. Narrative inquiry focused on three commonplaces in a narrative: temporality, sociality, and place; these three commonplaces gave a framework for analyzing and retelling the narrative. As a methodology, narrative inquiry fit the purpose and goals of the study.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Introduction

From the results of this study, I realized that I was truly gathering a snapshot of identity of early-career teachers, knowing that they would continually be constructing their identity as a teacher for years. With more experience, their identity as a teacher would become more established. And, as they continue in education they would go through a reshaping of their identity as a teacher with the introduction of new technology, and policies (Vahasantanen & Etelapelto, 2009). In this chapter, I will discuss how each participant constructed their new professional identity, through the lens of it being a snapshot of who they are as a new teacher, not as their established sense of professional identity.

Narrative inquiry asks participants to re-live and re-tell their lived experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As the inquirer of the research study, my expectation was to re-construct the participant's narratives and then ask participants to ensure its validity. According to Clandinin (2013), narratives occur within three commonplaces: temporality, sociality, and physical place. These can be used to re-construct narrative accounts. For each participant, I re-constructed the stories they told during the interview through the lens of the three commonplaces to create the narrative accounts. These common spaces allowed me to give structure to the participants' narratives. Once I had a draft of the narratives, I shared these with the participants and asked them to make corrections, comments, and suggestions to their stories to ensure their accuracy. Noah, provided significant feedback on the narrative account, while Hannah left very few comments, and Marie approved it without leaving any comments. All participants approved the re-created narratives. The narratives were re-told through the lens of temporality and sociality,

with the physical spaces embedded within the story. Four themes were apparent from analysis of the interviews and re-created narratives.

This chapter reports the narrative of each participant, the four themes discovered throughout the narratives, unique elements in each participant's story, and each participant's identity as a teacher. Direct quotes from the interview and parts of the created narrative are used to express participants' ideas. Some quotes have been altered to allow for clearer understanding of what the participant was meaning; verbal pauses and language fillers have been minorly modified for readability. The data collected for this study consisted of interviews, re-created narratives accounts of each participant, and the autobiographical narrative journal I kept as the researcher.

Participants were asked to review, make suggestions, and edit the narrative accounts I created to ensure trustworthiness of the study. I used this method of member checking, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) recommend in narrative inquiry, to ensure ethical practices. Pseudonyms were used to ensure the confidentiality of each participant. The pseudonyms Noah, Marie, and Hannah were used in this study.

Participants

Relationships hold a vital role in the work of narrative inquiry. The participant-inquirer relationship requires special attention in order to cultivate a trusting and authentic relationship. Relationships of trust are necessary to have in-depth, real dialogue during the inquiry process. For this study, I recruited participants who were former students of mine. To ensure ethical issues were considered in the study, the participants and I discussed my role in their learning experience. Specifically, when I asked questions regarding their time in their MAT program, they willingly told me both positive and negative experiences they had. I believe that having had

a prior relationship with the participants was beneficial for re-kindling a relationship for the purpose of this study. However, participants were most hesitant to share very personal information with me. For Marie and Hannah, it took them a while to open up about their childhood experiences that greatly impacted how they viewed themselves. During the study, I wondered if their initial hesitancy was because our prior relationship was professional and not personal, and how that impacted their readiness to tell their story. Noah was the most forthright about personal and professional issues and I wondered if that was because of his time in my cohort. By the end of the interviews, all of the participants were willing to share personal information with me. Information that was part of their story and identity formation profession.

Participants were willing to retell and relive their past experiences by sharing their stories of how they had constructed their professional identity. I reciprocated their openness and vulnerability in the midst of the narrative inquiry, sharing personal stories that related to the conversation. All three participants were aware of my personal background and we were able to discuss aspects of my own story as it related to theirs. All three participants shared information that was sensitive, which created vulnerability in the interview space due to the nature of the conversation. This vulnerability was evident in their ability to express the impact of life's experiences. Traumatic and tragic events such as childhood neglect and abuse, the sudden death of a spouse, being fired from positions, and divorces were all topics that participants raised in interviews. Due to my relationship with each participant, they were willing to relive these experiences in order to make sense of how they have constructed their identity as a teacher.

Each participant and I had varying degrees of relationship. Noah, participant #1, was in the cohort in which I taught most of their courses during the program. This cohort experienced challenging personal issues and as their cohort leader, I walked alongside of them as they

struggled in their personal life. Marie, participant #2, was only in one class I taught. However, in that one class, she showed a level of professionalism and leadership that stood out from her classmates. We also had connected over a shared interest in the psychology of personality types, both the Myers-Brigs and the Enneagram. Hannah, participant #3 was in multiple courses that I taught and remembered her as a student I had a good relationship with, was a critical thinker, and asked great questions.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, inducing the shutdown of school buildings and a statewide mandate to stay at home, all interviews were conducted via Zoom. Personally, I found this to be a great way to conduct the interviews. Meeting virtually allowed for more on-task conversation, and it allowed for there to be breaks or pauses that were not awkward. Thankfully, most of the participants were familiar with the idea of Zoom or had used Zoom prior to meeting with me. They were comfortable with the technology. Each Zoom session was recorded and sent to a transcribing service to be transcribed. With access to both the video and the printed interview transcript, I pieced the participants' narratives together using the three common spaces of narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality, and physical space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Each participant's story began with the temporality space: past, present, and future of the people or events under study. We moved from there into the space of sociality: the personal and social conditions of the participant and of the story.

Noah

As I waited for Noah to join the Zoom session, I was excited to catch up with him. Noah had been in my first cohort. I remember having taught my last day of teaching middle school students and being an instructional coach, and the next day, I started teaching graduate students. I remembered the struggles Noah had during the program. Coming from the field of science,

lesson planning had been difficult for him. He always had great and big ideas; the struggle was in how to transfer those ideas to a lesson. The last time he and I had spoken, at his graduation, I remembered how he and his wife were not doing well. I also knew he was seeking advice and wisdom from a man from his church whom he looked up to. When Noah joined the call, the discussion began with catching up on one another's lives. How was he doing, how were his kids, what had happened since he and I had last talked? Noah reciprocated the questions. How was I doing, what was new? After catching up, we discussed the study, he filled out the informed consent letter and emailed it back to me. With meeting virtually, I had to be okay with what he was able to give me, a picture of the informed consent form emailed back to me. From there, the interview began. Note: the narrative below combines both the interview and re-created narrative account which Noah approved.

Temporality. Noah grew up in Oregon, was the eldest of three kids, and came from a religious family. He left for college, where he met and eventually married his wife. They lived in multiple states before coming back to Oregon to live and work. While in graduate school pursuing a Master's in Public Health, a degree he was seeking to help him get into veterinary school, they had their first child. Noah dropped out of school in order to get a job and support his growing family. With a bachelor's in biology, with a focus on animal science, he had hoped to become a veterinarian. When he needed to stop school and get a job, he found his educational background led him to jobs where he took care of animals. When he was done with school, he struggled to find jobs that he was qualified for, oftentimes settling for jobs in the field of biology but none that he would consider to be his career. Any opportunity he had to move up in the lab or company was given to someone else. He was continually in jobs that had him taking care of animals, cleaning, feeding, taking blood samples, and other basic health data. What he wanted to

do was learn about them or work them. He was able to do this at times, but not as part of his paid job (Noah, narrative account, 2020).

Without the opportunity to grow in his work, he did not feel as though he had arrived in his career. Since he was not doing the work he was passionate about in his field, he felt as though he was a grunt worker, fulfilling a job.

One evening he and his family were invited over to a friend's house from church for dinner. This man was someone Noah looked up to and respected greatly. Over dinner, Noah and his friend began to talk about whether he was satisfied with his life. At this point, he was not satisfied. He had been doing the same kind of work for years and was not getting any opportunities to break into the field in the way he wanted. He also was driving an hour every day to get to work. His friend happened to be a Professor of Science at their local university, as well as the Director of the Student Teaching Placement Office. The friend asked him if he had ever considered teaching as a profession. Noah had not. His friend told him of the need for science teachers with experience in schools. This planted the seed for Noah, he took this advice and looked into it. Based on his prior experiences of interning at the zoo and doing wildlife education experiences, he knew he enjoyed talking with people about science and explain the science of animals. When he did observations in classrooms to see if it was something he could do, he thought, "I could do this" and applied for a local Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program (Noah, personal communication, March, 23rd, 2020).

Over the following year, he earned his MAT and teaching license. During this time, he was experiencing very difficult personal issues at home. His time in his MAT program gave him a community and a place to learn and grow. It was unlike any learning he had done before.

Although he wished for more time with his cooperating teacher, he was given tools to be successful, people to collaborate with, time to plan, and prepare.

The following fall, after graduating with his MAT and teaching license, he was hired part-time to teach middle school science in the school district he had done his student teaching practicum. Although his first-year of teaching was only part-time and he did not have his own classroom, he only had one prep and felt supported by a teaching team. Teaching part-time, allowed him ample time, even though he was not being paid for it, to plan and prepare his lessons.

At the time of this study, Noah was in his second-year of teaching and working full-time. However, this year, he had multiple preps, is teaching 7th grade science, teaching 6th grade health, and was teaching a blended grade-level elective that he had been asked to create. He felt spread thin. He did not feel as though he had a support team or people to collaborate with, because there were too many people he could collaborate with and not enough time to do so. Although he had his own classroom and felt more settled in that, he lacked the time to adequately plan and prepare the multiple classes he was teaching.

Sociality. Noah's decision to change career was based on his dissatisfaction with his work. He was frustrated that he was not able to move positions while being an animal technician as promotions were given to other people. This dissatisfaction allowed him to consider other careers as a possibility. Ultimately, it was a catalyst for change. His friend was influential in his decision to change careers as he was someone he trusted and admired. As a career, Noah found teaching to be a satisfying profession. Teaching allowed him to be passionate, to teach about Science, to be confident in what he was doing, and to be encouraged to grow in his profession. However, teaching was never a profession he considered prior to the conversation with his

friend. As he was applying for the MAT program, he realized his favorite times in his prior work were times he was able to teach people about the animals he was working with or the Science involved in taking care of the animals and collecting data. Noah felt like he had a career, however, he had not arrived at the professional identity as a teacher that he desired to be.

When asked what his identity as a teacher was, Noah referred to himself as a “teacher in crisis” (Noah, personal communication, March, 23rd, 2020). Due to the multiple classes, lack of a team to collaborate with, and a lack of time to plan and prepare his courses, Noah’s identity as a teacher was in a state of crisis. Despite this, he was also aware of times he felt like a teacher, and times that he had not felt like a teacher. And, even without a full understanding of his professional identity, he still felt as though he was finally in a legitimate career. His passion for science, his confidence in the content knowledge of the topics, and his confidence in his ability to teach were all there, which was more than in his prior career. He even had the support of his principal with the work he did in his classrooms. Even with these elements in place, he did not feel stable in his understanding of his teacher identity, he felt like a teacher in crisis.

Noah felt most successful when others acknowledged the work he had done and gave him praise for it. As an animal technician, there were a few times in which researchers and managers were impressed with his work, and let him know. As a teacher, this sort of affirmation happens more often with students and colleagues. He had students who affirmed his lessons as well as grow in their own passion and understanding of science. During team meetings, his colleagues listened to him, although he sometimes was frustrated with their lack of creativity, and they encouraged him in his work. The times he felt most like a teacher were when he could be fully prepared and had created engaging, hands-on lessons that connected to the real world. His education and experience in the field of biology gave him confidence to ask questions of his

colleagues that were relevant to the field of science and education. He brings into his teaching a depth of experience that had been useful to the classroom.

Noah's professional identity cannot be separated from his personal identity. Noah had an energetic and enthusiastic personality. As his teacher, I observed that when he got passionate about something, he would learn all that he can about it. Sadly, not everyone had appreciated his passion and enthusiasm. As an animal technician, he found that oftentimes he was told to tone down his passion and energy due to managers not wanting him to show them up. As an educator, he found his passion and enthusiasm acceptable qualities. He also recognized, as a new teacher, he might be more enthusiastic than some of his colleagues who had taught for a long time.

Noah always had an area of learning he was passionate about, but never a specific job he wanted to do. He always enjoyed learning about science, and specifically, animal science. As an educator, he found that he used his love for science to create ways for students to meaningfully engage in learning, with the hopes of sparking in them a love for science. This was not something he could do in his prior line of work.

His dissatisfaction in his prior career allowed him to question what it was he really wanted to do. He knew he wanted to do something that allowed him to be passionate about science, something he could gain confidence in, something he could continually grow and improve in, and something that he could receive affirmation for the work. He found this in teaching, even though he identified as a teacher in crisis. This crisis mentality may also be related to his personal life circumstances. He recently was divorced and shared custody of his two children with his ex-wife. As a single parent, he stated that he understood and empathized with the parents of his students in a unique way. He understood how hard it can be to get dinner on the table after working all day, let alone checking to make sure the kids have done their

homework. Within the last year, Noah began dating someone who had become a stabilizing force in his life. This was someone who he could talk to and bounce ideas off of, and was someone who gave him confidence and encouragement to be a better teacher.

The personal and social conditions of Noah's identity construction were a large component of his understanding of himself as a teacher. His idea of what it looked like to be a teacher, was different than where he wanted it to be. To him, being a teacher meant being well-planned, creating hands-on, engaging lessons, and collaborating with colleagues; all things he desired to be doing, but was not there yet as an early-career teacher. Whether in his prior career, his teacher education program, or in his teaching career, he benefitted from externally processing ideas and planning with other people. At this point in his teaching career his idea of the what it looked like to be a teacher and his need for a collaborative team were not in place. This dissonance was frustrating to Noah as he could see what he wanted to do, but struggled to make it a reality.

Marie

When I reached out to Marie as a potential participant, I was hoping she would say "yes." Marie and I connected during the one class I taught her while in the MAT program and I thoroughly enjoyed having her in class. I was grateful when she assented. As with all of the interviews, we decided to meet via Zoom due to the statewide shutdown of schools and sit-in restaurants. As I waited for Marie to join the Zoom call, I was excited to catch up with her. When I had Marie in class, she and I connected over a shared enjoyment of personality assessments and psychology. We both loved working with people and we both had big personalities. I knew from her email that she had found a teaching job in a great little school district not far from where I grew up. My dad had actually gone to the school she was teaching in when he was in elementary

school. I was looking forward to being able to hear how life and teaching were going for her. When she got on the call, Marie was unable to print or sign digitally the form for informed consent, since their printer was not working and her computer was not working at the moment either. She was taking the Zoom call through her cell phone. Instead, I had her verbally, and in an email, confirm her agreement to be part of the study after she read the letter of informed consent. She later sent a signed copy via email when her printer was working again. Marie's children were not at home, they were at her ex's house, and we were able to talk nonstop for an easy hour and a half. Note: the narrative below combines both the interview and re-created narrative account that Marie approved in a member check.

Temporality. Marie grew up in a small town in Oregon and lived in Oregon her whole life. As a child, she spent her first few years of school attending a private Lutheran school. However, her parents were unable to continue to afford her education and decided to homeschool her and her siblings instead. Homeschooling looked like sitting down with the homeschool book her mom bought and doing worksheets from it daily. When Marie was younger, her mom had suffered a major injury and was not a present parent. Her dad was working full-time, which left Marie in charge of her own and her younger siblings' education. Marie would map out the year for all three of them, and assign her siblings daily work. When Marie finished school and went to a state university in Oregon, she majored in education, thinking it was what she wanted to do. After some time in education courses though, she grew tired of her classmates, viewing them as petty and immature. One day after class, she saw a group of students under a tree, studying it and recording notes, and asked herself, "Who are these people and how can I do that too?" (Marie, personal communication March, 17th, 2020). When she asked the students which class it was for, they said it was for horticulture, and she immediately went and changed majors.

With her degree in horticulture and her love for people, she found herself managing staff at a local winery. When she started this job, she was working directly for the owner; it was a small, family-run business, the epitome Oregon's small, family-owned wineries. She was drawn to management due to her love for people. She loved to be able to meet people where they were at and walk alongside them in their journey. Even as a manager at a winery, she enjoyed coaching, mentoring, teaching, and guiding her staff in more ways than just customer service and wine. But her enjoyment of her work began to change once the owner sold the small winery to a large company in California. Once the owner retired from managing the business, the large company hired a new general manager who was production-focused rather than people-focused. Marie and her team found themselves in a tough spot. The demands the company put on them were too much, especially without the proper technology to do the work. She found herself working long days to try and meet the new demands and unable to meet their goals. She was away from her family a lot and felt the strain it was putting on her partner and her children. Marie also found herself doing more office work than people-oriented work. Eventually, she was given a severance package and was let go from the company.

When this occurred, she was already questioning her career choice and asking herself hard questions. Her partner was an educator and experiencing the most difficult year of teaching she had ever experienced. Even though Marie saw this, it did not deter her from realizing she wanted to be a teacher. The aspects of her prior career she enjoyed the most had always involved meeting people where they were at and walking alongside them in their journey. Marie applied to a local MAT program and began her one-year program. During her time in the program, Marie was able to find herself again, to find her passion and drive. After graduation, Marie found a job teaching kindergarten at a small elementary school about 20 minutes from her home.

Within the first month of her first-year teaching, Marie recognized that she felt like a teacher. It was a day in which the students listened to her, followed directions, and were engaged in the learning. Marie was given a mentor whom she met with regularly, and after this particular day, she told her mentor, “Today, I felt like a teacher.” Her mentor replied, “That’s magical” (Marie, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020). Although her first year of teaching was a difficult year, with an abnormal amount of bathroom accidents, thrown objects, fights, and a lack of socially appropriate behaviors, she stated being satisfied with her job and was glad she made the decision to become a teacher. By the end of the interview, Marie could clearly articulate who she was as a teacher and confidently stated her identity as a teacher.

Sociality. When I asked Marie to describe her identity as a teacher, she stated, “I’ve never not been a teacher” (Marie, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020). As a child, Marie was in charge of educating her siblings and herself. And even though she went to college anticipating becoming a teacher, she changed her mind and found herself in a different career. The aspects of education she most enjoyed were the people aspects. When the company’s culture shifted, making her work environment no longer enjoyable or fulfilling, she knew she wanted to make a change. She began to feel and see this affect her home life and her own happiness. When she saw how it impacted her family, she realized she needed to find a career that brought her life, instead of draining it. She returned to the idea of teaching.

Marie’s partner was a teacher, so she was familiar with what that looked like at home and was not coming into the profession unaware of the positive and negative parts to it. However, for Marie, it was also a coming home.

It was almost like my identity as a teacher helped me be okay with my identity as an individual or gave it space. I guess I was okay with it before but it was always needing to

be reined in, and now it was like I have a space to be my personal human identity (Marie, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020).

Through her teacher education program, Marie realized that she could be herself as a teacher. She did not have to quiet any part of herself to teach. Actually, teaching required she bring her whole self to the work. Once she was hired and began to teach, she realized she felt like herself.

As a teacher, she experienced all of the aspects she loved about working with people, coaching, mentoring, encouraging, being a hard-ass, and impacting the lives of children. Even though there were goals and objectives in teaching, she found freedom in knowing that some days, her greatest win was getting a student to know they felt cared for in her classroom. She was able to be her authentic self as a teacher. In order to be herself though, she realized that she had to go on a journey to separate the abuse she had experienced growing up with education in order to become a teacher. This journey began when she decided to change majors in college. “I think that was part of me trying to reject my family and that experience and so education was part of that, and I threw out the baby with the bathwater, if you will” (Marie, personal communication, March 17th, 2020). Marie went on to explain,

It took me a long time to be able to splice out that small town is separate from abuse experience, that education is separate from the experience, being a teacher is separate from, you know, and I eventually wrapped back around to what kind of always was my identity as a teacher (Marie, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

During the interview, I asked Marie if she felt as though she had to go on a walk-about, a liminal journey of self-discovery, before she could be okay with becoming a teacher. She laughed aloud and loved the metaphor. Connecting it to her time in the wine business and even her degree in

horticulture gave her a way to work through the abuse she had experienced and separate it from teaching.

Marie had been given tremendous support and autonomy in her first year of teaching. She worked collaboratively with her teaching team, had the support of her principal, had a supportive family, and had a mentor to support her throughout the year. She also found herself at a school that embodied her value of people-first. She was able to meet her students where they were at, as her school was a trauma-sensitive school and their first priority were the kids.

In her previous career, Marie felt she had to quiet part of who she was. As a manager, she was a leader, she asked questions, she pushed back when something did not seem right or fair, and when she found these values in conflict with a big, production-oriented company, she grew dissatisfied. Once the winery changed ownership and general managers, the role changed for her. Yet the people-first skills she learned and valued in management were ones she brought to the classroom, which enabled her to be a mentor and cheerleader, with small-town values that enabled her to encourage kids and families. Part of herself that she brought to the winery, pre-corporate, was her ability to be empathetic and meet her team's emotional needs. She understood and was empathetic to life circumstances. As a teacher, she effectively transferred these skills. She could meet her students' needs so they can learn (Marie, narrative account, 2020).

As a teacher, all of those aspects of personality that she had to quiet were desired and admired. Marie found that the work of a teacher was personally satisfying and felt as though she had found herself again; she had come home to who she was as a person.

Part of her identity as a teacher was that of novice. She was aware of how she had a lot of room to grow as a teacher. She also knew she brought managerial and people skills from her prior career that benefited her students greatly. Marie believed her ability to be empathetic

allowed her to be herself as a teacher and she found great value in being in a profession in which her professional and personal identity can be intricately connected.

Hannah

As I thought of participants who met the criteria for this study, I immediately thought of Hannah. From the courses I taught with her, I remembered part of her story. I knew she had been a paramedic before coming to the MAT program, and that her husband had died years ago. As a student she was organized, a critical thinker, and I enjoyed her willingness to ask hard questions. Sadly, her cohort and I did not have a good first class together. In that course experience, I did not realize they were in their first semester of the program and had never used the university's learning management system. Thankfully, Hannah and I were able to maintain a professional relationship through the first course, and the subsequent courses that I taught her cohort. However, when I reached out to her, I was hoping that she and I had maintained a professional enough relationship that she would consider being part of the study. Thankfully, she said yes to being a participant. Of the three participants, Hannah and I had the least developed relationship. And although I was initially felt concerned about how it would go, I knew her to be professional and kind.

Due to the fact that schools were shut down due to the statewide mandate for COVID-19, Hannah and I met via Zoom. She conducted our interview from her bedroom to be away from her kids; although her kids interrupted the conversation multiple times, we were able to always come back to the discussion topic. Hannah was a willing participant who shared very vulnerable information. I was thankful for her participation and her vulnerability.

Temporality. Hannah grew up in Oregon and lived in Oregon her whole life. Growing up, Hannah's dad struggled with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). Her dad's OCD meant

she grew up with the idea that there was a certain way to do things, and the way her dad wanted things done was the way it had to be done. There was little room for questioning or for doing things in the way she thought they could be done. This aspect of her childhood was foundational in her choice of a profession.

Hannah's undergraduate degree was in archeological anthropology. She never pursued this field as a career, but had been intrigued with the idea of traveling the world. During her senior year of college, her mom died, and it was her mom's death that made her realize she wanted to help people in crisis. After college, she met her husband and they moved back to her hometown. She had considered becoming a doctor or a nurse, however, medical school would have taken a very long time and she honestly wanted more autonomy. Those fields had so many rules that had to be upheld and followed whether they made sense or not, so she chose to become a paramedic. As a paramedic, Hannah found herself with the autonomy and independence in a career that she desired. When out on a call, she was the one making the decisions. Although Hannah did not need to be in charge, she was able to take charge when necessary. Being a paramedic allowed her to make decisions she thought were well-educated and best for her patients.

After over a decade of being a paramedic, Hannah wanted something different and went back to school to become a nurse. While she was a paramedic and in nursing school, her husband died. It was her paramedic company that transferred him to the hospital and he died in an emergency room that was used often by her company. Because of this, it was difficult for her to go back to work. Thankfully, her company was very understanding and allowed her to work sparingly. She was already pursuing a different career as a nurse when this occurred, however, his death was a catalyst for major change in her life. She wanted out of the trauma involved with

being a paramedic or a nurse. She was done with being in traumatic situations, but she did not know what might be next.

When her youngest child became a kindergartner, she began to volunteer in their classroom to be around her kids more. She enjoyed it so much that she found herself volunteering in her third grader's classroom as well. Hannah enjoyed being in the school environment, she started to look into jobs as an instructional assistant. However, a teacher friend of hers convinced her to look into becoming a substitute teacher, as they would make more money than substitutes for instructional assistants. She became a substitute teacher to decide if teaching was what she wanted to do. A couple of years into subbing she decided she wanted to be a teacher. Once she had decided to become a teacher, she applied to a teacher education program and began her journey to become an educator.

Through her teacher education program, she tried to learn as much as she could. She took the opportunity to try many new strategies and styles during her student teaching placement. Upon graduating, she found a job teaching in a local elementary school. At the time of the study, she was nearly finished with her first year of teaching. It was not until February that she really felt like a teacher and felt as though she had an understanding of her identity as a teacher.

Sociality. Hannah had multiple tragic events in her life that prompted her to question her life choices. When her mother died, she decided to change career paths and become a paramedic. When her husband passed away, she questioned her career decisions again and ultimately decided to change careers. As a teacher, she found the autonomy and independence she desired personally and professionally. She largely found her identity as a teacher in social interactions with her colleagues and with her students. In February, she felt like and began to see herself as a teacher when her colleagues recognized her work and asked for her opinion during a team

meeting. It was their acknowledgement of the work she had been doing that helped her recognize herself as a teacher. In March, she had this experience again in an interaction with a student. Since the beginning of the year, she had a rough relationship with this student. She regularly had to keep him in from recess for a few minutes because he was not doing his work. A week or so before our interview, this student, all on his own, came up to her and confirmed that if he did some specific assignments, if he could go to recess on time. She said yes, and silently felt the victory of finally seeing a student advocate for themselves. Hannah pointed to these two instances where she felt most like a teacher, since she viewed them as acknowledgment of her identity by her colleagues and a student.

Hannah recognized how her prior career had helped her as a teacher. Her ability to walk in a room, assess the situation, and determine next best steps were skills she learned from her time as a paramedic. Her ability to stay calm and keep her cool in the midst of various situations was also something she brought in from her time as a paramedic. Her ability to be thoroughly planned and prepared was also a skill she acquired long before becoming a teacher.

Even though her mom was a teacher, Hannah never saw herself as a teacher type. She felt as though there was a certain personality that was required to be a teacher, and she did not fit that mold. However, after volunteering in her children's classrooms and realizing how much she enjoyed the school environment and the work schedule of a teacher, she used substituting as a way to determine if she could handle other people's children. Not only did she find that she could teach, she found that she enjoyed the younger grades over the older grades. When she began considering teaching as a profession, she assumed she would be a high school teacher like her mom. Becoming a substitute allowed her a chance to realize she was better suited to younger grades.

Hannah's understanding of her identity as a teacher had more to do with how her colleagues and students saw and acknowledged her, than her own personal ideas of herself. When she received that acknowledgement, she felt as though others saw her as a teacher, therefore, she felt like one.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Each participant had a unique story and ways in which they constructed their new professional identity. The common themes found within their narratives express similarities in how they have constructed their new professional identity, even though they are all very different people. Cross-cutting themes in all three narratives include the ways professional identity was shaped by a) identity as a parent, b) personal identity, c) prior professional skills and experiences, and d) social contexts.

All three participants constructed their new professional identity through the lens of multiple identities. Their professional identity was impacted by their view of their life circumstances as well as their personal values. All of the participants were parents, and in unique ways, their role as a parent impacted their understanding of who they were as a teacher. During the interviews, the participants did not connect their prior professional identity to their identity as a parent. It appeared as though their professional identity prior to becoming a teacher, was not impacted by who they were as a parent. Being a parent was a catalyst for two of the three participants to move into teaching.

Professional Identity Shaped by Identity as a Parent

This theme organically occurred due to a discussion from the first interview. At the end of each interview I asked the question, "Is there anything that we have not talked about in your story to become a teacher that you would like to share?" During the first interview, Marie

brought up how important being a parent was to them. It impacted her desire to find a meaningful and rewarding career and to make a difference in the lives of kids. Marie went on to describe the ways in which being a parent influenced her understanding of being a teacher, and who she was becoming as a teacher. When she explained how much this impacted her, I knew it was a question I needed to ask Hannah and Noah when we met. I knew they had children as well, so I included this question in their interviews. From their responses, this theme emerged that I did not expect. The impact their parenting had on their teaching identity was a common theme in all three interviews. Each for different reasons, but each reason strongly impacted their understanding of who they were as people, and as teachers.

For Marie and Hannah, their identity as a parent greatly impacted how they constructed their identity as a teacher. For Noah though, he had not made the same level of connections with his identity as a parent as the other two participants did. However, through the interview I was able to see how each participant's identity as a parent was connected to their personal identity and their professional identity.

Noah. Noah, understood his new professional identity as a teacher in crisis. It appeared this was a reflection of his life circumstances for the past two years, which had been unstable. In the last two years, he and his wife, divorced, leaving him as a single parent. He had recently begun dating someone that he would like to marry. Every other week his kids live with him, which meant every other week his life was vastly different. He finds himself varying from living alone to having two children, with him as the only parent. His understanding of himself as a parent was similar to his understanding of himself as a teacher.

"I don't feel I am super adept at being a parent. I do, but I don't feel like I have all these really well thought out and explained and understood processes or skills" (Noah, personal

communication, March, 23rd, 2020). When asked about his identity as a teacher, he stated, “I feel like I’m a teacher in crisis, but I also feel like I know what I want to do. I feel like I have the knowledge and the tools, I just don’t have the time and a collaborative partner to do that work” (Noah, personal communication, March, 23rd, 2020). Noah used words such as drowning and crisis multiple times in reference to his identity as a teacher. Given his current situation at work, multiple preps, lack of support from a team, and creating his own curriculum, it was understandable to see how he felt that way. Although he did not describe his own personal life like that, he stated that as a teacher he was far more empathetic and understanding of parent’s roles in their kids’ school because he himself was, “stressed and doesn’t have enough time to do everything” his kids may need him to do (Noah, personal communication, March, 23rd, 2020). Being a single dad, it was hard for him to do everything he needed to do for them; such as signing homework assignments or following up with school work that was sent home. Noah’s understanding of himself as a dad and as a teacher were connected and may be a larger indication of his life circumstances, rather than a true understanding of his professional identity.

Noah was the only participant who did not make a strong connection between how he constructed his identity as a teacher, in relation to his identity as a parent. Which appeared to be a theme in his life and in his understanding of himself during this season. It would be interesting to check in with Noah again in a couple of years, once he was remarried which was part of his plan, hopefully had less preps, and a consistent collaborative team, to see how his identity as a teacher, father, and person changed, and how he constructed it.

Marie. Marie, who was remarried and sharing custody of her children, shared that being a mom had the most influence on her identity as a teacher, helping her connect with the emotional, heartfelt piece of teaching. Having children of her own created in her an empathetic

and tough-love nature that she used with her students. She also saw how working with other people's children was a way for her to help shape and impact society. Parenting and teaching were fulfilling, because "to be able to shape young minds and be a facilitator of their journey ...is really rewarding and terrible and hard, but you crave it" (Marie, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020). Marie's children were part of the reason she decided to change careers. When she was with her kids, it was a rewarding, hard, and fulfilling experience, in contrast to her prior work environment:

The work I was doing was flimsy and stupid, just a J-O-B that I had to go to and I was done with that, I needed something bigger. And knowing that my work could be teaching and hit all of those boxes of what I think is important was like, 'okay, I can feel useful and important and meaningful at work too (Marie, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020).

Marie's identity as a mom was a core part of who she was as a person. This theme occurred because of the interview with her. When I asked the question, "What else influenced how you constructed your identity as a teacher?" This was her response.

I'm going to say being a mom influenced it. Um, a part of its emotional heartfelt. Like this is where my children are learning, where my children are becoming, right. And so, I helped shape society on the parameter of that (Marie, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020).

Marie also discussed how the logistics of being a teacher were aligned with her personal values of parenting, being able to be done with work soon after her kids finished school, and having summers off with them. Marie's identity as a mom impacted her decision to pursue teaching as a career, and influenced who she was as a teacher. For Marie, this meant that she could be herself

in all aspects of her life, not only when she was at home. Her life circumstances prompted a change in careers, but it was her involvement in her children's lives that re-directed her towards teaching. Her identity as a teacher was heavily constructed through the lens and understanding of who she was as a parent.

Hannah. When Hannah's husband died, she was suddenly a single parent with three kids. Hannah never liked being the sole person in charge and preferred others she trusted to make decisions for her, or to make them with someone. As a single parent, Hannah found her career as a paramedic even more challenging, especially as her kids were 2, 5, and 8 when her husband died. She found being a paramedic and a single parent almost impossible to do by herself. When her youngest became a kindergartner, she began to volunteer in his classroom and found she enjoyed it so much that she began to volunteer in her third grader's classroom. The time volunteering in her children's classes made her realize she enjoyed working with kids and in schools and began to consider teaching. As a single parent, she wanted to be around her own kids. The logistics of a teacher's daily schedule made it more possible to work full-time and raise a family on her own.

As a teacher, she noted that there were things she did automatically that she attributed to being a mom. She realized there was a different level of with-it-ness that she attributed to being a mom. Holding students accountable for their work, teaching them responsibility, holding them to specific expectations, getting to know each of them well, and giving them grace when they make mistakes; these were all part of Hannah's teacher identity that she attributed to her identity as a mom.

There are some things I just do automatically. I don't know if that's because I'm a parent, but the difference in being a parent and a teacher, and a non-parent and a teacher, I

noticed with other people too, things that I just do and they're like, 'Oh I didn't even think about that,' and I'm thinking why did they think about that? Oh, because they don't have kids yet. Oh, okay, I'm just bringing that from home (Hannah, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020).

As a single parent, she had found that she was empathetic towards parents and grace-giving toward students. She understood there was more going on at home than anyone could see or know. "Obviously, there's more at home. I mean, I get it as a single parent" (Hannah, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020). She jokingly and affectionately said, "I feel like I have 28 kids right now" (Hannah, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020). With her students and her three kids at home, she reiterated that mistakes are okay to make because that was how learning happened. She strove to be the type of person who was relational and met people where they were; whether they are her own kids or her students. She would also intentionally admit her imperfections and mistakes with her own kids and her students; she tried to be a real person for them so they could break down some of those barriers that could happen with authority figures. Hannah also saw her kids and students as individuals and believed that one-size-does-not-fit-all nor was it feasible. Just as all three of her children were unique individuals with individual needs, Hannah viewed her students the same way.

Hannah's identity as a mom and a single parent was an intricate part of her personal identity. She viewed her role in the lives of her students as a parent figure and held her students to the same expectations she expected of her own children. How she constructed her teacher identity was greatly impacted by her identity as a mom and attributed many of her traits as a teacher to who she was as a single parent.

Professional Identity Shaped by Personal Identity

As each interview unfolded, every participant mentioned their personality and personal identity in understanding who they were as teachers. Parts of this was discovered in their explanations of their past careers and in realizing they were not the person they wanted to be, or they were not being allowed to be. This was not a question I asked the participants; it was one they brought up in their interviews. Bringing in their personal identity was not an area I thought necessary when discussing their professional identity. The participants obviously thought otherwise as they all brought up their personal identity, in various ways, during the interviews. In teaching, every participant found they were able to bring themselves to the profession, and were encouraged to bring themselves to the profession. They did not need to hide or suppress aspects of themselves in order to be a teacher. The aspects of their personal identity that they brought were determined as being from personal identity due to the common themes in their life from their childhood until present day. These elements were considered their personal identity in which they brought to the profession.

Noah. Noah had always had areas of learning and knowledge that he had been excited about and interested in, although no specific career path in mind. He had never felt as though he fit in the career paradigm of one job he would do for his whole life. Noah also was a very passionate person, and when he got excited about something, he would throw his whole being into it. Sadly, this backfired on him in his prior line of work. Noah remembered multiple times in which people did not appreciate his enthusiasm or energy. Instead of encouraging his enthusiasm, they would tell him to scale back. Noah described the experiences like this,

In my opinion, what happens, is when I get really excited, I'd mess with the status quo.

You get people that are the next level up from you, they get fearful of their jobs or their position and how important they are, because that's what happened to me with the

monkeys. I had a manager that didn't have a whole lot of experience but had a bit more than I did. I think he saw how excited I was and took that as, 'He's out for my job,' and made my life a living hell and I eventually was fired (Noah, personal communication, March, 23rd, 2020).

As a teacher, Noah confidently brought his enthusiasm about Science to the classroom. When he was making the decision to become a teacher, he went into classrooms and observed teachers and thought, "I could do this. I can do this, I could be passionate and excited about science and learning about these students and seeing them grow" (Noah, personal communication, March, 23rd, 2020). And this was exactly what he did. His passion allowed him to plan creative and hands-on lessons. His colleagues might tell him what he was doing was more work than necessary, but they did not feel threatened by his energy. He felt supported by his administration and never felt as though anyone thought he was too much or that someone wanted him fired. In teaching, Noah's energetic and enthusiastic personality was encouraged and desired by administrators. This aspect of his personality he brought to teaching was an asset to the profession, not a hinderance.

Marie. In Marie's past, she too had experienced hinderances in her profession based on her personality. Marie was someone who believed strongly in putting people first. This attitude was not always welcomed in a for-profit world. As a manager at the winery, who she was as a person aligned with the vineyard until they were sold to a large company. When the company no longer was aligned with Marie's values, she found herself dissatisfied with the work. The work lost its meaning and value because she was not able to be herself. Marie eventually was let go from this job because she did not mesh with the new culture of the company. As Marie made the decision to become a teacher, and began her teacher education program, she found herself again.

She discovered the parts of her prior career she enjoyed the most, she was able to do all of the time as a teacher. She found that the teaching profession needed her to bring her whole self to the work of teaching. She could bring her big personality to the profession, and it was valued. She was hired at a school that needed her people-first mentality as the school had a lot of students with generational trauma and poverty. Marie had found that teaching felt like coming home to her personal identity.

It was almost like my identity as a teacher helped me be okay with my identity as an individual or gave it space. I guess I was okay with it before but it was always needing to be reined in, and now it was like I have a space to be my personal human identity (Marie, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

In teaching, Marie had found her personality was important, who she was as a person was valued, and her personal values were admired, not diminished. As Marie had come to better understand her identity as a teacher, she had realized that she was free to be herself instead of trying to fit a box of someone else's making.

Hannah. The way Hannah was raised greatly influenced her personality. "When I was a child, if we made a mistake, it was not good. Like you screwed up. It wasn't physical but it was, you messed you, you're a bad person" (Hannah, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020). Her dad's OCD meant that she had to do things a certain way, she was not allowed to question it. When she made a mistake, she was made to feel as though she was bad; many decisions were made for her. This lack of autonomy, independence, and grace from her father was very formative. It influenced her personality and decision-making paradigm, as well as the careers she chose. She chose to become a paramedic, over a doctor or nurse, because doctors and nurses had more rules to follow.

I became a paramedic after my mom died...I wanted to be there for people who were in crisis. I didn't want to be a doctor or a nurse because I think, I'm not necessarily a rebel, but I don't like to follow the rules that I don't like. I am a rule follower, but if I think a rule is stupid, I will find my way around it if I can (Hannah, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020).

Hannah was done with following rules because someone said so, especially rules that could not be questioned, or if there was only one way to do something. As Hannah pursued teaching, she found that she had autonomy and independence to make educated decisions for her students. She also found that she could help them know that mistakes were okay and helped them learn; it did not make them a bad person. "To say that mistakes are okay, and that they're like proof you're trying or that you're learning...it's a huge deal" (Hannah, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020). The shame in which Hannah was raised shaped how she viewed other people. When students asked to do something a different way, she would say yes, and explained that there were many ways to do the same thing. Although she viewed others with a lot of grace, she was hardest on herself. However, her desire for autonomy and independence were part of her identity as a teacher, and was part of what she tried to encourage in her own students. Her grace-giving nature was an encouraged part of her teacher identity.

Professional Identity Shaped by Prior Professional Skills and Experiences

As part of the questions I asked participants, I specifically asked what aspects of their prior professional identity and skills they brought into their identity as a teacher. Noah, was the only participant who had not felt as though he had a career, although he was working in his career field. Marie and Hannah were able to clearly explain their prior professional identity.

They made connections as to how their prior skills and experiences impacted how they understood who they were becoming as teachers.

All three participants found that they brought aspects of their prior professional skills and experiences to their teaching identity, whether they were experiences in how they were trained, their prior education, or their professional experiences on the job. This was a cross-cutting theme through all of the interviews and narratives. Each participant could readily articulate skills they brought into the teaching profession from their previous careers and identify how those were connected to their past professional identities.

Noah. Noah worked multiple jobs within his career field. However, he never felt like his education, passion, or ideas were taken seriously by his managers. Noah's time studying and working with animals taught him to be methodical. Part of his identity was establishing the best routines and ways to take care of the animals. He was also given opportunities to collect data and provide information for the researchers, although this was mostly on his own time. From his time working in the Science field, Noah brought into teaching a methodical, process-oriented, and problem-solving way of working. He recognized how his time in the field of Science had been an asset for his time in the classroom. "I've seen the application of science, I wasn't personally a scientist but I saw those inquiry and problem-solving and trying to understand how it works" (Noah, personal communication, March, 23rd, 2020). As part of who he was as a teacher, he saw and acknowledged his need for time to methodically plan and prepare. He also was process-oriented and brought his previous experience of real life working in the science world to the classroom. Despite these skills, Noah would still say his greatest asset from his time in the field of science was his own excitement, "I think it was more just my personality of just an excitement

or science, an excitement for learning these topics and I still feel like I bring that in...just in my knowledge and excitement for the topic” (Noah, personal communication, March, 23rd, 2020).

Marie. As a manager, Marie brought many skills and experiences working with people to the classroom. “I love the people, I loved leading, I loved inspiring and encouraging” (Marie, personal communication, March 17th, 2020). She attributed her professional identity as a manager as someone who could wear many hats, she could be a “coach, mentor, teacher, guide, cheerleader, hard-ass; this is just what the team needs to accomplish [the goal] and it’s my job to help the team get there and sometimes it requires different hats” (Marie, personal communication, March 17th, 2020). As a teacher, she found her ability to wear many hats an asset. In describing how her prior professional identity impacted her identity as a teacher she stated, “So that identity blended really easily to teacher identity because it’s basically the same thing. You have to be hard-ass, and cheerleader, and orchestrator of chaos, and goal explainer and...it’s totally the same thing” (Marie, personal communication, March 17th, 2020). Her ability to meet people where they were at, and support them along the way was something she did daily with her students and was a large aspect of her former job managing people.

What she enjoyed the most about her prior career were the times she was able to make a difference in the lives of the people she worked with, “... these bigger conversations, about life and guidance, mentoring et. cetera, were always my favorite parts of things” (Marie, personal communication, March 17th, 2020). Marie would say this was also part of her personal identity. When she was not able to do this part of her management job, she was not able to be herself and eventually became dissatisfied with the work. As a teacher, she brought her people-first mentality into her identity as a teacher.

Hannah. From her time as a paramedic, Hannah acquired a lot of skills and experiences in the area of trauma. Her work trained her to make good split-second decisions. It also trained her to be able to enter a traumatic situation, assess needs, and make the appropriate calls to save lives. Hannah stated in the interview, “I think the biggest thing from being a paramedic is just being able to step into a room, and read a room and take charge right away” (Hannah, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020). She was also trained in how to be prepared and plan ahead. These skills became part of her identity as a paramedic. Even though she personally did not like being in charge or making big decisions, she had been trained in how to do this and was capable of doing this well. As a paramedic, she oftentimes found herself as the only female on a call, and was the one in charge. Hannah noted how her ability to lead others was an asset for teaching: “I think being a leader and identifying a situation and knowing what needs to be done has helped me as a teacher” (Hannah, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020). She gained valuable leadership experience and confidence in her ability to make decisions that she attributes to her prior profession and brought into teaching.

As a teacher, she used these skills daily: assessing situations, making split-second decisions, quick judgements, being in charge of a classroom of students, and being a leader. She had found these skills valuable as a teacher and saw how these skills and her prior work experiences had been an asset in her teaching and in her understanding of who she was as a teacher.

Professional Identity Shaped by Social Context

This theme was another organic theme that occurred in the interviews. Although I asked a few questions regarding their relationship with colleagues during their prior career, it was not connected to their social context in the way the participants talked about it. The participants

expressed this theme in multiple ways. For Noah and Hannah, it was not until they believed others viewed them as a teacher, or others affirmed them in their teaching, that they felt as though they had an idea of what their new identity was. For Marie, she had found a social context that fit her identity and values as a person. The social context of teaching fit who she was as a person. However, she relied less on other's affirmation of her as a teacher and more on her own intrinsic understanding of who she was as a person. Unlike Noah and Hannah, who both came to a better understanding of their new identity as a teacher through the affirmation and validation of colleagues and students.

Noah. In Noah's time in the field of Biology, he felt most like a professional when his work was acknowledged and affirmed; this helped him feel confident. As a teacher, Noah found he most identified as a teacher when he and his students sensed a lesson went well. He also felt that way when he was able to collaborate with colleagues and have a team to support him. His social context of work, was a difficult one. Since he had multiple preps, a new elective, and was creating curriculum for some of these classes, he was in crisis. He also felt a lack of support from not having a team with whom he could collaborate. Noah believed that if he had the social support he needed he could be the teacher he wanted to be, "I feel like I have the knowledge and the tools, I just don't have the time and a collaborative partner to do that work" (Noah, personal communication, March, 23rd, 2020). He was an external processor who worked best in social situations. Hopefully, as his teaching assignment change over the years, he will find a collaborative partner and a supportive team that would help him become more secure and confident in his teaching identity.

Marie. In her prior career, Marie's professional identity as a manager was largely dependent on what her manager demanded of her. When she was able to be who she was, she

found more security in her identity. When she had to try to be someone she was not, she found she no longer identified with that professional role. During her teacher education program, she discovered that she had been quieting herself in her prior career to fit the mold they needed. The social context of teaching helped her value and bring all parts of herself to teaching.

All these things that I had had to put away in the corporate world wasn't allowed to be perfectly people-oriented or whatever, you know. It was like, 'No, these are needed to be a teacher. You need these things that you've been quieting about yourself' (Marie, personal communication, March 17th, 2020).

As a teacher, she had found that she was able to be herself and take on that professional identity. She spoke confidently about who she was as a teacher and in her understanding of herself, without seeming to be influenced by how her team or students viewed her. Personally, she was confident in who she was. When she felt most like a teacher, it was because she was doing the things she imagined she would be doing as a teacher, not because of her relationship with colleagues or students.

Marie was also unique in that she chose to work at a school that fit her personal values. At the small school where she taught kindergarten, she was able to be people-first, empathetic, and focus on her students in ways that she would not be able to at a larger school in a larger town. "I think really what it comes down to is that small culture, or small town, view people first, and that the goals are wonderful and important, but cannot be accomplished without the people" (Marie, personal communication, March 17th, 2020). Compared to other teachers she knew, she was able to find a school that fit her personal values, rather than adapt herself to fit the social context of the school. In teaching at this small school, she found alignment between her personal

values and her professional work space, and relied less on the social validation of her colleagues and students to construct her identity as a new teacher.

Hannah. Of all three participants, Hannah most strongly identified her professional identity as a teacher based on relationships with her colleagues and students. It was not until February when she felt as though her colleagues asked her opinion and sought her advice, that she felt like a teacher.

It's like feeling like I've arrived because I'm not just sitting there and listening and trying to add things in and kind of going with the flow [anymore]. I [am able to say], 'This is what I'm doing and this is where I want to go with this and this is what I like and this is what I don't like.' That was the one point where I really felt like I kind of was a teacher, with staff, I mean with colleagues (Hannah, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020). She also felt like a teacher when the student who had been difficult all year finally took responsibility for his work. "And so, for me it was that moment where he actually came up and he talked to me...I was excited. That felt good" (Hannah, personal communication, March, 17th, 2020). Both instances were based in relationship with others. During her first year of teaching, she had people tell her that she was doing a great job and was far above her skillset than other first-year teachers. Personally, she did not see it. She accepted the compliment but was surprised when people said it. Hannah began to identify most as a teacher when her colleagues and students affirmed and validated the work she was doing.

Although in different ways, all three participants found a social context that met their personal values and constructed their professional identities by interacting in those contexts. Marie's strong sense of who she was led her find a social context that fit her, rather than need the

social affirmation of her colleagues and students. Noah and Hannah constructed their professional identity as new teachers through collegial and student affirmation.

Unique Aspects to Each Narrative

The four cross-cutting themes did not fully capture how the participants constructed their new professional identity. Each participant had some aspects to their story that were unique to their journey that did not connect with any other participant's journey. Marie was the only participant of the three who actually wanted to be a teacher originally, but then chose a different career path in college. Since her partner was a teacher, she knew what teaching looked like from a distance. While Hannah's mom was a teacher, she never thought it was a profession for her because she thought there was a certain personality associated with being a teacher. Noah had never thought about becoming a teacher until his friend suggested he look into it.

All three found themselves in education for different reasons. Although they came to the profession out of dissatisfaction with their first careers, they all chose to be teachers for different reasons. Marie chose to be a teacher because of the personal rewards she saw in it, the chance to make a difference in the lives of kids, and the ability to spend more time with her kids and family. Hannah chose teaching because she found she enjoyed the work and environment of a teacher, and since she wanted to be with her kids more, she volunteered in their classrooms. This led her to explore the idea of teaching as a profession. Once she realized she could work with and enjoyed other people's children, she pursued it as a career. Noah was passionate about his subject, and always had found joy when able to talk about the science of animals in his other lines of work. His passion for an area of learning led him to teaching because he saw how he had the opportunity to spread this passion to the next generation.

Of the three participants, Hannah was the only one who made the decision to change careers based on a major, life-altering event. Her husband's death propelled Hannah out of the health care field and into something different. In comparison, Marie and Noah were in fields in which they were dissatisfied with their work. Marie felt as though her work was trying to put her in a box that did not fit her; Noah felt as though his career had no opportunities for him to grow in or move up because of the structure of the profession.

All three had unique reasons for becoming teachers, as well as unique ways in which they became aware of their identity as a teacher. Each had reshaped their prior professional identity, often to look more like their personal identity. Teaching was a personal profession, and each participant felt free to bring parts of themselves to the profession they were not allowed to in their prior career field. Whether it was enthusiasm for the work, their big personalities, or their ability to teach kids that making mistakes was okay, they all felt free to bring their personal selves to the profession and found aspects of their personal identity in their identity as a teacher.

Overview of Themes and Participant's Quotes

The table below gives an overview of the four themes along with participants' direct quotes from their interviews.

Table 1

Themes and Quotes from Participants

Participant	Theme #1: Professional identity as shaped by identity as a parent	Theme #2: Professional identity as shaped by personal identity	Theme #3: Professional identity as shaped by prior professional skills and experiences	Theme #4: Professional identity as shaped by social context
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Noah	<p>“I don't feel my parenting has transferred over really at all because it's just so different with middle school students and I don't feel I am super adept at being a parent. I do it but I don't feel like I have all these really well thought out and explained and understood processes or skills. That's probably the biggest piece”</p>	<p>“I don't feel like I'm really a great teacher, just because some of my own personal ways of operating don't fit quite with the system”.</p>	<p>“I've seen the application of science; I wasn't personally a scientist but I saw those inquiry and problem-solving and trying to understand how the works”.</p>	<p>“I feel like I have the knowledge and the tools, I just don't have the time and a collaborative partner to do that work”.</p>
	<p>As a parent I felt... “stressed and doesn't have enough time to do everything.”</p>	<p>“I could do this. I can do this, I could be passionate and excited about science and learning about these students and seeing them grow”</p>	<p>“I think it was more just my personality of just an excitement or science, an excitement for learning these topics and I still feel like I bring that in...just in my knowledge and excitement for the topic”</p>	<p>I don't have that. I kind of have that now with the health teacher and talking about the sixth-grade health but still at the same time, all of us have other classes we're teaching but it's not our focus</p>
Marie	<p>“...to be able to shape young minds and be a facilitator of their journey ...is really rewarding and terrible and hard, but you crave it.”</p> <p>“I'm going to say being a mom influenced it. Um, a part of its emotional heartfelt. Like this is where my children are learning, where my children are becoming, right.</p>	<p>“It was almost like my identity as a teacher helped me be okay with my identity as an individual or gave it space. I guess I was okay with it before but it was always needing to be reined in, and now it was like I have a space to be my personal human identity.”</p>	<p>“...coach, mentor, teacher, guide, cheerleader, hard-ass; this is just what the team needs to accomplish [the goal] and it's my job to help the team get there and sometimes it requires different hats”.</p>	<p>“All these things that I had had to put away in the corporate world wasn't allowed to be perfectly people-oriented or whatever, you know. It was like, ‘No, these are needed to be a teacher. You need these things that you've been quieting about yourself’.”</p>

And so, I helped shape society on the parameter of that.”

“I’ve never not thought of myself as a teacher” (Interview, Marie, 2020, P.17).
 “I love the people, I loved leading, I loved inspiring and encouraging.”

“So that identity blended really easily to teacher identity because it’s basically the same thing. You have to be hard-ass, and cheerleader, and orchestrator of chaos, and goal explainer and...it’s totally the same thing.”

“I think really what it comes down to is that small culture, or small town, view people first, and that the goals are wonderful and important, but cannot be accomplished without the people.”

Hannah

There are some things I just do automatically. I don't know if that's just 'cause I'm a parent, but, um, the difference in being a parent and a teacher and a non-parent and a teacher, I noticed with other people too, things that I just do and they're like, "Oh, I didn't even think about that." And I'm thinking, why didn't they think about that? Oh, because they don't have kids yet. Oh, okay. I guess I'm just bringing that from home because, for me, I feel like I have 28 kids right now and not just my own three personal children.”

“To say that mistakes are okay, and that they’re proof you’re trying or that you’re learning. It’s, um, I don’t know, I think that’s it’s—It was big for me as an adult, so I think sometimes with kids, it’s a huge deal.”

“I think the biggest thing from being a paramedic is just being able to step into a room, and read a room and take charge right away.”

“I think my identity as a teacher has been tied as a following along. I haven’t always stepped up as a leader because I’m trying to scope out and figure this stuff out and get comfortable with the school, comfortable with the grade, and comfortable with her team.”

<p>“When I was a child, if we made a mistake, it was not good. Like you screwed up. It wasn’t physical but it was, you messed you, you’re a bad person.”</p> <p>“I give everybody else grace...But I don’t give myself that grace...So, [I’m] definitely harder on myself than other people so that’s just me, I guess. It was definitely there before I was a paramedic.”</p>	<p>“I think being a leader and identifying a situation and knowing what needs to be done has helped me as a teacher.”</p>	<p>“It’s like feeling like I’ve arrived because I’m not just sitting there and listening and trying to add things in and kind of going with the flow [anymore]. I [am able to say], ‘This is what I’m doing and this is where I want to go with this and this is what I like and this is what I don’t like.’ That was the one point where I really felt like I kind of was a teacher, with staff, I mean with colleagues.”</p>
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Identity as a Teacher

Even though all three participants were in various places in their teaching journey, all three could articulate their identity as a teacher. Noah was in his second year of teaching and had the most fluid idea of his identity as a teacher. Hannah was in her first year of teaching and saw how she was becoming more aware of her identity as a teacher. Marie was also in her first year of teaching and was confident in who she was as a teacher. Each participant’s identity as a teacher was unique and a combination of many aspects of their personal and professional selves.

Noah’s Identity as a Teacher

Through multiple statements in his interview, Noah’s identity as a teacher can best be understood by two statement he made:

- I feel like I'm a teacher in crisis but I also feel like I know what I want to do. I feel like I have the knowledge and tools, I just don't have the time and a collaborative partner to do that work.
- It's interesting and I feel like I'm still making that transition to fully being a teacher but it's great because I feel like I have a real career. I never really felt like I had a real career before but I feel like I do, and it's really, really hard because I just don't feel like there's enough support. But I know what I want to do and I know how important it is so it's a lot easier to do it" Although he was not where he wanted to be in his teaching, he was aware that he was a teacher and had an identity in his new profession.

Marie's Identity as a Teacher

Marie's identity as a teacher was intricately connected to who she was as a person. Her discovery of this became evident in the interview and was a positive revelation for her. She described it best in the following statements:

- I actually have never not thought of myself as a teacher.
- I see myself now as a new teacher and I'm learning and evolving and adapting and adjusting my expectations. As far as my identity as a teacher, I think I'm that type of teacher that likes to get messy to learn and I like to fail a lot and get excited about that and the effort.
- Instead of squashing it to fit within the box that they needed me, I was able to kind of form my own box to some degree and just say, 'It's okay to be who I am and that it's big and loud and sometimes not always orderly.'

- It is was almost like my identity as a teacher helped me be okay with my identity as an individual or gave it space. I guess I was okay with it before but it was always needing to be reined in and now it was like I have a space to be my personal human identity.

Of the three participants, Marie found her identity as a teacher closest to who she was a person. She found that in becoming a teacher, she was fully able to embrace herself.

Hannah's Identity as a Teacher

For Hannah, her identity as a teacher was heavily influenced by her social context. Affirmation from her colleagues and having a successful moment with a difficult student were times in which she realized she knew what she was doing, had something to offer, and could reach students. They are best described in the following statements from her interview:

- I think my identity as a teacher has been tied as a following along. I haven't always stepped up, as a leader because I'm trying to scope out and figure out stuff out and get comfortable in the school, get comfortable in the grade, and get comfortable with my team. Whereas now, I know what doesn't work and I know what I want to change.
- For me, I really realized [I was] a teacher when, it was probably, maybe in the last month when sitting down at our planning meeting with my team and they were asking me really what I thought. Not that they don't ask me what I think, but they really were letting me lead the meeting and really asking for my input. My team: I work with teachers who have been doing this forever...I'm definitely the new kind on the block...but just really feeling like I've arrived because I'm not just sitting there and listening and trying to add things in, and kind of going with the flow. I was saying, 'This is what I'm doing and this is where I want to do with this and this is what I like

and this is what I don't like.' That was one point where I felt like I kind of was teacher.

- With my students...I've have this one student who id just really difficult, and he came up to me the other day and...it was a moment where he came up to me and he was like, "Miss. B., I know I owe five minutes today, but if I turn this in and I do this, I'll be good, right?" and I was like, 'Yeah.'" And he goes, 'All right, cool. I'm gonna do it.' And so for me is was that moment where he actually came up and talked to me instead of me always [saying] 'Hey, what are you doing?'

Hannah's childhood and OCD father play a huge role into the professions she had chosen, who she was as a mom, and as a teacher. This was important in understanding how she understood herself as a teacher. The following statements describe how she was as a mom and teacher, which were in contrast to how she was raised to behave and think about herself.

- I feel like my biggest epiphany and part of the reason I tell it to my students is that we all make mistakes. Because talking with you made me really remember, just like as a child, for me making mistakes was not, it was like it was bad. It was the end of the world, like, 'oh my God,' and so like, as an adult, for me to have that epiphany...I didn't that epiphany until I was 36. So, of course, some of my 10 and 11-year old students, it's like – to say that mistakes are okay, and that they're like proof you're trying or that you're learning...It was a big deal for me as an adult. So, I think sometimes with kids, it's a hug deal.
- I have specific expectations [with students]. I'm usually very clear about them, but when the kids, when a student slips, it's not – So when I was child, if we made a mistake it was not food. Like you screwed up. It wasn't physical, but it was like, you

mess up, you're a bad person. So, for me, it's more of a yes, this is the expectation.

Yes, this is what happened...what do you think happened instead of, you're a bad person, it's more, where did it go wrong.

Hannah's identity as a teacher was heavily influenced by her childhood, her personal values, and the values she wanted her children and students to learn.

All three participants had varying degrees of understanding of their identity as a teacher. Each one constructed their narrative of their new professional identity through common lenses, but also unique to their life situations.

Conclusion

Four cross-cutting themes were discovered through the participants' personal interviews and the narratives of each participant, namely that professional identity was shaped by a) identity as a parent, b) personal identity, c) prior professional skills and experiences, and d) social contexts. Each participant also had unique aspects to their journey and discovery of their identity as a teacher that were noted in this chapter. Their understanding of their identity as a teacher was a snapshot of their understanding of themselves as a new teacher. They were still constructing their professional identity as a teacher, as they were all new to the profession and becoming more aware of who they were as people and as educators.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Over the past decade, second-career teachers (SCTs) have entered the career field at an increasing rate. Statistically, 37% of people who entered the teaching profession were SCTs (Marinell & Johnson, 2014). The average adult changes jobs 11.5 times in their lifetime, with younger adults changing careers more often than older adults (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). With the Millennial generation fully in the workplace, studies have found Millennials were more likely to change careers based on job satisfaction. Millennials accounted for 50% of the 40 million people who voluntarily left their jobs in 2018 (Adkins, 2016; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Millennials were interested in finding work that was worthwhile, engaging, and challenging (Adkins, 2016). This is in contrast to Generation Xers, representing 25% of the people who voluntarily left their careers, who did so due to a lack of opportunity to grow in their career (Maurer, 2018). The participants in this qualitative study were either Millennials or were young Xers.

How second-career teachers (SCTs) constructed their new professional identity as a teacher was the question at the heart of this study. Narrative inquiry enabled me to better understand the identity formation process (Creswell, 2013) that led participants to choose teaching as a second career, and make sense of themselves as teachers in their early years in the field.

The process in which people experienced re-shaping a professional identity was complex and multifaceted. Researchers on identity formation find the concept of identity was constantly evolving and shifting. Identity can be understood in terms of group associations and social

relations (Oyersman, et al., 2012; Olsen, 2012). It is not an ontological process, but one that develops during and over a lifetime (Beijaard, et al., 2003). The concept of professional identity formation was not a new concept to the body of literature. However, the professional identity formation of SCTs was an area of study within the body of educational literature with limited sources. This study offers some insights on how SCTs constructed a professional identity as a teacher.

Synopsis of Major Findings

Although common themes were evident, each participant's narratives were uniquely constructed in their own contexts. There were four cross-cutting themes from the analyzed interviews and narratives. These themes showed common lenses in which the participants constructed their professional identity. The four themes were: professional identity was shaped by a) identity as a parent, b) personal identity, c) prior professional skills and experiences, and d) social contexts. Only one of the four themes were based off of the questions asked during the interviews. Three of the four themes were derived from participants' stories, rather than intentional questions posed during the interview. The order in which the themes were reported were based on how significant they were to the participants. However, each individual had a unique experience, some themes were more important to some participant's stories than other themes.

Integration of My Personal Experience

Although I am not a SCT, I shifted careers within the education field to work as a teacher educator rather than a k-12 teacher. The shift was difficult for me. As a middle school teacher, I had a level of social status within the community where I taught. People admired what I did and were usually impressed with the fact that I worked with middle schoolers. I could walk into a

grocery store or restaurant in town and often encounter a student or a parent I knew. I enjoyed the level of status it brought. Part of how I constructed my identity as a teacher was within the social context of the school and community in which I taught. When I changed careers, I no longer had the same social status within the community because the community was a lot smaller than the town. The number of students I worked with in a year dropped drastically. And my adult students had their own lives, families, and came from communities all around the area. I might be known by my students and colleagues, but it was not in the same way as when I was a middle school teacher. Part of it too, was that I worked in a department that had multiple locations, which meant there was not one community in which I taught. It was difficult for me to recognize my new identity as a teacher educator until I had to write my third-year review. It was in this intentional reflection on who I was as a teacher educator, a scholar, my service work, and how I integrated my faith into my scholarship was when I realized I had shifted my professional identity. Similar to the participants journey of identity construction, I realized in my own story how much I was constructing my identity as an assistant professor was based off of the social context of the institution and the validation of my colleagues and students.

One common theme between the participants' stories and my own, was the aspect of reflection. It was only through intentional reflection that I discovered who I was becoming in my new profession. While I was conducting the interviews, participants were able to express their identity as a teacher, but it was because of the time they spent thinking through questions they had not previously considered or discussed. It was through intentional reflection the participants and I were able to put words to our new professional identities and the ways we constructed them.

When reflecting on the themes from the participants narratives, I could resonate with how they were constructing their new professional identity. I could see how I was using three of the four themes to reshape my professional identity from a K-12 teacher to an assistant professor. What was more beneficial for me though, was to see the assets and strengths SCTs were bringing to the profession. To not look at SCTs as needing more support in their teacher education program, but to look at them as needing a different kind of support than my first-career teachers. Not more, but different. This study helped me see and focus on the assets SCTs bring to the profession and to my classroom. Although the sample size was limited, I can see how I could start applying ideas the participants experiences to my teaching. I could easily begin to intentionally weave in ideas about the multiple identities used to begin to understand who SCTs are becoming as educators. I could focus on these identities as part of helping them understand how that impacts their ideas about what it means to be a teacher. As the three participants each brought in prior professional skills and experiences to how they were constructing their professional identity as a teacher, I could intentionally have SCTs reflect on the skills and experiences that would be beneficial in the classroom. And, for those SCTs who struggle with understanding a new professional environment, I can explicitly facilitate learning around school environments and what it means for them as experienced professionals, and novice teachers.

From this study and my own personal reflection along with it, I realized my own growth in how I view this unique population of educators, and desire for professionals who work with SCTs to see their assets and strengths as well.

Findings Related to Literature

Literature regarding how SCTs constructed their new professional identity was limited. Research regarding identity formation, both self and professional, were available but specifically

about SCTs identity formation process was not a common topic of research. Although the findings of this study are not generalizable, several themes from the literature are salient and deserve mention here.

Identity Formation of Second-Career Teachers

Studies on the identity formation process of SCTs found they benefitted from support from colleagues and mentors as they reconstructed their professional identity (Wilson & Deaney, 2010; Jorissen, 2003). This was true of all three participants in the study. Noah knew he needed more support but was not able to get the support he needed, and because of it, felt like a teacher in crisis. Marie mentioned a mentor who she worked with often, along with her grade-level team; this supported her in adjusting to teaching. Hannah felt supported as she was able to listen and learn in the first part of her year. 's support during her first-year came from her teaching team as she was able to listen and learn the first part of the year.

Meijers and Lengelle (2012) found in their study, that teachers with a strong sense of their prior career identity were able to navigate the changes in careers better than those did not have a strong sense of career identity. This seemed true for the participants. This was particularly true for Marie, who had a strong sense of herself as a teacher. Noah, who had never felt like he had a career was struggling to be the teacher he wanted to be. And, Hannah, relied greatly on her colleagues and students to affirm her in who she was as a teacher.

Grier and Johnston (2012) discovered five areas in which SCTs could be categorized in how they created their identity as a teacher: personal background, drawing from previous identity, concerns about becoming a student again, finding support, and the views on student learning. The three participants in this study did not neatly fall into any one of these five areas. All three discussed elements of their personal background and life history and how their

understanding of self, impacted who they became as a teacher. They all drew on prior identities, both professional and personal to construct their new professional identity. Noah was the only one who did not have support structures in place at home or at the school, and expressed the impact of the lack of support in his construction of his professional identity. Since both Marie and Hannah had structures in place, they discussed how the supports in place were beneficial in understanding who they were as teachers.

Identity Formation

Formative researchers on identity formation agreed that identity and the formation of an identity is not something someone has, but is a dynamic process, constantly negotiated and renegotiated over a lifetime (Blustein & Noumair, 1996; Erickson, 1968; Hogg, 2012). The participants of this study showed this dynamic process in how they constructed their professional identities as a teacher. Each participant referred to past experiences from childhood which were foundational elements of their personal identity and renegotiated these aspects of their personal identity in how they constructed their identity as a teacher.

Although each participant was over the age of 30, had held a prior career and was a parent, each participant was in a different place in regards to their personal identity development. According to Marcia's concepts of identity statuses (1966), people may be in one of four statuses of identity development. The participants of this study did appear to be in one of three of the four statuses. Marie appeared to be in the identity achievement status. She was focused on important issues in her life but was flexible and had the ability to understand the experiences of others. She was not easily swayed by external influences and could consider differing opinions without becoming defensive (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Noah appeared to be in the moratorium status at the time of this study. He was conflicted in who he was, yet engaging. He pulled others,

colleagues, students, significant others, into his formation plight to help him figure out his identity. Hannah's appeared to be confident and sure of herself but there was an underlying fragility to her, suggesting she was in the foreclosure status. True to Marcia's concepts of identity statuses, this development process was not linear, and people could vacillate between them as part of the identity formation process (1966).

Each participant's formative childhood experiences and personal identities were impactful in how they constructed their professional identities. This study was only a snapshot on a lifelong process for them to wrestle through past experiences and personal struggles in order to consider teaching as a profession. As they constructed their professional identities, each participant found they could become themselves, as a teacher.

Identity Formation of Teachers

Research on how teachers formed their professional identities, a different branch of research than how SCTs formed their professional identities, also gave insight into how these three participants constructed their professional identities.

Goodson and Cole (1994) found a teacher's identity was not merely a role, but was a complex, personal, and social practice which involved the whole person. All of the participants noted how they brought themselves to the profession. This study also affirmed that developing a teaching identity is a continuous process (Reynolds, 1996). Avalos (2011) found one vital period in which teacher identity formation occurred was when they first became a teacher.

Vahasantanen and Etelapelto (2009) found a teacher's identity might be reshaped during certain times during their teaching profession. During times of reform or when new technology was introduced to the profession, were also times in which a teacher would reshape their teacher

identity. Each of the participants were aware of how their identity was that of novice, or newbie. Yet even though they were new to this profession, they were not new to being a professional

Implications for the Teaching Profession

The findings of this study have implications for teacher education programs, school districts, and SCTs themselves. Those who work with SCTs in any capacity would benefit from knowing how SCTs construct their new professional identity.

Teacher Education Programs

Teacher education programs are an ideal place to have SCTs think through who they are as a person and the aspects of their lives that affected their decision to become a teacher. Professors in teacher education programs would benefit from understanding how this unique population use multiple prior identities to construct their identity as teacher in order to better support the development of thoughtful teacher educators. Teacher education programs would also benefit from explicitly engaging SCTs in their understanding and misconceptions about what it looks like to be an educator. As SCTs are typically older than first-year teachers, they tend to be removed from the classroom environment longer. This may create dissonance in understanding of what the role of a teacher looks like today and would be important to clarify any misconceptions SCTs have of what it means to be a teacher.

School Districts

The process of understanding how SCTs construct their new professional identity would also benefit professionals who work with SCTs: school districts, principals, mentors, and teaching teams. Despite SCTs' experience in other fields, this study points to the importance of mentorship and a solid teaching team for helping them feel confident as teachers. It would be

beneficial for the professionals who work with SCTs to understand the level of professional support SCTs need in order to adjust to a new professional environment.

Second-Career Teachers

SCTs benefit from being reflective in their own processes as they consider professional identity formation. This could take the form of explicit conversations with mentors and teaching teams about their identity as a teacher and what influences it. SCTs also benefitted from having strong support systems in their personal lives as they changed careers and became teachers. This study points to the importance for SCTs to consider the level of personal support they have as they enter into teacher education programs and their first few years of teaching.

Recommendations for Further Research

In regards to this unique population, further research in the area of how SCTs construct their professional identity would be beneficial for the field of education to discover which identities of a person most impacted how they constructed their identity as a teacher. Further studies on which identities most influenced how someone constructed their new professional identity would be beneficial to those who work with SCTs, and SCTs themselves. In further qualitative studies on this topic, more interviews with each participant would be beneficial to gain a deeper understanding of participants narratives and construction of identity.

The process of constructing a new professional identity was a personal process done within social context. SCTs needed the space to think through the identities they used to construct their new professional identity in order to navigate the changes which occurred when they decided to become a teacher. The participants of this study found they constructed their professional identity as a teacher largely from prior identities. Further studies on how SCTs

constructed their new professional identities as a teacher would be beneficial to understand their unique needs as they change careers and enter the field of education.

Concluding Remarks

As the number of career changers who entered the field of education increases, learning how this population constructs their professional identity as a new teacher would be beneficial for everyone who works with this population. The snapshot of identity formation shown in this study, showed the complexity of professional identity formation. How SCTs in this study were constructing their new professional identity was multi-faceted and heavily influenced by personal, social, and professional identities.

This study inspired me to be more aware of my students who were career changers and their unique needs. It also has encouraged me to discuss with career changers how to advocate for themselves and their unique needs when they enter their first-year of teaching. This study has also encouraged me to incorporate intentional times of reflection for my students so they can think through their prior identities and begin the process of constructing their new professional identities.

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APPENDICES**APPENDIX A****LETTER OF CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATING EDUCATORS****Second-Career Teachers Identity Formation Process**

Dear _____,

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study on how second-career teachers construct their professional identity as a teacher. This research is being conducted as part of the requirements for the Doctorate of Educational Leadership degree through George Fox University where I am both a student and instructor. I, Bethany Pflug, will be working directly with you as the researcher of this study. As part of the research, participants will be asked to share stories around how you formed your identity as a teacher. If you desire to bring any materials to the interview that were important in your teacher identity formation, please do so.

The qualifications for this study are the following: you have held a prior career, you hold a teacher's license, and you are either halfway through your first or second year of teaching. If you agree to be part of the study, you will be asked to participate in either one or two interviews based upon the needs of the study. Interviews will be 60-90 minutes in length. Interviews will be recorded, and subsequently transcribed. The interview will initially be guided by me, with prompts to help focus the conversations as needed. However, they are your stories, and we will follow the narrative you tell regarding how you found your identity as a teacher. The interviews will take place in a two-week time span, in which I will work around your schedule. We will meet either in your school, or at a public location of your choosing. I believe you have valuable information and experiences that will contribute to this study and thank you for your time.

The results of this study will only be used for research purposes, which may include presentations at a professional conference and/or academic publications. All research materials, audio recordings, transcriptions, letter of consents, notes, and reflections, will be locked in a secure location for three years. I will be the only person to have access to the collected information and I will personally delete the audio recordings and information, along with materials, after the three years.

The risks associated with this study are minimal. Please be aware that your participation is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop at any time. Your personal information will not be used in the study. A pseudonym will be used to ensure confidentiality. If you would like a copy of the results, I would share them with you upon completion of the study.

Thank you for your time and considering to participate in this study. If you have any questions regarding this research please contact me either by phone, at (503) 551-7588, or by email, at bpflug@georgefox.edu.

If you understand the use of this research and agree to participate, please sign below.

Participant signature _____ Date: _____

Researcher signature _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SECOND-CAREER TEACHERS**

1. Tell me the story about how you decided to change careers and become a teacher.
2. Describe the space of life you were in?
 - a. Were you confident in your career?
 - b. Were you questioning your career choice?
 - c. What were your relationships like with your colleagues?
 - d. Describe the physical work environment.
3. How did you view yourself in your first career?
 - a. How did you identify professionally in that career?
 - b. Tell me a story from your prior career that exemplified your professional identity.
 - c. What attributes of yourself did you attribute as being part of your career identity?
4. Tell me about your journey to become a teacher.
 - a. What process did you take to become a teacher?
 - b. What was your education experience?
 - c. Your student teaching placement?
 - d. What was this experience like for you?
 - e. How was your identity challenged while in your teacher preparation program?
 - f. When did you begin to realize your professional identity was changing?
5. Tell me a story about when you realized you had become a teacher.
 - a. What happened?
 - b. What was the context?
 - c. Has it been affirmed?
 - d. By who and in what way?
6. What is your identity as a teacher?
 - a. What attributes have you brought in from your previous career?
 - b. What part of your identity has stayed the same and what has changed?
 - c. When did you realize, this had happened?
 - i. How did that feel? Describe the moment.
 - d. How have you used your previous career identity in your teacher identity?
 - e. How do you view yourself as a teacher?
7. Is there something we haven't talked about in your story to become a teacher that you would like to share?

APPENDIX C

IRB Request Form

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY HSRC INITIAL REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Page 1

****NOTE:** Review carefully the full text of the Human Subjects Research Committee Policies and Procedures.

Date submitted: 02/04/2020

Date received: _____

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY Human Subjects Research Committee

PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS INITIAL REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

[Note: Dissertation, or other formal research proposal, need not be submitted with this form. However, relevant section(s) may need to be attached in some cases, in addition to filling out this form completely, but only when it is not possible to answer these questions adequately in this format. Do not submit a proposal in lieu of filling out this form.]

Title of Proposed Research: EXPLORING HOW SECOND-CAREER TEACHERS CONSTRUCT A NEW PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Principal Researcher(s): Bethany Pflug

Degree Program: Doctorate in Educational Leadership

Rank/Academic Standing: N/A

Other Responsible Parties (if a student, include faculty sponsor; list other involved parties and their role)

Scot Headley, Dissertation Chair

(Please include identifying information on page 6 also.)**

(1) Characteristics of Subjects (including age range, status, how obtained, etc)

- Teachers who are within their first or second year of teaching.
- Who hold a current teachers license.
- Who have held a prior career.
- Age range: 27 - 45
- Obtained through personal connections - participants will be former students who are now teaching.

(2) Describe Any Risks to the Subjects (physical, psychological, social, economic, or discomfort/inconvenience):

Potential risks to the participants are in the areas of discomfort and inconvenience. Participants may find the conversation to be uncomfortable if they have never thought through the topic. I am hoping, due to already knowing the participants, it will not be uncomfortable. The amount of time necessary, 1 - 2 interviews 60 -90 minutes each, may inconvenience participants. I plan to interview them when they are available. They will also state the day and time most convenient to them.

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(3) Are the risks to subjects minimized (i) by using procedures which are consistent with sound research design and which do not unnecessarily expose subjects to risk, and (ii) whenever appropriate, by using procedures already being performed on the subjects for diagnostic or treatment purposes? ☒ Yes/ ☐ No

Degree of risk: 1 (low)

(4) Briefly describe the objectives, methods and procedures used:

The purpose of this study is to better understand how Second Career Teachers (SCTs) construct their new professional identity as a teacher, so those who work with SCTs are better able to meet their unique needs. This interview-based study, will use narrative inquiry to understand and examine how SCTs construct their new professional identity.

For the study, I will collect in-depth, semi-structured interviews to be used as field texts. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The interview for a narrative inquiry study is viewed as a conversation in which longer conversations are necessary for the process of storytelling. Notes will be taken by the inquirer and participant as needed during the interviews and while I listen to the recorded interviews. I will also maintain an autobiographical narrative inquiry, as is essential in narrative inquiry to bracket oneself in the midst of the research. Any text the participants and myself create will also be used as field texts. Any artifacts the participant wants to share will also be used as field texts.

Participants in the study will meet the following criteria: in their first or second year of teaching, held a prior career, and hold a teaching license. As a relational methodology, it is important to build a trusting relationship with participants. For this reason, I will interview three former students who meet the criteria. At least one, in-depth, semi-structured interview will be conducted; with multiple interviews as an option. The interviews will allow for participants to tell their story of identity formation.

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- (5) Briefly describe any instruments used in the study (**attach a copy of each**).

There will be two instruments used. A letter of informed content (Appendix A), and an interview guide (Appendix B) accompany this document. The letter of informed consent, addresses the study, procedures, benefits, confidentiality, and potential risks of the study. The interview guide includes questions based on the main research questions and subsequent questions of the study. The questions allow for the story of how second-career teachers constructed their new professional identity as a teacher to be told.

- (6) How does the research plan make adequate provision for monitoring the data collected so as to insure the safety, privacy and confidentiality of subjects?

All participant information will remain confidential. They will be given pseudonyms in the reconstructed narratives. All data collected will be maintained for 3 years in secure folders, and a secure filing cabinet. After the three years, I will personally delete and/or destroy the material.

(7) Briefly describe the benefits that may be reasonably expected from the proposed study, both to the subject and to the advancement of scientific knowledge – are the risks to subjects reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits?

The number of people entering into teacher who are career changers is increasing. This population has unique needs, that are different than the traditional teacher candidate. The experiences, skills, and professionalism they bring to the profession could be assets to the profession. However, many of us who work with SCTs are unaware of their unique needs. We are unaware of how they are reconfiguring, shifting, re-shaping their professional identity and how this impacts who they become as a teacher. I believe this study will help people who teach SCTs, who mentor SCTs, who support SCTs, and who evaluate SCTs. By understanding how they re-shape their professional identity, I believe we will be able to better support them and better meet their needs. This could lead to more longevity in the field, overall work satisfaction, and a better understanding of SCTs.

There are multiple potential benefits to this study. Participants may benefit from the opportunity to think through and articulate how they have formed their professional identity. Being able to put words to the process, I believe will be a benefit. I also believe there will be benefits of this study to educational research, teacher preparation programs, administrators, and mentors. Those who work with second-career teachers will benefit from understanding how they construct their new professional identity as a teacher. It will help in understanding how teacher educators can prepare them, how administrators work with them, and how mentors work with them. Overall, I believe the risks to the participants are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.

(8) Where some or all of the subjects are likely to be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence (such as children, persons with acute or severe physical or mental illness, or persons who are economically or educationally disadvantaged), what appropriate additional safeguards are included in the study to protect the rights and welfare of these individuals?

All participants are adults who are able-bodied with a masters level of education.

(9) Does the research place participants "at risk?" ☐ Yes/☒ No If so, describe the procedures employed for obtaining **informed consent** (*in every case, attach copy of informed consent form; if none, explain*).

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COMMITTEE REVIEW

For Committee Use Only

	HSRC Member Signature	Recommend Approval	Conditional Approval	Not Recommended
Chair	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments (continue on back if necessary, use asterisk to identify):

2192035

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Title: EXPLORING HOW SECOND-CAREER TEACHERS CONSTRUCT A NEW PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Principal Researcher(s): Bethany Pflug

Date application completed: 02/04/2020

(The researcher needs to complete the above information on this page)

COMMITTEE FINDING:

For Committee Use Only

☒ (1) The proposed research makes adequate provision for safeguarding the health and dignity of the subjects and is therefore approved.

☐ (2) Due to the assessment of risk being questionable or being subject to change, the research must be periodically reviewed by the HSRC on a _____ basis throughout the course of the research or until otherwise notified. This requires resubmission of this form, with updated information, for each periodic review.

☐ (3) The proposed research evidences some unnecessary risk to participants and therefore must be revised to remedy the following specific area(s) on non-compliance:

☐ (4) The proposed research contains serious and potentially damaging risks to subjects and is therefore not approved.



Chair or designated member



Date