# “I love it, I love it, but aaaah!”: A Case Study of the Emotional Experiences of Preservice Teachers

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**Abstract**

This study examines the emotional experiences of preservice teachers within the context of a mindfulness intervention. With a collective instrumental case study design, my focus was highly descriptive. I ask: how do preservice teachers experience emotions around learning to teach? And, how do preservice teachers use mindfulness to frame their emotions in the process of learning to teach? Using a figured worlds framework, my findings chapters describe my three case study participants, with a final cross-case analysis that looks thematically across the three participants to address my research questions.

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# Introduction

## *Introduction and Background*

Emotions lie at the heart of teaching (Day & Leitch, 2001; Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996). Anyone who has spent time in the classroom is likely familiar with its intense highs and lows. Hargreaves (1998) argues, "good teachers are not just well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge, and joy" (p. 835). Emotions provide a fundamental way to understand and interpret our experiences. According to Denzin (1984), people "are their emotions. To understand who a person is, it is necessary to understand emotion" (p. 1). Although teaching is not *solely* an emotional practice, teaching "is always *irretrievably* emotional in character" (Hargreaves, 2001).

Yet while the centrality of emotions has become slightly more recognized in research over the past few decades, it is still mostly neglected in the "rationalized" world of educational reform (Hargreaves, 2000). Emotions were previously dismissed as unworthy of serious study (Ashkanasy, Hartel & Daus, 2002; Boler, 1999). Emotion was seen as beneath faculties of thought and reason. In fact, it was believed that "to be emotional is to have one's judgment affected" (Ahmed 2020, p. 3). Educator and education theorist Nel Noddings (1996) said this of emotions:

> In Western thought affect and emotion have been distrusted, denigrated or at least set aside in favor of reason. The tendency to distrust - even deplore - emotion has been aggravated by the rise of professions with their insistence on detachment, distance, cool appraisal and systematic procedures (p. 435).

Capturing its invisibility, Linston & Garrison (2003) write,

> For too long we have left emotions in the ontological basement of educational scholarship, to be dragged up and out only when a particular topic necessitated it (e.g., classroom management, student motivation, or teacher 'burnout'). That seems ill advised, and it is time to rebuild our academic house. When we teach, we teach with ideas and feelings. When we interact with students, we react and they respond with thoughts and emotions. When we inquire into our natural and social worlds, we do so with desire and yearning (p. 5).

The neglect of emotion is not just happenstance. A feminist standpoint (Bolder, 1999) explains emotion's long-standing erasure due to the West being mostly dominated by a strong pull from intellectual tradition that prizes the natural sciences and logic. Because of this, other ways of knowing – such as emotion and contemplation – were devalued and invisibilized. Emotions have traditionally been associated with the body and with women and posed as a "distraction to the mind" (Winans, 2012). As a female dominated profession, teaching has already been historically and socially devalued. This orientation reflects the assumption that teachers have innate feminine traits deemed essential for their work, such as empathy, caring, and patience. The false dichotomy between reason (considered a masculine trait) and emotion (considered feminine) is similarly echoed by Sutton & Wheatley (2003), who point to the perception that emotions are connected to irrationality. When someone is referred to as "emotional," it rarely has positive connotations. Emotions are perceived as out of control and destructive – certainly the opposite of civilized and thoughtful. Unfortunately, "emotions

stubbornly retain their place…as the aspect of human experience least subject to control, least constructed or learned (hence most universal), least public, and therefore least amenable to sociocultural analysis" (Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 1990, p. 1). This explains a long era of devaluation and, consequently, scholarship's overlook of the role emotions have played in teaching. This is unfortunate, given the transforming potential of emotions.

A long-overdue increase in emotion research in teaching over the past few decades was largely motivated by the realization that emotions do, in fact, impact teaching and students (Nias, 1996). Yet according to McWilliam (1994), "the culture of teacher education has shown itself to be highly resistant to new ways of conceiving knowledge" (p. 61). We have a long way to go to pierce the "monolithic position of privilege" that rationality has enjoyed for centuries. But once that dichotomy is "denaturalized," more ways of thinking become available (Zembylas, 2014).

There are some signs that this reason vs. emotion dichotomy is beginning to break down – we are seeing a proliferation of interest in the mind-body connection, in understanding humanity through an emotional lens, and in the surge of programs focused on well-being and emotional health. No movement may be more indicative of this momentum than the current expansion of mindfulness in the West.

Mindfulness is a secularized form of contemplative practice based on a practice of paying attention, on purpose, to the present moment, with equanimity – or, acceptance (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). The Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) model in the West, developed and mainstreamed by John Kabat-Zinn (1982), is held as the standard for systematic training in self-regulation of stress and emotion via strengthening underlying neural systems that help facilitate the power of attention. With roots in Eastern religious traditions, mindfulness has recently ridden a wave of popularity in the West, mainstreamed into health care, psychology, and even business.

In the field of education, mindfulness has been lauded as a potential to strengthen self-regulation, empathy, and compassion (Davidson et al., 2012; Meiklejohn et al, 2012). Even though there are increased studies on mindfulness in education that "highlight the potential of mindfulness-based interventions for enhancing wellbeing and performance of in-service teachers" (Hwang et al., 2017, p. 41), the pace of research on these programs is lagging far behind their explosion in the education arena. In addition, much of the current research is grounded in an orientation that reflects a psychologized lens, seeing contemplative practices as forms of mental and behavioral training (Davidson et al., 2012) and oriented in positivistic research traditions that explore impacts of interventions on teachers or students. While they claim promising results so far, what is missing from this research is a sociocultural approach that studies how emotions and mindfulness interact. To address this need, my research study investigated how pre-service teachers undergoing a mindfulness intervention experience emotions around teaching, and how mindfulness frames those emotional experiences.

*Context of the Study*

The University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for Healthy Minds (CHM) is a neuroscience research institution founded by professor of psychology and psychiatry Dr. Richard Davidson. CHM's mission is to "cultivate well-being and relieve suffering through a scientific understanding of the mind" (Center for Healthy Minds, 2023). Its research - oriented around the question of what makes a mind healthy - is cross-disciplinary and encompasses scientific investigation into areas of contemplative practice, emotions, attention, resilience, and others. One of CHM's research branches centers on well-being in infants and children, leading the surge of interest on the impacts of contemplative practices in education.

In 2015, a small team of researchers across multiple departments developed and implemented a randomized controlled design study on mindfulness for pre-service teachers (PSTs) to assess the impact of mindfulness on their psychological and physiological health, self-regulatory abilities, and classroom behaviors. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, and, under leadership of my advisor in Curriculum & Instruction, Dr. Beth Graue, I and another graduate student lead the qualitative research component of this study. The focus so far in many quantitative studies on mindfulness has been on what "dosage" results in what outcomes, with questions of fidelity of implementation a main focus as adherence to randomized controlled design requires. Because the qualitative team was oriented in interpretive, qualitative research, we found ourselves looking at the data from less of an interventionist perspective but from a focus on the lived experience of the PSTs. There are very few studies on mindfulness and PSTs – and even less from a qualitative perspective. Especially given the lack of empirical evidence related to mindfulness training with teachers, the focus of this study was not on causal pathways but instead was highly descriptive of the PSTs' emotional experiences in the mindfulness intervention.

*Purpose and Significance of this Study*

The purpose of my study was to investigate the emotions that pre-service teachers experienced around teaching within the context of a mindfulness intervention. I did this through a qualitative case study to first examine PSTs experiences of emotions, and then situate PSTs emotional experiences within the mindfulness intervention by exploring internal awareness and embodiment of emotions. This research study is situated at the intersection of mindfulness and emotion in PST education. I used these two research questions as a guide:

1. How do preservice teachers experience emotions around learning to teach?

2. How do preservice teachers use mindfulness to frame their emotions in the process of learning to teach?

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to a newer research field. Most studies of mindfulness come from positivistic traditions within the fields of neuroscience and psychology. This qualitative study contributes understanding of participants' lived experiences, which is especially critical as mindfulness programs in education expand at a rate alarmingly faster than research is able to understand their impact. In terms of emotion literature, and despite the growing interest, "missing is a discussion about the appropriate methodologies of investigating emotion in education" (p. 58). Because the field is also new, phenomena finding investigations are particularly important (Roeser et al, 2012). I aim to contribute to both the mindfulness and emotion literature by exploring the experience that connects the two fields within teacher education. Second, this project has implications for informing policies around teacher education. My hope is that an exploration of the emotional experiences of PSTs will lend to more awareness of PSTs' emotional labor that can open up new possibilities for transformation of teacher education programs by understanding and challenging the emotional rules that get taken up. In addition, understandings from this study may pave the way to use mindfulness as a tool to harness the power of emotions for innovative change.

# Literature Review

Scholarship on the intersection of emotions and teaching has only recently expanded, and mindfulness research is in its infancy, so many gaps and exciting potentials exist to move this research forward. This chapter first provides an overview of the literature on emotions and mindfulness as they relate to teaching. My framing of emotion research is constructed in two semi-chronological arcs – first, an exploration of the psychological and individual orientation of emotion, and then a more sociocultural perspective of emotion. This organization gives historical context to the field, allowing for an understanding of how emotions in teaching have shifted and how that positions the current study. This literature review will provide a foundation for my exploration of emotions in preservice teacher (PST) education – an approach guided by the need for emotion-rich, embodied ways of knowing and learning. Following the review of the literature, the latter part of this chapter describes the theoretical framework that guided my study.

## *Psychological conception of emotion*

The psychologized and interactional eras of emotion research typically attached emotion to cognition or bodily sensation - or a combination of both. In this wave, emotions may be fundamental to social life but it is the individual that still constructs their meaning. These research arcs are distinguished from the sociocultural emotion era by their lack of sociocultural context, regardless of their location on the continuum from purely psychological (example: when emotional appraisal is centered) to more interactional in nature (example: the way social-emotional competencies are theorized). Even so, there is slight overlap in my organization of this literature, where I explore specific emotions like empathy and discomfort. I have tried to parse out interactional from sociocultural as I explore these specific emotions by being clear about the

research focus and orientation. For example, research on teacher stress and regulation of emotions can have a psychological orientation, such as research that orients around surface and deep acting (Grandey, 2000). And while the concept of emotional labor includes teacher emotion self-regulation, literature focusing on emotional labor comes from a more sociocultural perspective which frames labor in the context of how feeling rules get codified through the power of gender norms, for example. This focus on power dynamics helps me situate the section on emotional labor in the sociocultural framing of emotions, and the studies on self-regulation and stress in the psychologized and interactional framing of emotions.

There are some elements in the psychologized orientation of emotion that are agreed on. For example, emotions have episodes including "prototypical emotional episodes" – what we usually consider clear cases of emotion – and also milder, less noticeable episodes like avoiding someone out of apprehension (Shuman & Scherer, 2014). There is also some agreement on the components involved. Lazarus (1991) defines these as subjective experience, a physiological change (heart rate and facial expression), action tendencies, and appraisal. Russell & Barrett (1999) include "core effect" in emotion. Core effect is the most basic element of emotion not directed at a situation or object, like an overall sense of feeling tense or relaxed. Last, appraisal is a component largely discussed in this literature. Appraisal is how an individual interprets or evaluates a situation that provokes emotion. Importantly, "appraisal theory explains why the same external event does not lead to the same emotions in individuals" (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, p. 330). Other literature points to a "situation" component, where a situation is seen to impact a relevant goal. This element "coordinates responses to the situation that generated it" (Jacobs & Gross, 2014, p. 184). In other words, the situation provokes a bodily response that connects feeling to behavior – for example, blushing when embarrassed.

Beyond that, researchers have not been successful in reaching consensus to define emotion (Shuman & Scherer, 2014). Russell & Barrett (1999) point to the fact that "emotion is too broad a class of events to be a single scientific category" (p. 805). For example, different theories exist to explain how the different components of emotion "hang together" (Shuman & Scherer, 2014), including basic emotion theory, appraisal theories, and psychological construct theories. The following sections describe some of the branches within this psychologized orientation to emotion in teacher literature: stress and burnout, regulation and self-efficacy, and social-emotional competence.

*Stress and Burnout*

As teaching began to be recognized as an affective endeavor in the 1980s and 1990s, emotion and teaching research raised awareness of the importance of emotions in teaching (Zembylas, 2003). It was the concern over stress and burnout that brought emotion research into educational research. One of the emerging theories is that teaching is such a stressful profession because of its inherent social-emotional demands (Zembylas & Schutz, 2016). Kyriacou (2001) calls teaching one of the most stressful jobs, with teachers citing workload, lack of collaboration and support, and student behavior as the biggest stressors. Without emotional resilience, build-up of emotional stress results in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment, leading to a deterioration of the classroom and social environment (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). An unhealthy classroom and social climate only causes further emotional exhaustion. This is aptly named the "burnout cascade" (p. 498). In their "prosocial classroom" model, Jennings & Greenberg (2009) propose that teachers' social-emotional competence supports classroom relationships and management, which, in turn, mitigates burnout.

"When teachers lack the SEC to handle classroom challenges, they experience emotional distress. High levels of emotional stress can have an adverse effect on our job performance and may eventually lead to burnout. Among teachers, burnout threatens teacher-student relationships, classroom management, and classroom climate" (p. 496).

Burnout was defined by Maslach & Jackson (1981) as having three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Teachers and burnout literature is expansive, covering topics like burnout among social justice education activists (Gorski, 2015), burnout and mindfulness (Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, Bonus, & Davidson, 2013; Lomas, Medina, Ivtzan, Rupprecht, & Eiroa-Orosa, 2017; Roeser et al., n.d.) emotions and burnout (Chang, 2009; Jones & Youngs, 2012), and burnout and interpersonal relationships (Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, & Vanroelen, 2014). For new teachers specifically, the toll of emotional burnout is even higher (Jones & Youngs, 2012). The fallout from burnout is the "revolving door" of teaching (Ingersoll, 2014) and has led to grave concern over attrition, which encompasses a closely associated literature base. In general, the focus on teacher stress and burnout points to its place of centrality in this psychologized orientation – and as being a continuous point of focus in emotion and teaching literature currently. Importantly, the stress and burnout focus connect to other points of discussion in this first wave literature. Namely, research has drawn strong connections between burnout and emotion-regulation (Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa-Kaja, Salovey, & Reyes, 2010; Lavy & Eshet, 2018).

While a focus on social-emotional competence and stress may seem interactional and even sociocultural in nature, the research angle was still largely from a psychological lens - meaning, although emotions were seen as arising out of interactions with individuals, emotion was still constructed and understood at the individual level.

*Regulation and Self-efficacy*

Most of the literature on emotion regulation comes from social psychology. Pertaining to teachers, this literature asks about the goals teachers have for their own emotional regulation and the strategies they use (Sutton, 2004). Emotion regulation encompasses individuals' conscious or unconscious influence on which emotions they have – and when – and how they experience and express those emotions (Gross, 1998).

Teachers attempt to regulate emotions so they are more effective with management, discipline, and in relationships with students. Emotion regulation goals come from teachers' beliefs about the role of a teacher, which adheres them to norms or "display rules" about acceptable emotions to be displayed under particular situations, and "feeling rules" about what is appropriate to feel (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino, & Knight, 2009). In Sutton's (2004) study, many of the 30 middle school teachers she interviewed brought up emotional regulation before even being explicitly asked about it, which partly points to its strength and prevalence in the teaching profession. Teachers talked about "holding in anger, gritting their teeth, lowering their anger back down, stepping back and breathing, keeping themselves in check, looking at their own tone, and not letting their frustrations affect their teaching" (p. 384).

Jacobs & Gross (2014) ask, "what exactly, is being regulated?" It is because of the malleability of emotion response that different regulation points are possible. Referring again to the basic components of emotion, the differing points of regulation include action tendencies, appraisal, and even physiological changes (Lazarus, 1991). As evidence of this, Gross (1998) differentiates between two classes of emotion-regulation: antecedent-focused occurs before emotions are generated, and response-focused happens after the emotion response is triggered.

For example, part of antecedent focused regulation is selecting or modifying situations to avoid an emotional impact. Relatedly, some teachers report regulating not just what emotions they feel and express, but to what degree – this strategy is called up and down regulating (Jiang, Vauras, Volet, & Wang, 2016). Having a sense of "control" over emotions is pervasive throughout the literature on teacher self-regulation. One participant in Knight-diop and Oesterreich's (2009) study on the role of emotions in teachers who confront educational inequities said, "I think that when our emotions take control, we lose control" (p. 2685).

Self-regulation of emotions allows teachers to override emotions in the moment in order to help them attain longer-term goals that are more closely tied to their sense of effectiveness as teachers (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino, Knight, 2009). Lazarus (1991) points to appraisal as part of the emotion component that drives feelings of self-efficacy. Appraisal includes recognition of how an experience interacts with an individual's goals and motivations. Goal incongruence leads to negative emotions, and goal congruence leading to positive emotions (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Because teachers invest themselves in their work, they feel a sense of failure or success due to their perception of self-efficacy (Nias, 1996). Farouk (2010) used cognitive appraisal theory to explore teachers' emotions to find that they experienced different emotions based on their differing cognitive interpretations – or appraisals – of situations. For example, anger emerged in relations with students when teachers perceived continuous goal blockage and a build-up of frustration. This finding also supports Sutton's (1994) similar conclusion that appraisal of persistent goal blockage produces anger.

Self-worth is a large motivator for teachers (Parker, Martin, Colmar, & Liem, 2012). But Zembylas (2003) notes that this puts teachers in a perpetual state of vulnerability, as they are constantly analyzing their self-worth. This is exacerbated by pressures exerted on them from

expectations about what a teacher should be. Last, regulation of emotions can actually exacerbate stress and burnout. Self-regulation can lead individuals to regulate action responses in order to align with social expectations, and over time these coping mechanisms can be very taxing on the system (Grandey, 2000).

*Social-emotional Competence*

The literature on social emotional learning occupies a large chunk of the research on emotions and education. Daniel Goleman popularized the term with his book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), which framed EI as more important than IQ in contributing to life success. In turn, this influenced positive psychology to explore what were called "non-cognitive" factors such as grit. Facilitated by the grit and resilience movement (Duckworth, 2016), a social-emotional competence focus took root, and social-emotional learning (SEL) programs and curricula exploded in PreK-12 educational contexts. Smith (2013) recounts that connections between SEL and academic success solidified alongside a rising accountability movement in the early 2000s which focused on initiatives borne out of concern over the achievement gap.

Components of SEL programs include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2022). SEL programs, interventions, and curricula abound. There are school based programs like Second Step and Responsive Classrooms geared towards students, and teacher programs like Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (Jennings, Frank, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2013). Some researchers explore how SEL programs have transformed students' lives by helping to shift the quality of learning environments and promote social, emotional, and academic competencies (Brackett & Rivers,

2014). Social-emotional competencies are seen to lead to improvement in teachers and the classroom through emotion regulation (Jennings, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2011). Roeser, Skinner, Beers and Jennings (2012) say teachers need "habits of mind," or dispositions - reminiscent of the more psychologized approach to emotions in education. In their widely cited paper, Jennings and Greenberg (2009) point to teachers' social-emotional competence as critical to the successful implementation of student SEL programs.

The continued growth of SEL programs today – and mindfulness, as I will later explore – points to the strength of this psychological conception of emotion in teaching in continuing to shape current national interest, practice, research, and policy in education.

*Emotions as Sociocultural*

A sociocultural approach to understanding emotion offers a different conception of what emotions are than the psychological or interactional orientation. Gomez & Lachuk (2019) describe this approach by saying that "emotions are socially and culturally constructed and agreed upon between persons. Emotions frame how individuals experience and interpret their contexts and their lives" (p. 6). As an example, there is interesting research concerning the variability of emotional complexity across cultures based on the country's interdependent (i.e. Japan) or independent (i.e. the U.S.) social orientation (Grossmann, Huynh, & Ellsworth, 2016).

In understanding emotions as structured by relationships, rules, expectations, and power, various perspectives emerge that either conceptualize emotions as fundamental to social life but where individuals still construct meaning, or which conceptualize emotions through an understanding that meaning is actually created jointly in interaction and sociocultural context. For example, emotion meaning varies "according to who or what embodies them, what

expectations accompany them, when their expression is deemed appropriate, how they are regulated, and by whom their expression is monitored" (Lachuk, 2019, p. 2).

Critically oriented emotion and teaching researchers in this arc of research attend to networks of power and oppression. Zembylas (2007) orients himself in feminist and poststructuralist views of emotion. “These views examine the role of culture, power, and ideology in creating discourses and how teachers and students participate in this process by adopting or resisting dominant discourses” (p. 296). As he is a preeminent voice in this field, it is worthwhile here to outline the four assumptions that underlie his concept of emotions: 1) Emotions are not private, universal, or uncontrollable innate impulses. They are constituted via language and social life, 2) “Emotion talk” is structured by power relations and emotional rules, 3) Sites of social and political resistances can be created through emotions, and 4) This orientation recognizes the role of the body - embodiment - in emotional experiences.

Feminist thought, specifically, pushes beyond the notion that emotions act in opposition to rational thought and instead challenges the power relations inherent in patriarchal thought – pitting the rational and emotional against each other, for example. In fact, emotions are intimately tied to gender. “Discourse on affect is also a discourse on the nature of women, their subordination, and their potential for rebellion in American society” (Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 1990, p. 16) – a “rhetoric of control (of emotion) is more evident in women’s conversations than in men’s,” and is echoed in the ongoing narrative around self-control and regulation of emotions in teaching. The critical feminist orientation also challenges the assumptions that emotions are “natural, personal, or individual” (Winans, 2010, p. 479). Even the hierarchy between thought and emotion gets “displaced” by a hierarchy between emotions, with some emotions seen as “good” and some as less desirable (Ahmed, 2020). The idea of “emotional hegemony” points to

the tendency to see some emotions as valuable while others are judged "suspect or ineffective" (Langstraat & Bowdon, 2011, p. 5).

In the following sections, I outline some major foci in the emotion and education research that stem from this sociocultural framing of emotions. They are: emotions embedded in relations; the idea of emotional labor and feeling rules; specific emotions of caring, empathy, compassion, and discomfort; and, how race intertwines with those specific emotions.

*Relation*

One of the reasons Nias (1996) claims teaching is emotional is precisely because it involves people. Hargreaves (2000, 2001) uses a sociological lens to explore the emotional practice of teaching by focusing on how the emotional relationship teachers have with students cuts across all other areas of teaching, such as curriculum planning and school structure. In previous work (1998), he uses the theory of emotional politics, which frames emotions in a social-cultural context.

Learning is a social phenomenon, and schools are social places where individuals learn and grow in relation with each other (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004). It is widely accepted that the core of teachers' work is the emotional bond they have with students (Day & Leitch, 2001). Indeed, the emotional labor in relationships of care, specifically, has been discussed (Gilligan, 1982; Goldstein, 1999; Noddings, 1988, 1995). But emotions are also constituted in the relational spaces between teacher colleagues, between teachers and administrators (Schmidt, 2000), between teachers and students' parents (Hargreaves, 1998; Lasky, 2000), and even in relationships embedded within contexts of school policy reform (Little, 1996; Kelchtermans, 2005).

Parent-teacher interactions are also emotional practices shaped by culture, context, power, and status. Power shapes "authority" relationships, some marked by a culture of surveillance that exists between parents and teachers – and from which discouragement and anger can spring from (Lasky, 2000). These relationships of power also manifest in Hargreaves' (2001) "Emotional Geographies of Teaching," which illuminated different emotional geographies within parent-teacher interactions that are characterized by the closeness and distance of emotions within them: sociocultural, moral, professional, physical, and political. While each of these geographies can be expanded upon as they relate to emotions, in general the geographies describe "how teachers' emotions are embedded in the conditions and interactions of their work" (p. 1058). Relatedly, emotions are constituted in relationships of power that exist between educators within a school, as evidenced by Schmidt's (2000) study on the emotional experiences of department heads, characterized by power imbalances that impeded shared emotional understanding.

A smaller number of scholars work in the intersection of education, emotion, and critical relational transformation (Knight-diop & Oesterreich, 2009; Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013; Matias, 2016; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Trainor, 2006; Winans, 2012; Winans, 2010; Zembylas, 2012). These scholars agree that "emotions, like identity, emerge in relation, in the context of specific relationships" (Winans, 2010, p. 487). Emotions are not conceptualized as psychological states but as "social and cultural practices" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 9). These scholars recognize power relations in shaping the construction of emotions within these social processes. For example, in a society steeped in white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism, those become the institutions that form "how our emotions are felt, expressed, and understood" (Matias, 2016,

p. 5) – and in turn, it is how we experience these emotions that tell us how we experience racism, sexism, etc.

*Emotional labor*

The sociological framework of emotional labor came out of Arlie Hochschild's (1983) piece, "The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling" and earlier work on emotion work and feeling rules, and was then applied to the literature on teaching. Hochschild describes emotional labor as the display of "social engineering" (p. 33), using the example of female flight attendants who were explicitly directed and then taught how to suppress their anger at passengers. Emotional labor is the management of feeling and expression of emotions in order to produce or drive efficiency in the work place (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). In this way, emotions are commodified as labor. Sometimes this emotional labor is explicitly taught, as in the flight attendant example, but sometimes it operates covertly by way of "feeling rules," (1979) in which the individual implicitly "measures experience against an expectation often idealized" (p. 565) that governs what one should feel, wants to feel, and tries to feel in order to do their work. These "feeling rules" get defined as emotional norms of the workplace that, in turn, regulate individuals' perceptions on the appropriateness of emotions and emotion expression. For example, teachers act as agents who stifle, control, suppress, and manage emotions in order to do their work (Hochschild, 1983).

Not surprisingly, the emotional labor that teachers are expected to perform is closely connected to and indicative of pervasive emotional self-regulation in teaching. Lavy and Eshet (2018) describe emotion regulation as "crucial to teachers' work, as a core component of educational work includes expressing care, empathy, and support for students and exhibiting

appropriate emotions during teaching and interpersonal interactions with students" (p. 152). Teachers express feelings that their job is to avoid anger or manage it – and in cases where it was expressed, it was seen as "incompatible with the professional role of teacher" (Liljestrom, Roulston, & Demarrais, 2007, p. 287). The current climate of education prioritizes and values "educational objectivity", alongside social norms that expect teachers' affection for students. Walking this delicate line between neutrality and affection requires "constant emotion management" (Bodenheimer & Shuster, 2020, p. 68).Connected to previous issues of relational power, younger teachers found themselves "at the bottom of a hierarchical structure" that made them feel restricted as they were learning "appropriate" ways to express their emotions.

The emotional impacts of teachers' regulation of emotions can be explored through two pathways – deep acting, in which individuals change their experienced emotion, and surface acting, in which individuals regulate their expressed emotion (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). Lavy and Eshet (2018) found that increased surface acting paired with teachers' negative emotions, while deep acting was associated with less burnout, more adaptability, and more self-efficacy. Similarly, other scholars have found a relationship between emotional labor and burnout (Bodenheimer & Shuster, 2020). Teachers employed both surface and deep acting in an effort to do their work more effectively, exhibiting the enactment of emotional labor. Similarly, another study yielded findings that expressing naturally felt emotions – where emotional experience and display are authentic - influenced teaching satisfaction (Yin & Lee, 2012; Yin, Lee, Zhang, & Jin, 2013). Echoes of emotional labor can be heard in teachers' ideas about emotion rules such as "commit to teaching with passion," "hide negative emotions," "maintain positive emotions" and "instrumentalize emotions to achieve teaching goals" – including exaggerated facial or gestures to get students' attention (Yin & Lee, 2012).

Other scholars have explored how emotional labor ties to a more critical stance. Notably, emotional labor implies the commodification of feeling: "When deep gestures of exchange enter the market sector and are bought and sold as an aspect of labor power, feelings are commoditized" (Hochschild, 1979, p. 569). This commodification reflects structures of oppression and power. In this lens, power relations are what determine what can and should be said about one's emotion. It is emotion discourses that "establish, assert, challenge, or reinforce power or status differences" (Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 1990, p. 14). The politics of emotions, therefore, challenges the often-assumed norms about emotions – and who gets to express what emotions under particular circumstances (Zembylas, 2007), in part to resist the emotional rules that act as exploitative commodification. "Constructing an emotional landscape that subverts the prevailing emotional rules, as a means of questioning these rules and their assumed ideologies and truths, invokes vulnerability as well as resistance" (Zembylas, 2007, p. 305). It is in this awareness and resistance that opens up possibilities. It is this vulnerability where new emotional connections can take root that upheave and allow for transformation (Boler, 1999).

Wingfield's (2010) piece, "Are some emotions marked "whites only?"" uncovers how feeling rules are "implicitly racialized" (p. 251). We see emotional rules in social movements manifest today, as movements like Black Lives Matter demonstrate the need for "justified anger." The very fact that anger over racial injustice needs explicit attention to its rightness – its justification – may, in part, be evidence to the "feeling rules" that govern how White culture interprets, accepts, and discounts particular emotions from particular people.

Next, I will highlight several specific emotions that get much of the attention in emotion literature within teaching – caring first, followed by a more critical look at empathy, compassion, and discomfort.

*Caring*

When it comes to connecting specific emotions to teaching, caring is right up there with stress and burnout. Several eminent scholars of care do not see caring as an emotion in its own right, but as a relational act through which emotion is constructed. Much of the focus of educators on caring rests upon the work of Carol Gilligan (1982) and Nel Noddings (1984). Caring connects deeply to the emotional dimensions of teaching largely because of how teachers invest personally in their students out of moral obligation (Nias, 1996), reflecting Noddings' (1988) stance that caring is a moral orientation, or a form of "relational ethics" (p. 218). Teachers call on this sense of relational obligation to perform caring.

Noddings (1984) describes caring as a relational dance between the cared-for and the one-caring. Both have to contribute to this relational act. In this conception, caring is not considered a personality trait but a moral choice – as something a teacher does. Goldstein (1999) similarly conceptualizes care as a relational act and used Nodding's "ethic of care" to explore the role of emotion in this relational space. She describes a "shared affective space" that is created between the learner and the teacher in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). She says an interaction in the ZPD is "intellectually rewarding and emotionally satisfying" (p. 665). Similarly, teachers use and manage emotions to exhibit care about and for students, casting care as a choice requiring emotional labor and as not just an interaction between individuals but influenced by institutional structures and working conditions (O'Connor, 2008). That care is not an intrinsic trait but requires emotional labor is a concept that addresses the sociocultural framing of emotion as it relates to care in teaching.

Caring is not exempt from the "tentacles of power dynamics" – rather, caring "is value laden, in that power and hegemony render definitive expressions of caring that is normalized and

deemed appropriate, while subjugating other expressions" (Matias & Zembylas, 2014, p. 331). While caring is seen as foundational to teaching, the emotional labor of caring has not been a wide focus except in a few studies (O'Connor, 2008; Oplatka, 2007). In a similar vein, Goldstein and Lake (2000) used Beth Swadener's (1992) "hegemony of nice" to explain pre-service teachers' oversimplification and essentializing views of caring. This is a more critical orientation as it problematizes caring as a one-dimensional, universal, natural element of teaching, and instead recognizes that caring has also been shaped by cultural scripts laden in power dynamics. In turn, this may help teachers call these hard-lined beliefs into question to reinvestigate their attachment to these idealized visions of caring.

*Race and: Empathy, Compassion, and Discomfort*

> Emotion is what makes us human. And a large part of education for social justice is helping teacher candidates connect with the humanity of their future students. At times, such a connection w/ others' humanity requires emergent teachers to question deeply ingrained beliefs embedded within their families and communities about persons who are culturally, racially, and otherwise different from themselves. Questioning who they are and where they come from can lead to emotional anguish and tension, as emergent teachers begin to question even the ethics and morality of the people who are closest to them in their lives (Lachuk, 2019, p. 11).

In Ahmed's (2020) book, *Cultural Politics of Emotion,* she asks not what emotions *are*, but "what do emotions *do?"* (p. 4). In this sense, I explore here the literature on how emotions are entangled in investments in Whiteness and racism. And for White teachers especially, how

does understanding their emotional landscapes "unveil the ways in which emotions work to cloud and reify structural racism" (Leonardo & Gamez-Djokic, 2019, p. 15). Teachers cannot be prepared to teach one of the most important topics - or teach in a way that honors a racialized experience for students - if they do not understand the relationship between race and emotions, or "racialized emotions" (p. 3).

Like other scholars in this field, Matias' book *Feeling White: Whiteness, Emotionality, and Education* (2016) brings together race, critical whiteness studies, education, and emotion. She views emotions as structured by social institutions that govern how they are felt and expressed, much like emotional labor's "feeling rules." Her aim, "supporting humanity by dismantling hegemonic whiteness" (p. 15), circles around the emotionality of Whites and the "whiteness of sanctioned emotions." Her lens is not to centralize White emotions to reinforce the way white supremacy already does this (i.e. the movement around well-being), but to use emotions to disrupt racism. She says, "although Whites' emotional strategies are not the lynchpin of racism but play a part in its overall architecture, white emotions are often enough to block progress in racial understanding" (p. xv). In particular, I will explore some of her work on empathy in this effort.

It is one of the most critical tasks to help teachers begin to dismantle deficit perspectives and develop a sociocultural consciousness (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), especially because White teachers comprise 79% of the teaching force (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Behaviors and emotions "develop [in white teachers] because of the on going presence and persistence of racism" (Grant, 2019, p. 9) so in order to do this work, teachers need to examine who they are, their attitudes and beliefs, and how those attitudes influence their teaching (Zeichner, 2009). With the demographic of teachers entering the profession – primarily white,

middle-class, monolingual women – this internal examination can be a challenge as they are often unaware of or resistant to the need to critically examine themselves and their teaching practices (Picower, 2012), often using Tools of Whiteness, or oppositional stances which act as a barrier to developing a sense of social justice and integrating that vision into teaching. The focus is not on "achieving" cultural competence, but on the struggle and process of understanding an enacting it – including taking part in "emotional risk" of examining race (Buehler, Ruggles Gere, Dallavis, & Shaw Haviland, 2009).

A major barrier to White teachers engaging in justice-oriented teaching is a fear to speak about race, and discomfort over the need to address racial injustice and racial identities (DiAngelo, 2011). Emotion is a central component or impediment to this progress. "Our very motivation to explore or to avoid exploration of the unusual, unfamiliar, or uncomfortable – indeed, our ethical questioning – is often experienced emotionally" (Winans, 2012, p. 155). White people have repressed emotional investments in whiteness (Matias, 2016). However unknowingly indoctrinated, these emotional investments in Whiteness serve to reinforce and reproduce social orders. Colormute (Pollock, 2004) and colorblind ideologies (Bonilla-Silva, 2003) are those that help White people avoid addressing race. As Matias (2016) says, if White people continue to hide under this narrative (i.e. "I respect all humans") we of course cannot – because we have not acknowledged systems and processes of power. To capture this sentiment, she relays:

> In teaching White teacher candidates who sadly and characteristically perform their whiteness to a point where they regularly and sometimes apologetically cry or shout at me, I am the loving one who continues to stand there and take it for the end goal that they can learn, even at the price of my radicalized humiliation. Until

> a White person truly sees the dehumanization process of investing in their whiteness, standing before them will always be a person of Color who is demoralized by it (Matias, 2016, p. 20).

But trying to understand colormute/blind racism so far has fallen short in fully explaining White peoples' investments in their ethical stances. Winans' (2010) study on White students' development of racial literacy found that when they claimed colorblindness they were expressing an emotional desire to define themselves as good, moral, ethical people. In addition, their emotions demonstrated an individualistic framework – "whereby one is considered responsible only for the direct, intentional consequences of one's actions" (p. 483). In addition to emotional investments in Whiteness – and the fear to puncture that vision, which will be further explained through pedagogy of discomfort, below - teachers also exhibit feelings of guilt and anxiety when they realize they are "implicated in the social forces that create the climate of obstacles the other must confront" (Boler, 1999, p. 166). Again, in her use of critical emotional literacy, Winans (2012) posits emotions not as private, individual experiences. Rather, they are "embodied phenomena that are profoundly social and cultural in nature" (p. 150). Her answer to the question of how to "craft a pedagogy whose means and ends mutually reinforce one another" is to help students develop a conscious and *embodied* awareness of their interpretation of the world and how they "negotiate their interpretive frameworks and how they live" (p. 151). Understanding and welcoming the full emotional spectrum is necessary in this work if White people are to work productively through emotions that have so far acted as roadblocks to justice. Below I will explore two areas discussed critically in this literature – empathy and compassion, and the pedagogy of discomfort.

*Empathy and Compassion*

Empathy and compassion, along with love and caring, are common emotional tropes in education. Scholars explore how these emotions are embedded in whiteness and should be uncovered through a critical orientation. Matias (2016) refers to these emotions as often "sentimentalized performances" (p. 25) that serve to mask racism. Matias proposes that we avoid universalizing and essentializing these emotions if we want to dismantle unjust systems. If we instead provoke them – such as using Valenzuela's (1999) notion of "authentic care" and Boler's (1999) "strategic care" these emotions can work towards anti-racism instead of upholding it. Fear and disgust, for example, are political because they involve creating boundaries and alliances between people. Disgust "organizes the social and bodily space" (Matias & Zembylas, 2014, p. 321).

As mentioned, compassion is central to critical emotional studies because it can "easily mask unequal power relations" (Langstraat & Bowdon, 2011, p. 7). It brings up questions of how compassion reflects privilege. Who can feel compassion, and who suffers? Who is "worthy" of compassion? Berliner (2005) situates compassion critically this way:

> In operation, compassion is a term denoting privilege; the sufferer is *over there.* You, the compassionate one, have a resource that would alleviate someone else's suffering. But if the obligation to recognize and alleviate suffering is more than a demand on consciousness - more than a demand to *feel right* [about ameliorating an unjust scene of suffering] then it is crucial to appreciate the multitude of conventions around the relation of feeling to practice where compassion is concerned. In a given scene of suffering, how do we know what should constitute sympathetic agency? (p. 4).

Universally and superficially practiced, empathy and compassion can disguise other emotions that are seen as socially inappropriate, and serve to maintain a White person's innocence (Matias, 2016). As she says, this is the structure that maintains a White pre-service teachers' ability to declare that they are social justice educators while at the same time exhibiting unresolved emotional discomfort. This is what allows for contradictions like the participant in Matias and Zembylas's study (2014) who said she is "well on her way" to becoming an anti-racist educator yet dropped a class that explored education and race because it was too emotionally uncomfortable for her. In fact, Leonardo & Gamez-Djokic (2019) describe the "violence" of love and care when race relations are not placed at the center. They describe "racist love" and "colonial care" as pre-service teachers profess love, joy and care for students (p. 9).

Similarly, Leonardo & Zembylas (2013), in "Whiteness as a Technology of Affect," explore the implications of the emotionality of whiteness – specifically Whites using "intellectual alibis" or excusing one's actions in the face of racism. For example, these alibis encourage the thought that if one engages in race dialogue, then he or she cannot be racist. "This creates equilibrium for many white educators, which allows them to continue with anti-racist work with their identity relatively intact" (p. 156). Using these alibis is also problematic because it exists in an individualistic framework – "whereby one is considered responsible only for the direct, intentional consequences of one's actions" (Winans, 2010, p. 483). An individualistic lens avoids recognizing one's part in structural racism, at the same time reifying these structures.

A small body of literature explores empathy specifically, which has been traditionally talked about as a neutral emotion and touted as a solution to connection and bridging "difference." Like caring, it risks upholding whiteness through perpetuating "good intentions" (Warren, 2015, p. 594). In addition, empathy is empty if not accompanied by action, and instead

one assumes that “declarations of caring are enough to alleviate the other’s suffering” (Matias, 2016, p. 28). Boler (1999) refers to this as passive empathy, stating bluntly that “people don’t want empathy, they want justice.” Further, “if no change can be measured as a result of the production of empathy, what has been gained other than a ‘good brotherly feeling?’” (p. 164). Warren (2015) echoes this by distinguishing between empathy and false empathy. Nodding to the trappings of individualism, Boler also remarks, “at stake is not only the ability to empathize with the very distant other, but to recognize oneself as implicated in the social forces that create the climate of obstacles the other must confront” (1999, p. 159). In the intersection of justice, emotion, and education, the literature has begun reckoning with the invisible rules embedded within notions of empathy and compassion, and the ways they manifest in teaching practices. Without a critical stance, these emotions risk continued essentialization, further perpetuating Whiteness and racist structures that they purport to upend.

*Pedagogy of Discomfort*

Grant (2019) asks whether a study of emotion in education is complete “without placing race and racism at the center and as fundamental to the study” or is “studying emotions and education without centering race a continuation of American history that keeps Black identity invisible/negative and White identity visible/positive?(p. 1). He asks whether White preservice teachers understand that their feelings towards Black people are “created out of collections of myths and lies constructed by their ancestors?" (p. 6). The persistence of racism roots these emotions in White teachers. Grant invokes Baldwin:

> What is ghastly and really almost hopeless in our racial situation now is that the crimes we have committed are so great and so unspeakable that the acceptance of this knowledge

> would lead, literally, to madness. The human being, then, in order to protect himself, closes his eyes, compulsively repeats his crimes, and enters a spiritual darkness which no one can describe (Baldwin, 1964, p. iv).

This spiritual darkness thrives because of the privilege of White people to turn away from racism. In order to uncover deep barriers to teachers being able to emotionally invest in antiracist teaching, the pedagogy of discomfort needs to be present (Matias & Zembylas, 2014). Boler and Zembylas (2003) consider the pedagogy of discomfort to be "counter hegemonic." They pose this definition: "A pedagogy of discomfort recognizes and problematizes the deeply embedded emotional dimensions that frame and shape daily habits, routines, and unconscious complicity with hegemony" (p. 108). The pedagogy of discomfort has been theorized in connection with anti-racist work in education, and predominantly by "White feminists about White students in predominantly White institutions within the literature on higher education" (Knight-Diop, Oesterreich, 2009, p. 2681), but it has also started to be explored in pre-service and in-service teacher education.

For example, Ohito (2016) uses the pedagogy of discomfort as a conceptual framework to help puncture the "tight yet seemingly invisible hold" that Whiteness has in teacher education. Here I discuss it for the ways it demonstrates using emotions critically for social change. The pedagogy of discomfort is about how White people act in response to their feelings of discomfort in confronting their own privilege, power, and role in oppression.

Emotions are frequently problematized as barriers to progress, but the pedagogy of discomfort invites possibility. For example, when individuals "do attend directly to emotions (of fear, embarrassment, anger, sadness, or guilt) they are grounding themselves in a specific context

in meaningful ways and hence moving away from the stance of innocence" (Winans, 2010, p. 486) and identities "assumed to be stable, innocent, and faceless are unsettled." In this way, moving through discomfort can facilitate learning that "challenges racial oppression" rather than impeding it (Ohito, 2016). It is an uncovering of uncomfortable emotions rooted in the present – evoked emotions like anger, defensiveness, and pain – and, like strategic empathy, includes the action that is provoked. Boler (1999) describes this as: "Action to 'bear witness' to the inequities that exist in the world with the primary aim of explor[ing] beliefs and values; examine[ing] when visual 'habits' and emotional selectivity have become rigid and immune to inflexibility; and identifying when and how our habits harm ourselves and others" (p. 185-186).

Pedagogy of discomfort is used to "trouble" the comfort zones (Zembylas & Papamichael, 2017), and pushes against the notion of "safe spaces" for race talk. Sheppard and Levy (2019) discuss the need to critically interrogate how the White expressed need for "safe spaces" prioritizes the comfort of race talk in a way that might impede the discomfort required for emotional learning related to race. A White teacher in their study admitted she stops social studies classroom discussions that get "too personal and too emotional." White women using their privilege to excuse themselves from conversations about race because it is uncomfortable or not worth the "investment" allows them to stay "within the comforts of Whiteness" (Leonardo & Gamez-Djokic, 2019, p. 13). How do we allow confrontation, passion, and conflict to exist over the need for safety, comfort, and control? Unfortunately, "at its heart, the pedagogy of discomfort may call for self-reflection, learning to listen, and student interaction, but the pedagogy remains about safety, comfort, and control for those who have long functioned in the privileges of an inequitable society" (Knight-Diop & Oesterreich, 2009, p. 2685). Echoing this sentiment, Ng (1997) refers to the pedagogy of challenge:

> To speak of safety and comfort is to speak from a position of privilege, relative though it may be. For those who have existed too long on the margins, life has never been safe or comfortable…Teaching and learning against the grain is not easy, comfortable, or safe. It is protracted, difficult, uncomfortable, painful, and risky…it is a challenge (p. 52).

To this point, pedagogy of discomfort and challenge can be critiqued if they do not disrupt patterns of the entrenched need for emotional safety for individuals that most need to recognize their complicity in racism and the need to engage in race talk and action.

*Mindfulness*

In the field of education, mindfulness has been lauded as a potential to increase self-regulation, empathy, and compassion (Davidson et al., 2012; Meiklejohn et al, 2012). Much of the literature, policy, and practice on mindfulness in education is either implicitly or explicitly connected to expanding social-emotional learning initiatives that have taken root in schools (Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, & Davidson, 2015; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Other literature covering impacts of mindfulness on education include Langer and Moldoveanu (2000) and Langer (2000), as well as Schonert-Reichl's work (Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015) among many others, who point to impacts on executive functioning, attention, awareness, well-being, and social-emotional learning. Studies on mindfulness and students dominate the fledgling research, but research on mindfulness and teaching is growing (Hirshberg, Flook, Enright & Davidson, 2020; Romano & Chang, 2022; Dorman, 2015; Hwang, Bartlett, Greben, & Hand, 2017; Napoli, 2004; Roeser, Skinner, Beers, & Jennings, 2012; Soloway, Poulin, & Mackenzie, n.d.; Taylor et al., 2016). These studies continue to "highlight

the potential of mindfulness-based interventions for enhancing wellbeing and performance of in-service teachers" (Hwang et al., 2017, p. 41).

The current proliferation of mindfulness programs in education is grounded in an orientation re-circulated from emotion research on social-emotional competencies, stress, and burnout. Research on mindfulness in education typically reflects a more psychologized lens, seeing contemplative practices as forms of mental and behavioral training (Davidson et al., 2012) and oriented in positivistic research traditions that explore impacts of interventions on teachers or students (Hirshberg, Flook, Enright & Davidson, 2020). This is true *even* when a more sociocultural issue like race is centered in the study (Hirshberg, Flook, Moss, Enright, Davidson, 2022).

These studies claim promising results so far, and this new focus demonstrates an "affective turn" in education. However, prevailing "instrumentalist and economists function of learning still reigns supreme" (Hyland, 2013), reflecting studies on mindfulness for instrumental aims like attention (Napoli, 2004), executive function (Flook et al., 2015), and mitigating against burnout (Roeser et al., n.d.). In addition, there are some unintended consequences when the empirical science orientation drives the current mindfulness in education movement (Ergas, 2015). While these researchers (Davidson et al., 2012) do call attention to the need to ask how to ensure no harm in this area of education, other scholars (Barker, 2014; Ergas, 2015; Forbes, 2016; Hyland, 2013; Reveley, 2015) would argue that studies that are oriented in a lens of individual deficiency and pathology *are* in and of themselves, causing harm.

For example, Kabat-Zinn accepted the need to "medicalize" Buddhist meditation practices in order to make them palatable to the masses (Harrington & Dunne, 2015). Ergas (2015) explains that the drive to disassociate mindfulness from Buddhism and religion to

legitimize its place in secular contexts in the West has resulted in veering into a secularism that is now being held up by capitalistic endeavors. He comments on the "dangers and risks involved in the 'scientification,' secularization, commercialization, and commodification of contemplative-based curricular 'interventions' (p. 217). In this light, mindfulness interventions may actually sustain a narrative in which individuals are "concurrently the subject of their own therapeutic regulation" and objects to be managed (Barker, 2014, p. 175). Similarly, another critique is that mindfulness may perpetuate the idea that "the self is both the problem and the solution for all social ills" (Forbes, 2016, p. 1267) because mindfulness has grown within a culture of neoliberalism that "denies that society, societal structures, and institutions exist" (p. 1257). In effect, the message is that individuals must manage themselves in order to deal with problems.

Exclusive focus on "responsibilizing" (Reveley, 2015) the individual is highly problematic as the practices can mask and distract inequities. Mindfulness can have the veneer of fundamentally changing what is happening in the classroom without actually piercing inequities. Although mindfulness purports to put the "control" of emotion management into the individual, "what we don't want to do is communicate to students that when your school system is failing you, the best way to cope is to sit still and be quiet and compliant" (Pettway, 2017). To this point, Reveley (2015) comments that mindfulness is being pushed to build individuals' "resilience" in order to deal with harsh circumstances.

> If mindfulness provides the opportunity to pathology-proof oneself, to achieve mastery over one's self in the face of adversity, then those who do not avail themselves of the opportunity to develop the cognitive skill of being mindful can be blamed as having failed (p. 507).

This "responsibilizing" can be said for mindfulness interventions that focus on teachers' stress and emotional competences, without failing to address wider systemic issues causing stress in the first place. For example, as part of their randomized controlled study exploring the connection between mindfulness and effective classroom practices, researchers assessed the quality of student-preservice teachers' interactions (using the CLASS scoring system) before and after they underwent a mindfulness intervention. They found that the skills of attention, emotion regulation, and connection practices like compassion supported teacher well-being and classroom teaching practices because it allowed the preservice teachers to access their knowledge and skills in the moment. According to these researchers, mindfulness allowed the preservice teacher to put into practice more of their teaching skills (Hirshberg, Flook, Enright & Davidson, 2020). However, absent was the inclusion of systemic factors that interfered with teacher well-being and made teaching challenging. While there is research on mindfulness and teacher stress, without a focus on inequities a less stressed teacher might still be perpetuating racial harm in the classroom (Romano & Chang, 2022).

Weare (2014) cautions that we should be concerned about the quick rise in popularity and availability of resources "likely to be seized on by schools and funding agencies as low-cost, quick-fix solutions" (p. 1044). How, instead, can we take a "long-term, integrated" (p. 1047) critical stance towards the mindfulness arena as it explodes within educational contexts?

Literature has also emerged in the intersection of mindfulness and equity, some of which is Renshaw and Phan (2023) in the area of equity-focused mindfulness programs, studies on mindfulness and anti-bias in teachers (Ash, Helminen, Yamashita & Felver, 2022) Vacarr (2001) who explores privilege and oppression, Berila (2016) who uses mindfulness in higher education to help students uncover personal bias and privilege through embodied experience, listening, and

witnessing, and Magee (2016) who has led the field in blending contemplative practices with Critical Race Theory through using ColorInsight practices. Although this would be a problem with secular public education, some have called for mindfulness to be re-anchored in its Eastern traditions. Reorienting mindfulness to "right" mindfulness in Buddhist philosophy to include awareness of racial suffering would "help shift the use of mindfulness as a practice for personal wellness to mindfulness as a practice for racial justice and freedom" (Romano & Chang, 2022, p. 7). More recently, researchers found that a mindfulness intervention helped strengthen preservice teachers' awareness and self-regulation. They reported evidence that showed the mindfulness intervention decreased preservice teacher race bias and improved teaching through behavior change and perception of students (Hirshberg, Flook, Moss, Enright & Davidson, 2022). But, this intersection is fairly new, and there is a long way to go in building more understanding of how mindfulness practices can intertwine with this more critical bent. Situating mindfulness in sociocultural framing of emotions in teaching may be one way.

Mindfulness and emotion studies in education are primed for alignment. Parker Palmer (1998) critiqued educators' "excessive regard for the powers of the intellect" and the obsession with "objective knowledge" (p. 61), but especially at the expense of other ways of knowing, like emotion knowing. Viewing emotion linked to cognition had been at the expense of understanding emotion as connected to bodily sensations (Ahmed, 2020). Yet mindfulness allows both embodiment and the analytical aspects of inquiry about emotions to align (Winans, 2012). It cultivates a "greater capacity to distinguish feelings from bodily sensations unrelated to emotional arousal and to understand and describe the complex nature of emotional states. Thus, mindfulness would be correlated positively with measures of emotional awareness" (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 234). In addition,

> Contemplative work seems especially appropriate for engaging with emotions, given the way that emotions connect body and mind, individual and social worlds, inner and outer worlds - and given the ways that emotions reframe and enrich our understanding of knowledge (Winans, 2012, p. 160).

As opposed to taking a purely psychologized approach to understanding emotions and mindfulness, a more interactional approach looks at studying how emotions reflect social relations – that emotions do not just exist in the human body, but in the "social body" and as shaped by the "ecologies and political economies in which they arise (Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 1990).

An exploration of mindfulness and emotions can involve both individual and structural elements. Rather than the intention to put the locus of control - and responsibilizing - entirely in the teacher, research could explore how teachers conceptualize emotions in teacher education from an angle that understands emotions to be individually felt but also socially constructed.

*Gaps and Ways Forward*

Despite the critical role emotions play in teaching, the literature base is still fairly underdeveloped. In the current landscape of education research, shockingly little attention is paid to emotions. However central emotions are to teaching, the dominant narrative being propelled is that the ability to work with and through emotions is seen as simply a natural part of one's disposition, or an intrinsic trait – you either have it, or you do not. The implication here is the "essentialist" trap, pitting emotions as "second nature," "natural," "a gift," and "completely instinctive" (Goldstein & Lake, 2000, p. 865). This kind of characterization of teaching expertise is a trap for teacher learning – if this is intrinsic, then how could this be something to learn or

refine over time? In addition, if they are individual and internal, then the way to understand them continues to be solely an inward, introspective turn, which "deflects attention from social life and its possible implication in the very language of emotion" (Lutz & Abu-Loghod, 1990, p. 3). Forbes (2016) also makes a compelling statement about the danger of this perception of emotion when he says, "the therapeutic culture and industry regard stress itself as an individual, privatized problem instead of seeing it as embedded in problematic social relations and social conditions of people's lives" (p. 1267). For however long this remains underexplored, we risk the continued devaluation of emotions and their devalued position as the "invisible" aspects of learning how to teach.

So far, what remains unexplored in research "are the need to develop pedagogies that promote empowerment and teacher self-development" (Zembylas, 2003, p. 113). To centralize emotions as powerful elements of teaching, my research here attends to how teachers construct and navigate emotions within dynamics of power. "Power relations determine what can, cannot, or must be said about self and emotion, what is taken to be true or false about them, and what only some individuals can say about them…Emotion discourses establish, assert, challenge, or reinforce power or status differences" (Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 1990, p. 14).

Empowerment can arise from deepening our understanding of how emotion rules are enacted in teacher education. Trainor (2008) encourages asking, "what emotioned rules do we teach, intentionally or not, and what political projects do those rules, again intentionally or not, support?" (p. 28). To teach in pedagogically transformative ways, would teachers actively resist or transform current emotional rules? Winans (2010) points out that "schooling" individuals emotionally would seem at odds with the goals of critical pedagogy that underlie her approach. Instead, Worsham's (1998) approach is to explore emotion rules but focus on individual agency.

"If our commitment is to real individual and social change…the work of decolonization must occur at the affective level, not only to reconstitute the emotional life of the individual, but also, and more importantly, to restructure the feeling or mood that characterizes an age" (p. 216).

An intellectual approach that only centers on systems of power is incomplete, as is a purely psychological approach to individual emotions. A new way of knowing stitches the two together in a way that deepens awareness of teachers' emotional experiences as *reciprocal* processes between individuals *and* socialization – or in person-environment interaction. Both frames independently – the individual and the social – offer insight about emotion. However, Chubbuck and Zembylas (2008) suggest an approach which locates emotions "in the liminal space *between* individual and social constructivist approaches, challenging the divisions between individual and social, private and public" (p. 278, emphasis mine). Only a few scholars so far have begun to align a social/structural orientation with an exploration of the *feeling* of emotion. As Winans (2010) recognizes, "emotions and deeply held beliefs are ultimately embodied experiences" (p. 488). Ahmed (2020) leans on psychologist William James (1890) to underscore the importance of understanding emotions as the "feeling of bodily change" (p. 5). What expands this exploration is integrating embodied experiences of emotion with attention to systems of power. This excerpt from Resmaa Menakem's book (2017), *My Grandmother's Hands* poignantly illustrates how embodied feelings are also embedded within systems of power:

> If you're a white American, your body has probably inherited a different legacy of trauma that affects white bodies – and, at times, may rekindle old flight, flee, or freeze responses. This trauma goes back centuries – at least as far back as the Middle Ages – and has been passed down from one white body to another for dozens of generations.

> White bodies traumatized each other in Europe for centuries before they encountered Black and red bodies. This carnage and trauma profoundly affected white bodies and the expressions of their DNA…this historical trauma is closely linked to the development of white-body supremacy in America (p. 11).

Emotions are not purely bodily phenomenon, but ignoring their embodiment is deeply problematic. An orientation that sees emotion existing in the space between sociocultural and "psychodynamic" (Zembylas, 2007) allows for alignment of embodied emotions to systems of power in order to "deconstruct the power relations that normalize [teachers'] lives in the classroom" (p. 295). It may be that internal emotional awareness can help teachers recognize how to "destabilize and denaturalize the regimes that demand" (p. 299) the regulation of certain emotions. Constructing meaning in this bidirectional way is critical to connect individuals' experiences of emotions to systems of power, recognizing emotions as psychobiological but at the same time not being "forced to concede that it must be "natural" and not shaped by social interaction" (Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 1990, p. 12). Rather, "the reality of emotion is social, cultural, political, and historical, just as is its current location in the psyche or the natural body" (p. 19). Stitching together emotions as embodied experiences *while* connecting them to systems of power opens up new ways of understanding and acting. That orientation is what motivates and frames my research here.

## Theoretical Framework

In this section I focus on how existing theory informs my framework. A theoretical framework is a "tentative theory of the phenomena you are investigating" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 39) and can consist of experiential knowledge, existing theory and research, pilot and exploratory research, and thought experiments. A useful theory acts as a spotlight that sheds light on relationships that might otherwise be unseen (Maxwell, 2013) and which provides a new way of understanding things. This theoretical framework also served as my analytical framework, which I will explain in my Methodology chapter.

My research is framed by a sociocultural perspective, which takes the approach that peoples' unique social and cultural backgrounds frame their interactions with the world around them, and contribute to their interpretation of it. Within this sociocultural lens, I use the theory of "figured worlds" which comes from Holland et al.'s (1998) theory of identity and agency. I first describe why I chose figured worlds as my theoretical framework, and then I describe how the concepts of positional identity and improvisation further frame my approach to and understanding of this research. Last, I detail the ways that emotional labor also frames this study.

### *Figured Worlds*

In asking about 1) the emotions that PSTs experienced around teaching, and 2) how mindfulness framed their emotions in the process of learning to teach, I chose to frame PSTs experiences as arising out of their interactions with various figured worlds. I use the idea of "figured worlds" (Holland et al., 1998) as a framework for studying the emotional experiences of PSTs because of its orientation that these emotional experiences are both individually *and*

socially and culturally determined. Like Campbell, Horn, Nolen and Ward (2008), I needed a framework that allowed for sensitivities to individuals and the teaching world they met - and in addition, the mindfulness world that participants were introduced to.

A figured world is the “socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 52). Each of the worlds the PST orbits within - teacher education and mindfulness, for example - can be understood as “as if” worlds (Holland et al., 1998). In these "as if" cultural worlds, "people have the propensity to be drawn to, recruited for, and formed in these worlds and to become active in and passionate about them. People's identities and agency are formed dialectically and dialogically in these worlds" (p. 49). In other words: social contexts guide individuals to interact within and help constitute the figured world which, in turn, continues to help form one’s identity.

While identity helps us understand the individual, identities are "constructed through culturally available descriptors, narratives, and archetypes, embedding and linking the individuals in the contexts around them” (p. 62). These contexts can include social interactions and cultural artifacts. These worlds may also have their own characters, perspectives, and norms that are constantly reified and developed by the individuals and their interactions with others within the world. Through these interactions with others and the figured world in which they inhabit, individuals continue to construct meaning out of the world and themselves.

I decided to use the figured worlds framework because it centered around how various cultures come together in complex ways, and allowed me to understand how cultural norms (understood through figured worlds) and individual agency interact (p. 124). This framework allowed for sensitivity to the individual and the worlds of teaching and mindfulness that collide.

As Rush and Fecho (2017) note, we are never just part of one figured world, but rather we "slide among" various figured worlds constantly. For teachers, learning to teach does not happen in the classroom entirely, or in any one world entirely. Learning occurs as PSTs work through, with, and across various figured worlds. A figured worlds approach understands that emotions can be created in one figured world and then transported as a cultural script into another - for example, emotions constructed in a PST's childhood that get carried into the figured world of teacher education. This can create conflict - and is why a figured worlds theory is useful. PST emotional experiences that arise in a new figured world can often be understood through how they were brought into that new world, and where they came from. The figured worlds theory is one way to talk about that.

*Positional Identity*

> New teachers do not simply enter teaching with a professional identity intact, nor do they acquire it on their own. Rather it is deeply connected to the communities in which they learn to teach and to their interactions with colleagues, students, and families as they engage in learning pedagogical practice (Sisson, Whitington, Shin, Thiel, Comber, 2022, p. 37).

Similar to Campbell at al. (2008), using a figured worlds framework in my study allows an exploration of the emotions that were constructed in the relationship between PST identities and their learning, with an understanding that "identity shapes and is shaped by their learning" (p. 62). Identity shapes how the PST participants engaged in teacher education and how they oriented their learning through the mindfulness intervention. The participants in this study, like

the learners in Rush and Fecho's study, "hold simultaneous membership of various degrees in a multitude of figured worlds, each in dialogue with the others as we constantly construct our sense of identity" (p. 124).

With multiple memberships in a multitude of figured worlds, it makes sense that identities are not static or fixed, but rather are in continuous formation as individuals interact with the world - *worlds* - around them. In a sort of interactive dance, identity mediates what happens in a figured world and figured worlds also shape an individual's identity. Horn, Nolen, Ward and Campbell (2008) "conceptualize individual agents as operating within their various figured worlds by asserting and receiving different identities" (p. 62). Yet while identities are not fixed, pre-existing roles and previous scripts in a different figured world can exert a powerful influence on an evolving identity.

In this study, I focus selectively on the idea of *positional identity* to explain how PSTs experienced emotions as they adapted identities across timescales and when figured worlds seemed to clash. Holland et al. (1998) define positional identities as "day to day and on the ground relations of power, deference, and entitlement, social affiliation and distance - with the social-interactional, social-relational structures of the lived world (p. 127). They are features of the individuals in specific figured worlds. Positional identities are linked to relations and hierarchies of power, privilege, and status. Positional identity centers how race, gender, class, etc. frame how one positions self in social contexts like a program, or a school (Moore, 2008). In fact, all of the PSTs in this study exemplified similar positional identities tied to gender and race. In the figured worlds of their childhood, their positional identities as white females led them through experiences with a certain amount of privilege and power. Taking up positional identities as white women gave them a sense of their own social position and relative social

position. Because positional identities may cut across figured worlds, this invites an exploration of how a positional identity as a white female can exert powerful influence over how a PST makes meaning and experiences emotion in a new figured world. Taking up certain positional identities can lead to silencing or elevating oneself in a certain figured world - such as a new one. Using the idea of positional identities helped me shine a lens on the emotional experiences of my PST participants as they entered the new teaching world as white women.

*Improvisation*

In addition to positional identities, I decided to use improvisation as another one of the constructs in the figured worlds framework for my study. A figured worlds approach accounts for how individuals are influenced by their social context while also understanding individuals' abilities to resist these influences and *improvise* their own way - sometimes rejecting and sometimes acquiescing to these influences (Rush & Fecho, 2017). Even within constraints, individuals "improvise their own ways through/beyond them", p. 124). Improvisations are "impromptu actions that occur when our past, brought to the present as habitus, meets with a particular combination of circumstances and conditions for which we have no set response" (Holland, 1998, p. 18). Within and among figured worlds - especially where they sometimes "mesh, bump, or collide" (Rush & Fecho, 2017, p. 128) - individuals improvise. Colliding figured worlds provide prime opportunity for improvisation as individuals "find ways of coping" in their unique circumstances where previous habitus does not suffice.

Improvisation gives us a lens for thinking about human agency within the constraints of worlds structured by cultural norms, and by the limitations of individuals' own identities in those worlds. Improvisation is situated exactly where "cultural norms and individual agency interact"

(Holland et al 1998, p. 124). Instead of focusing on "'webs of constraint that limit agency and possibility," (p. 277), improvisation highlights how an individual uses bits and pieces of their cultural resources to meet novel circumstances. "Improvisation within figured worlds provides an explanation of how individuals subtly modify the identifications attributed by social and institutional norms" (Rush & Fecho 2017, p. 124). I was drawn to improvisation for the same reason I chose the figured worlds framework - for its dual focus on the individual *and* culture.

Improvisation shapes identity through individual agency. Agency lies in peoples' improvisations in response to unique and particular situations. Holland et al. (1998) call improvisations "crafted in the moment" one of the "margins of human agency" (p. 278). Similarly said, improvisation is "individual behaviors that work outside the lines drawn by cultural expectations" (Rush & Fecho, 2017, p. 124). Agency and identity are linked here through the ways that individuals improvise - exercising agency- within and outside the limits of social institutions. It is through improvisation within figured worlds that individuals "subtly modify the identifications attributed by social and institutional norms" of those figured worlds (Rush & Fecho, 2017). And it is through these ongoing modifications where new identities are constituted. Graue et al (2015) describe how improvisation allows for the formation of new identities through the space that is opened when culture and individuals interact. So, one of the possible outcomes of improvisation is that a new identity is formed. "The constraints are overpowering, yet not hermetically sealed. Improvisation can become the basis for a reformed subjectivity (Holland et al, 1998, p. 18).

In my study, participants were forced to improvise when previous scripts and cultural resources did not work in new worlds. Again, improvisation is where "cultural norms and individual agency interact" (Rush and Fecho, 2017, p. 124). A white woman is driven by

cultural norms around race and gender, but her actions are not "hermetically sealed" (Holland et al, 1998, p. 18). In new figured worlds a pre-service teacher faces numerous novel circumstances where previous habitus is insufficient. So, what does she do? She finds new ways of responding to meet these novel situations - she improvises. As I found with the three PST participants, the space in new worlds where they acted out their identity in situations that called them to question, adapt, modify, and reject various perspectives - this was improvisation. And it was rife with emotions. Sometimes it resulted in the PST doubling down on their identity in a new world. Sometimes it caused them to question their identity, leading to the aforementioned "reformed subjectivity." Emotional experiences arose especially when preservice teachers became aware that their previous habitus was insufficient and improvisation was necessary.

*Emotional labor*

To fully explore my research questions and maintain a perspective on the interaction between both the individual and culture, I also use "emotional labor" as a construct through which to frame my study and understand my participants. I have already introduced the idea of emotional labor in the literature review section. I will outline it below to lay out its use as a framework in my study. First, Sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1990) uses a working definition of emotion that I employ as a basis for understanding emotions in this study. They include four interrelated elements:

a) Appraisals of a situation

b) Changes in bodily sensations

c) The free or inhibited display of expressive gesture

d) A cultural label applied to specific constellations of the first three elements

Bodily sensations and the cultural label are particularly important to my study as they highlight the ways PSTs are both *feeling* the emotions, possibly facilitated through mindful awareness, and the ways that this sociocultural framing sees emotion as inseparable from social and cultural forces.

Emotional labor gets codified as a script within the figured world of teaching. In a teaching context, emotional labor explains teachers' effort to manage their feelings and expressions of emotions. This is done in alignment with beliefs and expectations that have been culturally and collectively constructed, and that define the emotional rules that teachers enact (Yin & Lee, 2012). And as Winograd (2003) notes, teaching meets all three of Hochschild's (1983) criteria for work that requires emotional labor because teaching requires face-to-face contact; teaching requires the production of some emotional state; and external control over teachers' emotional labor comes from established cultural expectations and professional norms.

Teachers' regulation of emotions is closely tied with emotional labor, as I discussed previously. Emotion regulation is "the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions" (Gross, 1998, p. 275, as cited in Grandey, 2000). While some of the literature on emotional labor discounts the satisfaction of this labor, which includes favorable feelings like satisfaction, self-esteem, and even well-being (Zembylas, 2004), thinking of emotional labor as having positive and negative consequences may obscure the more complex question of how emotional rules constrict teachers and teaching practices. It also decentralizes the amount of effort exerted into management of teachers' feelings, especially in conflicting messages about emotional expectations – this is poignantly captured right in the title of their article, "Be passionate, but be rational as well" (Yin & Lee, 2012).

This framework helps spotlight PSTs' emotional experience – how they are perceiving the managing, displaying, and valuing of emotions that might otherwise remain invisible. This theory also spotlights how mindfulness may have its own set of "emotion rules" that may interact with the emotion rules and labor of teaching. "Emotion rules" serve to codify values and norms around emotions and emotional expression (Trainor, 2008). Many studies on emotional labor document teachers who, in effect, "actively try to manage what we feel in accordance with latent rules" (Hochschild, 1979, p. 571).

Using emotional labor as a framework provides a way to explore a mindfulness intervention in a way that transforms and empowers through making emotional labor more visible. "Recognizing that teachers and students are agents in constructing such cultures, educators, teachers, and administrators are more likely to grasp the complexities and possibilities of emotional labor" (Zembylas, 2004, p. 319). An exploration of how power is connected to the "invisible" aspects of emotion work of teachers is needed (Zembylas, 2003). In practice, emotional labor can facilitate exploitation of the emotional self to the organization's needs (Hochschild, 1983). Given that mindfulness engenders greater emotional awareness, this may prime teachers for understanding the interaction between themselves as emotional beings, and the emotion rules and labor they may create, enact, and resist. This study is not about identifying positive and negative impacts of emotional labor – although both the stress and burnout of emotional labor, as well as self-efficacy and joy it brings, are documented in research. Instead, this study uses emotional labor as a frame to understand how teachers construct their experiences of emotion in the context of a mindfulness intervention. As Boler (1999) says, emotions are "sites of social control" (p. xviii). In deepening this understanding, "one acknowledges profound

interconnections with others, and how emotions, beliefs, and actions are collaboratively co-implicated" (Boler, 1999, p. 187).

*Conclusion*

Together, figured worlds and emotional labor provide a useful framework for understanding multiple contexts that surround a teacher's emotional experiences. In shaping identity, the figured worlds framework attends to both individual agency and cultural and social institutions - especially the ways in which preservice teachers operate in figured worlds where emotional rules are created and abound. The emotional labor framework also sits at the theoretical intersection of the individual and their context, in the way it visibilizes the construction of emotions. These sociocultural approaches represent a shift away from individuals and instead centers the way emotional experiences are situated through interactions between individuals and the contexts in which they live.

# Methodology

*Background and Purpose*

This qualitative case study was carved out of a larger, mixed-methods research project that was a collaboration between three departments at UW-Madison: the Center for Healthy Minds (CHM), Curriculum & Instruction (C&I), and Educational Psychology; and two community partners: the UW Health Mindfulness Program and Madison Metropolitan School District. The larger project was designed as a randomized controlled study to assess impacts of a mindfulness intervention on cohorts of preservice teachers enrolled in UW-Madison's Elementary Education Program. That study focused on stress and psychological and physiological health concerns, improvement in instructional behaviors, and classroom quality. Qualitative data were generated as part of this larger study. It is from this qualitative data that I conducted my research.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the emotions that pre-service teachers experience around teaching within the context of a mindfulness intervention. I employed case study methodology to do this, first by examining PSTs experiences of emotions and then situating their emotional experiences within the mindfulness intervention. Hyland (2013) problematizes the "inward" turn and states that mindfulness is really about reconnection with the world. Mindfulness allows clarity of vision and stability that opens space for "passionate motivation to engage with the world" (p. 6). It is in this spirit that I designed a study that explored PSTs' emotional experiences within the mindfulness context to push past a perspective that uses mindfulness to individualize and instead use it as a bridge to critical awareness of social structures – to "connect their experience with social conditions" (Forbes, 2016, p. 1265). My aim was to use this mindfulness intervention context to explore these teachers' experiences in a way

that makes visible their emotional experience and their emotional work. In borrowed words, "the task is to uncover, evaluate, and challenge the often problematic, implicit, unacknowledged cultural contexts of moral values, norms, and meanings hidden in the background" (Forbes, 2016, p. 1266). In this chapter I will identify and explain my research methods.

*Research Questions and Approach*

The questions that guided my research were:

1. How do preservice teachers experience emotions around learning to teach?
2. How do preservice teachers use mindfulness to frame their emotions in the process of learning to teach?

To address these, I aligned with a social constructivist, or interpretivist paradigm. This study explored the social meanings participants construct in their particular contexts. As opposed to positivistic traditions where truth exists objectively, Lincoln and Guba (1982) describe the notion that meaning is constructed, rather than uncovered. An interpretive approach makes the invisible visible (Matias & Zembylas, 2014) and prioritizes the process by which something happens – in this case, how PSTs conceptualized emotion within a mindfulness intervention. Again, this study was situated in a wider research project that relied on an intervention and randomized-controlled design model. In distinguishing qualitative from quantitative inquiry, Stake (1995) points to the difference of searching for *cause* versus searching for *happenings*. Especially in case study methodology, which I will explain below, the aim was not to establish a relationship between variables but "to see what some phenomenon means as it is socially enacted within a particular case" (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 10). I did not - nor could I – address issues

of effectiveness or causal claims about the mindfulness intervention. Instead, this interpretivist approach uncovered how participants sought to understand their world and develop varied and "subjective meanings of their experiences" (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). In this work, the goal was to rely on participants' views of their own experience as much as possible, suiting qualitative inquiry's orientation that subjective meanings are "negotiated socially and historically" (p. 21).

*Collective Instrumental Case Study*

This project took the form of a case study in the qualitative or interpretive tradition. Case study is an appropriate methodology to study complex phenomena in actual, real-world contexts (Yin, 1994). It is optimal here because this study centered around a "how" question and sought to capture the uniqueness of a particular phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). While some say that case study is a choice of what to study (Stake, 2000), it is also considered a qualitative approach (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Merriam, 1998) or method of inquiry (Stake, 2000) because it guides decisions about study design, from the questions asked to the interpretation of findings. Creswell (2013) outlines case study as a research methodology in defining it as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection" (p. 74). My study has a "clearly identifiable case[s] with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the case" (p. 74).

More specifically, I used a multiple, instrumental case study approach (Yin, 2003), or, using Stake's language (2000), a collective instrumental case study approach. An instrumental case study - as opposed to an intrinsic case study, where the reason for study is in the case itself- is based on my interest in how mindfulness gets taken up in educational contexts, and the

question of how emotions can be centralized in preservice teacher support. Because that question motivates my work, my study is an instrumental case study.

A collective case study is appropriate because in order to illustrate an issue and study emotions and mindfulness, I focused on individual cases. These individuals were situated in a cohort model within the teacher education program, and it was to the cohort that the mindfulness intervention was given. I initially considered the cohort to be the bounded case. However, as qualitative research often goes, as I generated the data I realized that I was actually studying each individual's emotion experiences *situated within* their entire teacher education program, as well as their experiences in their practicum and student teaching classrooms. The case became clearly structured around individual PSTs with particular attention to how they were embedded within larger systems. "The same single-case study may involve units of analysis at more than one level" (Yin, 2018, p. 51).

The case is a "specific, a complex, functioning thing" (Stake, 2000, p. 2) as a bounded system. Individual cases were examined to explore the emotional experiences of preservice teachers. These individual cases making up the collective were each defined as a bounded system (Stake, 2000) because I was interested in the experiences and thoughts of each participant enrolled in the larger mixed-methods research study. It was the individual experience I wanted to understand. Other ways I bound these cases were by the boundaries of their teacher education experience, including the University and public school-based components. And finally, they were bounded temporally as this research study took place over two semesters of their time in the teacher education program. This bounded system structured the methods I employed in this study and that I will continue to describe below.

*Research Site and Participants*

The four-semester teacher education program at UW-Madison enrolls 100 new students each year in different cohorts of ~25 students each. For the wider study, over a period of 2 years, cohorts in their third semester were recruited, for a series of four "waves" of two cohorts each (total of 8 cohorts recruited). In each wave, one cohort was randomized for treatment to receive the mindfulness intervention, and the other was randomized as the control cohort. Consenting PSTs and supervisors in the treatment cohorts engaged in a 9-week modified form of the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course (Kabat-Zinn, 1982) in their third semester of the teacher education program (further detailed in a section below). This "PST Well-being Training" (2015) consisted of nine weekly 1.5 hour classes and two 4-hour intensives. These PSTs concurrently engaged in classroom practicum experiences as part of their teacher education program. In the semester immediately following this third semester mindfulness intervention, PSTs began their full-time student teaching semester. In this semester, treatment cohorts also were given audio recorded mindfulness exercises during their weekly student teaching seminars in order to continue their mindfulness practice. Once a month they got a visit from a mindfulness instructor to lead a short practice and reflection.

*Mindfulness Intervention*

The mindfulness intervention (referred to as the PST Well-being Training) was a 9-week modified form of the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course (Kabat-Zinn, 1982). This took place in participants' third semester of their teacher education program, before their last semester in the program in which PSTs would be full-time student teaching in public school classrooms. The MBSR model developed and mainstreamed by John Kabat-Zinn (2003) is held

as the standard for systematic training in self-regulation of stress and emotion. The "PST Well-being Training" (2015) consisted of nine weekly 1.5 hour classes and two 4-hour intensives on separate weekend days. Participants were also asked to practice formally on their own for 10-15 minutes a day.

The course curriculum was co-developed by a lead researcher on the wider mixed-methods project and several mindfulness practitioners, but largely based off of Kabat-Zinn's MBSR curriculum (2003). To understand the vision and intention of the mindfulness intervention from the standpoint of the wider mixed-methods study, it is helpful to look at the curriculum purpose, as stated in the course curriculum: "To develop intrapersonal skills that support well-being, effective classroom management, and persistence in teaching" (2015). Key skills woven throughout the curriculum included:

- Self awareness (of bodily sensations, emotions, and thoughts)
- Self-regulation (learning to respond, honing stability and flexibility of attention)
- Acceptance (being able to rest into the experience as it is in the present moment)
- Non-judgment/equanimity (not needing to change the experience in any way, even if uncomfortable; being able to maintain a sense of rest, ease or calmness as positive, negative, and neutral experiences rise and fall
- Mindfulness (focusing on what is arising internally and externally)
- Kindness (getting in touch with and developing basic sense of goodwill towards others – and one's own condition)

In addition, key points of practice embedded throughout included curiosity, understanding experience as impermanent, attachment and aversion, and interconnectedness.

Key to my study on emotions, much of the curriculum's focus includes self-awareness, self-regulation, and non-judgment of emotions. In fact, there are nearly 30 direct references to "emotion" in the curriculum, including an entire lesson in the seventh week titled "Working with emotions," with an explicit purpose to understand and experience the rising and fading away of emotions, observing the experience of emotions in the context of the mind and body, and cultivating the attitude of patience. Please see Appendix A for this sample lesson, as well as Appendix B for a layout of the mindfulness intervention's purpose, key skills, and background.

*Participants*

For my research I selected the final participating wave's treatment cohort from which to draw individual cases for several reasons. First, the previous waves helped smooth out general research logistics such as interview protocols and the course curricula, which was continuously adapted to better reflect PSTs' needs – such as pedagogical decisions and digitizing their practice records and audio practices. Second, this was one of the only waves with some gender diversity, having one male participant. And third, this cohort had one of the highest participation rates of all the previous cohort waves. While the wider study's qualitative component was designed with a different research question in mind, my preliminary read of the available data, in addition to my interpretive memoes during the data collection period, demonstrated that there were substantial interview data on PSTs' emotions and emotional experiences of teaching.

In total, there were seven PSTs in this final treatment wave who became consenting participants in the wider study, as well as one of their supervisors. All seven participants identified as white. Six of seven identified as female, one as male. The supervisor identified as a woman of color. The mindfulness instructors that taught their intervention identified as white

women. The focus of this cohort was Middle Childhood to Early Adolescence with an English as a Second Language focus. As a cohort, they were each all placed in different practicum and student teaching placements in area public schools, but attended weekly seminar and classes together. During the mindfulness intervention in their third semester, in addition to hours in practicum and the weekly practicum seminar, participants were also taking a language acquisition course, a methods course on teaching mathematics, and a methods course on teaching science. In the following semester when they became full-time student teaching, they were not only attending to all facets of student teaching, but participating in the weekly student teaching seminar, an ESL/Bilingual methods course, and completing other requirements such as a rigorous performance assessment for their program and teaching licensure.

I recognize that sampling – whose stories I am presenting - is a choice, and those choices impact the research. Due to limitations of time and resources, I was not able to focus my analysis on all of the consenting participants. I was also driven by the need to elaborate deeply on emerging conceptual ideas to develop the robustness of my emerging categories and theory during my data generation phase of the study. So, to focus my analysis I chose three participants (of the seven consenting preservice teacher participants) to study more closely. I chose these three among a typology of "emotional styles" in order to explore the phenomenon at different styles of emotional experiences, as I explain below:

Participating PSTs consented to a battery of computer-based tests and surveys as part of the quantitative data collection. One of these was the ESQ: Emotional Styles Questionnaire (Kesebir et al., 2019). This questionnaire is highly correlated with personality as it pertains to emotionality, from low healthy emotionality to high healthy emotionality. The ESQ is also correlated to other variables like positive and negative affect, psychological well-being, and

emotional management. I took all seven participant scores on the ESQ and put them on a continuum. Each was selected from being in roughly the high, medium, and low score areas of ESQ data. The three PSTs selected represented different dispositions on a continuum of "emotionality." I used this strategy because sampling across a variety of emotional styles suggests potentially interesting differences in emotional experiences and also their perception of the mindfulness intervention.

*Data Collection and Methods*

To answer my research questions, I focused on the final treatment wave cohort and used previously-collected qualitative data from participants (generated in the wider study) related to their emotions and experience in the mindfulness intervention. Other boundaries of the cases also included data collection pertinent to PSTs' experiences, such as artifacts describing the mindfulness intervention (i.e. language in the course curriculum) and interviews with the mindfulness instructors. Data included that which concerned the subjects of the case – the "phenomenon," as well as data to ideally capture the "context" (Yin, 2018). Data such as the interview protocols were actually designed to complement the wider mixed-methods study. But my process of participant selection, described above, helped align the data available with my research questions on PSTs emotional experiences.

**Artifacts**. Since context is an important element of case study, and this mode of inquiry recognizes that the case to be studied is a "complex entity located in a milieu or situation embedded in a number of contexts of backgrounds" (Stake, 2000, p. 449), I included documents related to the overall study design and mindfulness intervention, including record-keeping artifacts like proposals, progress reports, and planning documents that supported the

development of the mindfulness intervention. I also looked at the course curriculum itself to gain insight into the practices and concepts taught – and the meanings that the mindfulness language and practices gave to emotions, to understand how the intervention may have framed PSTs emotional experiences.

**Interviews**. Interviews with each of the participants were the core of my data. I interviewed each participant three times, for roughly 45 minutes each. Interviews were semi-structured. The first interview with consenting participants in the mindfulness intervention cohort took place before the mindfulness intervention began. The second interview occurred towards the end of the training, and the final interview took place the following semester. All of these interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed in full. Please see Appendix C for these written interview protocols.

"The qualitative interview is a construction site of knowledge. An interview is literally an inter view, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest (Kvale, 1996, p. 2). Without observational access, these interviews provided a "direct and powerful way of learning about people's behavior and the context in which this occurs" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 103). Further, for researchers interested in the subjective experience of emotions, interviews are most appropriate (Sutton &Wheatley, 2003). Especially for a field that is so new, they allow for illumination of initial patterns. Again, the interview protocols were developed as part of the wider mixed-methods study, but offer insight into PSTs emotional experiences related to teaching, as well as their experience in the "PST Well-being Training" (2015) intervention.

**PSTs and Supervisor**. I conducted three 1-hour semi-structured interviews with all seven consenting cohort PSTs and their supervisor over the course of the study. The first interview

occurred midway through the 9-week course and asked PSTs about how it was going, what they thought of it, what tools they had developed to become more responsive to students, and about their own stress and emotion. In addition, this first interview elicited from the supervisor questions about how she was observing PSTs taking up mindfulness practices. The second interview with participants took place immediately following the 9-week course and centered around their reflection of the course, including eliciting connections being made between mindfulness constructs and teaching practice. The last interview occurred midway through participants' fourth and final semester in the teacher education program in which they were student-teaching in classrooms full-time and receiving "booster" audio mindfulness practices weekly as a cohort in their student teaching seminar. This final interview explored their evolving mindfulness practice, the implementation of mindfulness within teacher education, and final thoughts about connections between mindfulness and teaching. I approached these interviews with structured questions but flexibility allowed for a natural conversation to occur, with questions for clarification or follow-up.

**Mindfulness instructors**. Three mindfulness instructors were involved in the design and implementation of the "PST Well-being Training" (2015) throughout the waves of the study. I conducted a semi-structured group interview at the completion of the 9-week course with this cohort to gather instructors' opinions about how the course went, thoughts on its implementation within teacher education, and their perception of PSTs experiences of the intervention.

**Quantitative Dat**a. As part of the wider mixed-methods study, quantitative data was also available. I used the ESQ Questionnaire to guide my sampling technique, as I described above.

*Data analysis*

Here I describe the multiple phases of my data analysis. In case study research, the goal is to describe the case and context (Creswell, 2013). I pursued data analysis with a priority on capturing diverse participant perspectives and letting the voices of participants come through as often as possible. Of course, my interpretations are my own voice, but as Stake remarked, it is the participants' interpretations to seek - not the researcher's. And as Stake (1995) says, "research depends on interpretation" (p. 41).

After writing memos following each interview that captured my tentative thoughts, all interviews were transcribed and uploaded to MaxQDA. MaxQDA is a computer software program used to compile data, code, categorize, and memo. In addition to interview transcripts, I also uploaded and included in my data set the memos I wrote after each interview, as well as artifacts like the mindfulness curriculum.

My initial read through of the data helped me develop an initial set of analytic codes. Strauss (1987) talks about the goal of coding to "fracture" the data to rearrange them into categories that can aid understanding that builds to theoretical insights. My data analysis process included both inductive and deductive coding methods (Maxwell, 2013). I used words and phrases from participants in multiple rounds of descriptive coding (Saldana, 2016). I captured where moments felt emotionally charged and where participants used feeling words (frustrated, stressed, love, etc) but also "in vivo" codes that captured some of the emotive language. I also developed codes from the concept of emotion coding (Saldana, 2016), such as discourse clues around emotional labor or emotion talk, references to emotional aspects to teaching, specific emotion references, emotional "arcs," and statements that include emotion markers like "I feel." Saldana (2016) describes emotion coding as part of affective methods of coding that "investigate

subjective qualities of human experience" (p. 124) that label recalled emotions of the participant or "inferred by the researcher about the participant" (p. 125). I was particularly aware of "hot spots of affective intensity" (Niccolini, 2013), p. 3). Some of these emotion codes also overlapped with the deductive codes I used.

For example, because I was interested in participants' emotional experiences, I also used Hochschild's (1990) working definition of emotion that I employed as a basis for coding for emotions in this study. The definition includes four interrelated elements, some of which I was able to code for in my interview data: appraisals of a situation, changes in bodily sensations, and a cultural label applied to specific constellations of the other elements. Bodily sensations as participants relayed, and the cultural label were particularly interesting as they speak to the ways participants were both feeling the emotions and connection to social and cultural labeling of those emotions. Other deductive codes originated from key concepts provided by the figured worlds theoretical framework, including identifying cultural scripts and clues about participant's figured worlds. These are a compilation of constructs that I amalgamated from researchers like Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), Hochschild (1983), and Morris and Feldman (1993) that I used to develop codes inspired by my emotional labor framework:

1) Managing emotions to achieve goals of teaching
2) Talking about characteristics of teaching; ideal qualities of a teacher
3) Referencing effort, control, self-regulation (including antecedent and response-focused)
4) Referring to "appropriate" emotions, and implicit display rules, emotion rules
5) Cues of surface and deep acting
6) Talk that signifies emotional congruence or dissonance

Finally, I used emotion coding simultaneously with deductive codes derived from key concepts from the mindfulness curriculum (e.g. emotional awareness, bodily sensations, emotion regulation), to help answer my second research question about how the mindfulness intervention framed PSTs emotion experiences. I made sure to also code with an eye towards instances where emotions seemed "absent" so those data were not "lost" in the subsequent phases.

Throughout this coding process, I wrote on-going analytic memos to preserve my shifting insights across the data. It felt like a next phase of research when I began writing more extensive, analytic memos. I wrote memos on relationships and patterns, compelling quotes and why I felt captivated by them, my analytic process, and emerging ideas about categories. These categories I explored in greater depth and began to organize into broader themes that captured the complexity and variability of experiences. Categorizing "places the original set of relationships in context, with a different categorical structure" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 112). I organized these themes in order to create a picture of the emotional phenomenon described by the participants. I surfaced themes across these memos and from categorizing and re-categorizing the excerpts attached to the codes I used. I also used what my advisor called "connecting strategies" like writing profiles and vignettes that put the concepts back together in context after fracturing it through coding. The vignettes (Graue & Walsh, 1998) became data I coded later. These strategies helped me surface themes and look for relationships that connected into a coherent whole. At this time, I was meeting regularly with the qualitative research team, including my advisor and another graduate student. It was extremely helpful to be able to check our interpretations together.

After fracturing and putting the data back together with these strategies, I went back through the data with new analytical lenses, and re-coded and categorized with a new layer of codes that seemed cross-cutting (for example: agency). Part of this next phase of my data

analysis was re-coding and solidifying themes. I circled back to the entire data of my three participants, applying revised codes and further combining codes and categories into themes. Then I spent time writing analytically by theme. By writing thematically, I was able to understand better the arc of each participant's story to explain their emotional experiences. I was particularly fascinated by how emotions were created in one figured world and transported as cultural scripts into another - this seemed to create conflict. It helped me realize why a figured worlds framework was useful to organize my writing and surface the themes I was circling around. Part of my task was to look across cases in this phase of data analysis to explore similarities and differences in the way participants experienced emotions and the way the mindfulness curriculum framed their emotional experiences. This became the basis for my cross-case analysis section in my concluding chapter.

*Positionality*

I have learned how important it is to examine my own role as a researcher throughout the life of this qualitative study to understand and communicate how this interacts with the ethics of study design, data generation, and my interpretation of findings. As Dyson and Genishi (2005) write, "our researching selves are essential within the case" (p. 56) especially because qualitative researchers are instruments themselves as they generate data and interpret meaning. "As researchers on our respective cases we acknowledge that the way we come to know one thing well is a complicated, humanistic process" (p. 58). I hope to touch on my own positionality here and throughout the study in order to lay bare the ways my experiences are reflected in this study.

I view teaching – a truly emotional practice for me - through my own five years of middle school public teaching. But my more recent years in graduate school have profoundly

shaped the personal interest that I bring to this study. First, supervising PSTs teachers has been the most gratifying, challenging, and enriching work. I have found deep meaning observing PSTs interact with students in their classroom, reflecting with them about their teaching practices, and watching their progress as they learn to teach. I feel humbled by the enormity of this task - how to help prepare teachers for a profession that necessitates a deeply transformative processes of self-reflection, unlearning, and discovery.

Second, being steeped in the department of Curriculum and Instruction's critical orientation was a catalyst for doing my own necessary and long-overdue inner work. This was made more deeply resonant by several acute moments of reckoning over the last five years, whose elaboration is beyond the scope of this paper, but through which my own awareness was provoked and amplified. My identity as a white woman shapes the way I walk through life and comes with biases that have impacted my research. This includes ways I analyzed my white and female case study participants and ways that I was blind to other ways of interpretation.

Last, my interest in mindfulness has shifted quite considerably over the few years. My practice had originally started as a personal life-raft in the struggle for balance, but I have since relied heavily on my practice to facilitate inner identity work and help me turn towards, explore, and dismantle my own emotional barriers. In short, the work to understand the implication of my whiteness, especially within teacher education work, would have been more empty, halting, and surface-level had I not had a contemplative practice on which to draw from. A decade of personal exploration in contemplative practice provided a foundation for me to learn how these types of mindfulness practices both perpetuate injustices but also how they can be used to disrupt them.

## Findings: Sarah

This study focuses on the emotional experiences of pre-service teachers learning to teach. I ask 1) How do preservice teachers experience emotions around learning to teach? And 2) How do preservice teachers use mindfulness to frame their emotions in the process of learning to teach? I use Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain's (1998) lens of *figured worlds* to frame my analysis. The specific elements of figured worlds that I use to frame Sarah's story are specific scripts and improvisation.

### *Section 1. Script of home: The figured world of Sarah's childhood*

Sarah was a white woman in her early 20s. In our interviews she came across as chatty and confident. Of the three PSTs, she most openly divulged information about herself and her experiences. Although not specifically asked about, Sarah offered glimpses into her background, family, and education that helped me understand and describe the figured world of her upbringing. In doing so, she surfaced emotions associated with the scripts that helped define and constitute her idea of teaching and teachers. It was important for me to get to know some of the scripts from Sarah's childhood figured world first. Only then could I understand how they would play a significant role in her navigating the multiple figured worlds of learning to teach, and the emotions that would surface for her.

While expectations and standards were strict at home, she spoke of her parents glowingly. She said they were loving; they cared for her; and they were present. She said of them: "They worry. My Dad's like, 'we don't sleep when you're gone, and I keep leaving!'" To her, parents who worry are parents who care. She also referred to them instilling in her "a very strong work ethic." To Sarah, that meant completing school work and doing it well.

> The way I was raised happened to fit very well with the school environment so I've always been really successful in school because I was taught it's disrespectful to leave things here, and it's disrespectful to talk when someone else is talking, and all these things were also the way school is as a good student.

Doing well, completing work, respecting someone who is talking - all of these are the scripts of being a "good" student that formed Sarah's understanding about education, and which were stressed as important at home. The need to improvise is borne out of the incompleteness of current scripts to address a present problem (Holland et al., 1998). But being white and middle-class helped her easily fit with the educational system in which she excelled, so improvisational moves were not necessary or provoked by any mismatch between scripts of home and school. Her family support, which provided resources and instilled "ethics" in her, were the scripts that formed a core of normative images for Sarah about home and school (Graue, 2005). These are the scripts that would shape her vision of a classroom as an adult - ones that informed what she understood about success and failure, and what it took to get things "right."

And school did come easy for Sarah. She explained this ease by saying, "I can get down and write a five-page paper in an hour and a half and some people, like my brother, it takes him seven days to write a page. So that's a privilege too, to be able to articulate what you're thinking." Sarah recognized that this lack of academic struggle afforded her privilege. That she could easily knock out a paper aligned with normative expectations of success in school. To her, speed and ease were coveted traits that helped her "do" school with ease.

The scripts of school success that defined how Sarah operated became key scripts that she drew upon to make sense of what academic success looked like at the college level. Like her

cohort peers, University coursework and assignments caused her emotional stress. But because she was raised with the view - and celebrated for the successes that it enabled - that you just get the work done and you do it well, she approached college-level workloads in the same way. While some of her peers seemed to crumble under the stress of the teacher education program, one of the scripts she drew on was a "get it done" mentality that had served her well in the past. Her tendency was to, as she said, "hammer it out so I don't have to think about it anymore." At one point she contrasted her approach to what she saw from her peers: "I'm not the kind of person who is going to open the document and then be like, 'oh there's so much to do' and close it. I'm going to spend an hour, get as much as I can done, and then cross it off my list."

Unlike the paralysis that she sensed from her peers when they confronted a large task, she was going to do her best and then cross it off her list - a testament to the feeling of relief she felt in being productive. As a white woman, she embodied the white expectation around feeling good when being productive, being "in control," and being "independent." Checking boxes of task completion was one way she felt productive. Another time, she reflected on the lack of control that she felt when she was dependent on group members, who were downstairs working on a group project at the time of her interview.

> I'm like, what are they doing? How are they doing it? Am I going to change - am I going to have to change something? And trusting that they're also pre-professionals who are at the same point in their education and are very capable human beings. So just being able to let go of that control.

Sarah's tendency was to want to take charge, as evident by her questioning of what and how they were doing the project, and whether she would have to change any of their work to meet her standards. At the same time, she was self-aware - as evidenced by her admission that she should

just be able to "let go of that control." In fact, while she wasn't aware of the term, she was aware that the emotions that came up for her in this situation (need for control, stress and worry about what others were doing), were anchored in the scripts from the figured world of her childhood. This is the exchange that followed after the quote above:

> Interviewer: How did you realize it was a control thing?
>
> Sarah: I don't know. I think that's just who I am. And I think a lot of that comes from my dad because I'm very similar to my dad and my dad was always like – like I would wash a dish and put it in the drying rack and my dad would rewash it. He'd be like, 'this is not clean,' and he'd rewash it.
>
> Interviewer: It's like who rearranges the dishwasher.
>
> Sarah: Yes! He rearranges the dishwasher, too. He's like, 'no you put the big plates in the back, you put the small plates in the front, you separate,' you know. I notice those things in myself, too. If my roommates organized the dishwasher poorly, I reorganize the dishwasher! Cause none of the dishes are going to get clean! So I definitely think it's an adopted trait just from growing up. My dad used to, if my closet wasn't clean enough, he used to go in, if he would get frustrated enough and just knock everything off the shelves and be like, 'now you have to redo it.' And I'd be like ...okaaay. Leave a wet towel on the floor was a sin in my house.

Improvisations are "the sort of impromptu actions that occur when our past, brought to the present as habitus, meets with a particular combination of circumstances and conditions for which we have no set response," (Holland et al., 1998, p. 17). Yet Sarah had a set response here - and one that had worked well to propel her forward so far. She relied on that same well-set script

from the figured world of her childhood - one that prioritized control in order to get things done "right." Sarah recognized that she had adopted her father's behaviors. The scripts that she grew up with - like the standards of cleanliness that were expected, and the need to "fix" someone else's work if it did not meet those standards - were concepts that she carried into adulthood. In rearranging the dishwasher after her roommates loaded it, she exerted her need to correct and control in order to meet her high standards. Sarah felt out of control in not being part of her group work - even momentarily - and fearful with the responsibility for potential mess and disorder. Correcting her group felt important because the consequence of getting things wrong - the likeliness of which might increase without her involvement - was rooted in similar experiences in the figured world of her childhood (e.g. the shame of not getting things right - the "sin" of leaving a wet towel on the floor). It explained why similar emotions arose in this situation. She closed with this:

> My Dad takes, and I think to some extent I do too, he takes things like that as signs of disrespect, whereas my intent obviously isn't that, isn't like 'oh it's 6AM and I forgot a wet towel on the floor because I'm rushing to drive my brother to school.'...you know what I mean. And I think I have adopted some of that too where if you're not doing some of this to this standard it's disrespectful whereas everyone just has a different standard.

In this case, Sarah was aware that she was raised to think a certain way about standards, respect, and expectations, and that script continued to drive her interactions as an adult. Sarah had no need to improvise yet, because she was able to accommodate the situations she described here with the well-honed scripts or "habitus" (Holland et al., 1998) brought from her past to the present (for example, control). However, when realizing she acted out those same cultural scripts

with her adult roommates, we do see her initial awareness that the scripts that had defined her childhood might not serve her as well in the new world of the teacher education program. Sarah's personal improvisation of a productive white student was well honed. It was hard to take up new scripts relative to that identity.

*Section 2. Script of teacher ed program: Sarah's improvisations across the figured worlds of learning to teach*

In the process of learning to teach, Sarah navigated multiple figured worlds at once, each with their own values, accepted behaviors, and scripts. Here I describe how Sarah brought scripts from the figured world of her childhood into the new figured worlds of the teacher education program, and the emotions that surfaced for her in that process. It was tremendously confusing for her at times. For possibly the first time in her life, academic "success" was not measured by the ease through which she could tick off completed assignments - it was about the process of becoming a professional teacher: messy, emotional, and complex.

*The Teacher Education Program*

The most intense emotions that Sarah exhibited were in relation to her struggles in the University teacher education program. The colliding world of her childhood with this new world of the teacher education program might have yielded opportunities for improvisation (Rush & Fecho, 2017), yet the attempt to translate her script of success - which had worked quite well for her up to this point - to this new world caused anger and a resistance to author herself into a new script. As an example, Sarah expressed frustration at her perception that she was not getting what she thought was "useful." Here were her frustrations:

- I've struggled in the program with feeling like I'm not being provided with *concrete enough information to be successful*.
- I'm probably lead on the 'I'm sick of this program get me out of it' train so I think I'm at that point grasping for anything that would that would get me a *concrete benefit*, looking for kind of a silver lining to doing a bunch of stuff that *I don't see a purpose in*. I'm just looking for a reason to *find something useful*.
- We're told 'you're doing it wrong' but *we're not told how to do it right.*
- *When am I going to get practical knowledge?* I'm not. Cause clearly I'm not.
- When you ask, 'what are *concrete ways that I can fix this?*' There's no answer, there's never an answer to anything, which can be good but also can be extremely frustrating at a certain point when you've been pushing for, 'well you've been in the classroom. You are my teacher. So, *tell me something that I can do to make this better when I'm a teacher,' and there's no answers it's just 'you figure it out.*'

Sarah complained about the lack of concrete information, practical knowledge, and fixes. Like Horn et al.'s (2008) study, Sarah also "asserted her ideas of what matters in teaching" (p. 65) based on selecting what she thought was most useful. To her, the teacher education program should dispense concrete fixes, tools, and practical knowledge, or as she called it, a "concrete toolkit." Similar to those in Graue's (2005) study, she had the conception that "through their professional training they would develop the clinical tools of teaching" (p. 178). She put great trust in the program to "give" her the requisite knowledge to become a professional. At one point she mentioned wanting some resources that a "holder of the knowledge to some extent" would have already vetted. She believed that the program had that knowledge to impart on her, and she

was frustrated when she felt she was not getting that. This caused her to question the purpose of what they were learning. Seminar, in her words, was a "waste of time."

The complaints Sarah levied against the teacher education program, and the anger that came with them, were evident of her struggle across these different figured worlds. Because Sarah came into the program having done well in school previously, that ease may have given her an expectation that learning to become a teacher would be no different. However, she was faced with a figured world much different than the one she came from - this new figured world did not have those prescribed fixes that she was seeking, nor did it have concrete answers to her questions. Having to learn to play by new "rules" was not easy for Sarah, and required a shift in her role from student to teacher -where success and evaluation looked different and operated by different rules. Her attempts to translate criteria of success from one figured world into another caused anger. And without "concrete" information from the teacher education program, she was not getting the tools she felt she needed to avoid those feelings.

*The classroom*

In addition to the figured world of the teacher education program, there was the figured world of the classroom, with completely different norms and expectations. Sarah's frustration was also directed towards the complexities in working across the teacher education program *and* that figured world of the classroom. Not only was she not getting concrete and "practical knowledge" from her teacher education program, but what she *was* learning in their program was - in her eyes - not reflected in the "real world" of the classroom:

> …it's just hard when you're learning all these things here and you're not seeing any of them in practice…so you're learning about differentiated learning and how it's inefficient

> to do differentiated learning like 'I'm going to give these kids one test and these kids another test.' And then you go to practicum and your CT is handing out one test to some kids and one test to another kid. So it's hard to see that and then be like, 'well I'm learning how that's ineffective, but it's still being done.'

We slide among figured worlds constantly, never belonging to just one or another (Rush & Fecho, 2017). In this case, the classroom was a place where Sarah's multiple figured worlds interacted in complicated ways. Sarah's tension in working across these worlds appeared in her last sentence: she was frustrated by witnessing classroom practices that she learned in the teacher education program seemingly being ineffective. This was even more concerning to Sarah given that she had the script that the classroom was the "real" place. The teacher education versus classroom divide is a well-documented tension for PSTs learning across both worlds. However, Ma and Singer-Gabella (2011) write that although the disjuncture between the University and PreK-12 classroom is "commonly conceived as a mismatch problem, the figured world lens pushes us to understand how individuals are interpreting their situations" (p. 19). It was this productive struggle that Sarah was referring to, and interpreting as a tension, that was helping her shift her identity as she came into her role as a teacher. Her frustration was a "useful signal" (Benesch, 2017) that her ideas about teaching were being re-formed as she negotiated between these worlds and began questioning them.

The Cooperating Teacher (CT) was the authority figure in the figured world of the classroom, and served a significant role as mentor, friend, supervisor, confidant, co-teacher, etc. Thankfully for Sarah, this relationship was a positive one both semesters. She even remarked of her CT, "I don't know how I'm supposed to teach without him!" This comment shows her CT's

positionality - the positions afforded to people in a particular figured world, that can be influenced by power distributions (Urrieta, 2007). Her CT was so instrumental to her teaching (she “wouldn’t know what to do” without him), possibly because she recognized how much power he held, and as a contrast, how little she felt she had. In fact, she stated definitively, “you’re not in a position of power when you’re a practicum student.”

During the practicum semesters Sarah was experimenting with learning within the walls of her CT’s classroom, where existing structures and norms guide behavior and actions. She was trying to do many things at once: to fit in to existing classroom structures and routines, to build relationships with students while also diving headfirst into lesson planning and actual instruction, to experiment with practices taught in methods classes with practices learned in the practicum setting, and to be helpful – and maybe even a little impressive: “I think I had to get over being afraid to ask him questions because you want to be independent and I’m a very independent person, so I want to be able to do those things and do them well.”

Sarah remarked on the pressure of wanting to be a “good practicum” student and “be what your CT wants from the classroom,” so the way Sarah improvised in this situation was to fully adopt her CTs scripts. In this case, Sarah’s CT had become her version of authority - her father figure in showing her “right and wrong” in teaching. As a self-described “independent” individual, Sarah felt the pressure of wanting to project independence and competence, even though what accompanied her position as a PST was the understanding that she was a learner. Varghese and Snyder (2018) describe the positionality of the PST in having to negotiate “the tensions and complications inherent in both modeling themselves after their mentor teacher and simultaneously differentiating themselves from their mentor" (p. 153). Yet the vulnerability of asking questions of her CT or using improvisational moves in the classroom was not comfortable

for Sarah, who, in an effort to project competence and independence, focused on playing out her CTs scripts and fulfilling his expectations of her in the classroom.

There was a marked boost in confidence during her student teaching semester, when Sarah taught full-time as a co-teacher with her CT. Instead of having a foot squarely in both the University and the public school classroom world, she moved a few steps farther into the classroom world. This felt significant. She admitted, "The practicum environment wasn't a fit for me and the student teaching environment more so is, so I feel more comfortable in my role in that sense, which is helping a lot." The consistency of being there every day was key to helping her feel more comfortable in her role as a teacher. If you walked into her student teaching classroom, Sarah said her CT would say "I have done nothing in here." Instead, Sarah says, "I made the job chart, I made this bulletin board, the organization is all me and he just really let me go with it."

Although she still referenced his power in saying it was *he* that let *her* go with it, her confidence in her emerging role as a teacher is unmistakable. As Graue (2005) stated, "Being a professional was the key to their authority" (p. 173). In addition, Sarah had also worked in Ukraine the summer before student teaching, where she had her "own" classroom, and then was asked to be the director of studies. In student teaching, she was asked to lead a language lab that even the principal took note of. Even her self-conception shifted: "I am a magnet for hugs and cuddling and emotional support and girl drama and boy drama and all of these other things that my CTs do notice and deal with, but in a different way than I do."

Sarah brought her experience from Ukraine and her role shift into the student teaching semester and found ways to improvise a "comfort zone" for herself within the figured world of the classroom. Helping to boost her confidence was the fact that she had carved out an

indispensable role as a "magnet" to students' social-emotional "drama." She had a separate - and powerful - role here, as signified by her comment that her CT does similar things "but in a different way than I do." Early on - in practicum setting - she was a visitor. But in the student teaching semester, she assumed more a co-teaching role, elevating her status, authority, and power, and helping her see herself as more of an equal with her CT (Salerno & Kibler, 2018). In referring to Holland et al.'s (1998) ideas on improvisation, Graue, Whyte, and Karabon (2015) note, "improvisation is the space that creates the potential for new identities - where culture and individuals interact responsively to create change" (p. 15). With her CTs transition of power into Sarah's seemingly capable hands (ex: "I made the job chart, I made this bulletin board, the organization is all me…"), and Sarah's students' hugs and cuddles, Sarah was able to shift into and find comfort in her new role as a "magnet" and a fully contributing teacher.

*Section 3. Script of mindfulness: How Sarah used mindfulness to frame her emotions in the process of learning to teach.*

> I think for sure this program has encouraged me to be more of an advocate and more aware, it's just at what cost to myself has that happened?
>
> -Sarah

In the previous sections, I first described the figured world of Sarah's childhood. Then I discussed her improvisational moves as she brought her own cultural scripts into the world of the teacher education program. In the midst of navigating between the multiple featured worlds of learning to teach, and the world of her past experience, Sarah also dove headfirst into a

completely new figured world: mindfulness. In this last section about Sarah, I will show how emotions played a central role as she improvised across this additional figured world.

Although mindfulness was not new to Sarah, she was new to the practices and orientation of this particular "PST Well-being Training" (2015). In the same way that Sarah made meaning across the figured worlds of teaching, she also made meaning of the mindfulness practices in a way that made sense to who she was becoming as a teacher. In doing so, Sarah took up mindfulness in ways that framed emotions in particular ways.

Sarah sought practicality, technical knowledge, and concrete tools in the process of learning to teach. And as the self-described "lead" on the "I'm sick of this program get me out of it" train, she was grasping for anything that she felt would get her a "concrete benefit." So the drive to find what was "useful" for her showed up immediately in her description of why she was interested in the mindfulness training:

> Yeah, like 'give me something that is good that I can use.' Also just in the current, I don't see a downside to it. You get paid for it. You don't have to do much. And it looks great on your resume to have a mindfulness training. You get a ton of training and practical experience for free, you don't have to pay to do the training...so I just didn't see a lot of downsides to it which for me is like, well, might as well. You're already here.

Her rationale for investment in the training was the cost (free), the time commitment (not much), the professional credential (a training), and practical experience (more on that below). And very quickly, it seemed, her outlook shifted - she realized that instead of the practicality that she might have been after originally, the practicality revealed itself as a practice for herself. Here she reflected on that learning:

> I thought it would be more practical, like 'this is what you teach' instead of 'this is what you practice, and then your practice carries over into…' you know? I think I thought it would be more like, 'here are chimes. This is when you can use them.' You know, more instructional...like, instructional tools versus the idea that you're learning your own practice so that you can then share that practice with your students.

Instead of a "practical" training on how to implement mindfulness for students (i.e. directions for what to teach), her participation became a deep dive into developing her own mindfulness practice. She had been seeking from the teacher education program the more technical skills about how to teach, but her teaching identity actually developed in significant ways when she was forced to improvise in moments where there was no "set response" to a "particular combination of circumstances and conditions" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 17). Yet again, Sarah was learning the trope of a new world, and the inward turn that this figured world of mindfulness encouraged - coupled with how she related it to her teaching - was a place of growth in her identity as a teacher. I'll use two stories to show this - the "Hangman" story and the story of Sarah's racial awareness.

### *The "Hangman" story*

PSTs are in a constant cycle of re-forming their identities and then using those shifting identities to "edit" their learning across the University teacher education program and the public school classroom into what makes sense and is useful to them (Horn et al., 2008). The process of doing this "editing" helped to highlight Sarah's improvisational moves in situations that were

novel to her. First, it was important to understand what she drew from the figured world of mindfulness: an essential practice in the mindfulness training involved focused attention on bodily sensations. The breath plays a central role in mindfulness practices as an object to help focus attention, and deepen non-judgmental awareness, or awareness absent of an intention to change or fix anything ("PST Well-being Training," 2015). Here Sarah described its significance:

> I feel like I always just take a deep breath. And I think that comes from actually being asthmatic since a lot of time when I'm stressed is a time when if I lose control of my breath I *really* lose control of my breath and I just had a panic attack the other day and just the feeling of not being able to control anything I think I bring that knowledge of what that feels like to my students. Because sometimes you are so angry and students haven't learned how to be aware of that and they do chuck a chair. And sometimes I feel like I want to chuck a chair! It's just that social construct has told me that's not okay and so you don't do it, but they haven't learned that yet, or maybe they're still learning…But yeah, I definitely think I ground myself in breath because I know what it's like to not have it. So if I'm really frustrated I'm just like, 'take a deep breath girl.'

Sarah drew on the artifact of "taking a breath" from the mindfulness world in order to bring herself composure and control when she was stressed and felt like she had none. In this instance, the breath opened a brief pause to help her regain control of herself so she did not "chuck a chair" in anger. While the feeling of anger may be justified, throwing a chair is not a socially acceptable response to that anger. For Sarah, the self-reminder ("take a deep breath, girl") served as a powerful tool that could help her act more wisely on feelings. Sarah ended up

relying on "taking a breath" to help her through a difficult teaching moment. I could feel Sarah's anger rising as she re-told this teaching story.

> I was pissed. My teacher, my CT was teaching, so I wasn't teaching, I was doing basically one teach one observe - or one monitor.' So I'm just walking around the classroom, watching him teach, and I see these girls playing hangman and I go up to them and I'm just like, 'I think you know you're not making the right choice right now. I'm going to give you the decision to make the right choice.' And they didn't make the right choice, and she moved the hangman to her leg, you know they think they're smarter than you, she moved it to her leg and I was like, 'they're *still* playing hangman!' and that's when I got mad cause then they were trying to hide it and they think I don't know.

The situation is typical of any PST who is finding their way in the CT's classroom. Sarah's CT was lead teaching, and Sarah was supposed to be supporting students. In this case, Sarah noticed two students playing Hangman, and used a script she had picked up from her CT as a way to help them make the "right" decision - to put the hangman game away and pay attention. Instead, the students devised a sneakier way to continue their game. Sarah got even more incensed when the students tried to hide the game from her. Their behavior became a challenge to her authority as a teacher - "you know they think they're smarter than you." She recounted the awareness of her anger in the moment:

> And I was like, 'well I could go over there and yell at them,' cause that's when I'm standing there and I'm like, 'okay how do I handle this because I'm really mad,' and I could feel, even if I spoke, my voice was going to shake cause I was really pissed about it for some reason. And that's when I was like, 'okay, you're really angry and I can tell

> you're angry,' because I literally was making the fists and I was really tense and I was really upset and like, 'okay, how am I going to handle this situation and my CTs teaching.'

The internal dialogue that Sarah verbalized about this moment captured the emotions that preceded Sarah's improvisation, and they were visceral - hands in fists, tension, and voice shaking. The students had really perturbed her! As the moment unfolded, and Sarah felt her emotions boiling, she drew on the tools and practices from the figured world of mindfulness, to be more responsive, and less reactive, to the situation. As she reflected,

> I think it was noticing my physical response and being like, 'why are - if I was the student, why might I be doing that? Why am I playing hangman during class?' Cause right away I was like - I recognized that I had went inside first before having an external reaction, which normally wouldn't be, well that's hard to say cause I am kind of an over thinker but I think in the moment I'm normally - act now. They're making a bad behavioral choice. Fix the bad behavioral choice so that they can learn.' Versus realizing, 'why am I so quick to act?' So I definitely think - I noticed right away that that wasn't a choice I might have made last semester.

As an "act now" type of person, Sarah often made quick, decisive responses in reaction to an event. But noticing her physical response (going "inside first") before having the "external reaction" allowed her a moment's pause to ask herself "why am I so quick to act?" That brief in-the-moment reflection allowed her to do some perspective-taking ("if I was the student, why might I be doing that?") and gave her a brief pause to avoid an automatic reaction which might

have lacked necessary nuance and understanding. This pause allowed Sarah to improvise in moments where there was no "set response" to a "particular combination of circumstances and conditions" (Holland et al, 1998, p. 17). With the space that she opened for herself, she employed this move to address the situation:

> And that's when I went over and I was like, 'okay I gave you the chance to make the right choice and you haven't made the right choice. And I'm upset about it because I feel like you're disrespecting me and you're disrespecting Mr. K. We're not here because *we're* interested in slope-intercept form, we're here because we care about you and we want you to be able to learn the things you need to know.'...And I was like, 'okay, I want you to think about the choices you're making. And then I'll give you another chance to make the right choice.' And then they stopped playing hangman. I was like, 'that went so much better!'

This epitomized a typical - and emotional - PST dilemma of trying to enact and test out the "authority" of their teacher role in an effort to manage student behavior - however clumsy and misguided it was. There is still lots to question here - that off-task behavior was seen as disrespectful, that she felt success not from authentic engagement, but from coercing students to demonstrate corrective action, and that she framed her anger as coming from "disrespect," while she actually was bending students to her will with a false choice. Yet this is the first time she discusses a departure from her CTs script, because it did not work. She had to go back and try again. Her emotional internal dialogue opens up the possibility of improvisational practice – previous scripts that had worked well for her because they allowed her to control situations and feel success now were unsuccessful in this new figured world. This new figured world required

much more responsiveness. Seglem (2015) describes Holland et al's (1998) idea of the space of authoring as "the multiple internal dialogues that people engage in to make sense of their selves" (p. 23). Sarah's improvisational moves took shape in this space of authoring, where she questioned, rejected, adopted, and negotiated across figured worlds. The figured world of mindfulness was what helped her reason and investigate the emotions behind her intentions, both in the moment and afterwards.

The ability to pause, check in with bodily sensations, perspective-take, and be more responsive was supported in practical ways both from the mindfulness training and Sarah's practicum placement. Because of this alignment, it seemed to have really shifted the depth to which Sarah integrated the practice into her teaching identity. She reflected:

> And I think part of that is my CT, too. He's very explanatory to them of like 'I want you to be successful people and that's why I'm tough on my behavior and academic expectations,' so that's probably part of it but there's definitely a moment where I had to recognize myself and be aware of what as going on in order to handle the situation cause I totally could have gone over there and been like, 'you guys are being so annoying right now! I don't know why you're doing this, go in the hall! Or tab out in Mrs. S's room or whatever other behavioral method the school has.'

In how she improvised how she "handled" the situation, she considered her CTs tendency to be very "explanatory" to students, as well as other strategies she could have employed like the school-wide policy of "tab out" or sending them to the hall. She ultimately rejected that option in favor of the more explanatory approach that seemed to have been more effective in trying to keep the relationship intact. The rejection of practices, as she does here, is an expression of

identity (Horn et al., 2008). To her, being tough on expectations, like her CT, demonstrated that she cared about her students' success. Still evident in her dialogue were the vestiges of her father's lesson that not living up to one's expectations (ie. a wet towel on the floor) is a sign of disrespect. However, Sarah's negotiation and subsequent choice and rejection is a demonstration of improvisation, which proved to be a productive emotional space for Sarah to try on approaches in order to figure out who she wanted to be as a teacher.

*Sarah's emotional racial awareness*

Especially here where there's so many conversations going on about equity and race and the program is majority White and what comes with that. And having to come every day and grapple with those things so much is very taxing.

-Sarah

Sarah was aware that the learning happening in her University teacher education program sometimes caused internal tension with who she saw herself to be. She said: "There is a certain perception here about how you should feel about equity. Like you should feel like everything needs to be equitable and there is a clear way that is the right way." She went on to say that dissent was "not received well" in this program. It is hard to argue with the rightness of equity - but to Sarah, who was learning, untangling, and reshaping her ideas and identity as she learned to teach, it was met with some hostility because it challenged her identity. Deep set normative views deepened this resistance. It was in this emotional space that she wondered about her position as a white teacher.

Sarah: This program I've been really struggling - do I even want to be a teacher? You know? There's so many – especially coming here, and it's awesome about this program that it's so social justice focused, but that's very hard being a White teacher.

Interviewer: Oh, tell me more about that?

Sarah: Just the stereotype of being a White teacher and having to combat the white savior and all these other things…and my dad's an immigrant, my dad was born in Ukraine, and I was always not White enough for the White kids but not Russian enough for the Russian kids. And so I very much struggled with that. But when I came here I felt like a lot of those parts of me were invalidated because I was White, so it no longer mattered that I was Jewish, and it no longer mattered that my dad was an immigrant and I struggled with that, and it just mattered that 'well you identify as White on a sheet which means you're this…' And so I think I really struggle with that, especially in this program, because I'm like 'what can I do…?'

In the space of this racial reckoning, and the internal dialogue that she surfaced, Sarah authored her ideas about who she was and what that meant for her teaching. Both individual agency and social structure forms an identity (Wegner, p. 98). Sarah felt her identity as a Jewish, Ukranian woman was "invalidated" when she came to the teacher education program because it was her whiteness - to the exclusion of her other identities - that was used as a window into who she must be. She had come to terms with the fact that being white did mean that she interacted with the world through a white lens - and the realization that white saviorism might describe her, was a painful awareness. To Sarah, trying to "combat" or fend off judgments about her intention and impact as a white teacher made being a white teacher emotionally "taxing." Defensively, she

held up her experience in Tanzania as proof that she wasn't *that* kind of white teacher. Here she related that struggle specifically to what it meant in the classroom, working with students:

> And I think that frustration of people being like, 'well I'm very frustrated that I'm just perceived this way. Or I'm invalidated in this way,' is really difficult. And there's this certain sense of White tears. That whole thing of 'you don't get to be upset, you don't get to feel this way,' I think that's been really frustrating. Cause I'm like – I go into my classroom and how do I separate, 'okay well this kid just called me a bitch and he's in 5th grade, can I not – how do I discipline him when he's a young, African-American student and I'm a White teacher, how do I even—' You're paralyzed, you're kind of paralyzed in that cause you got so much going on in your head, how do you even start? And so that's been really hard for me cause I'm like, 'why didn't I go into frickin' nursing and study and study chem-atoms and drug chemistry and stuff like that.'

To Sarah, this moment was defined by paralysis. But this paralyzed state was hardly so. In it, she needed to hold the weight of her own identity, her student's identity, and a teacher's moment-to-moment moves that can have tremendous significance. The angst in that moment arose as she held these multiple demands simultaneously, from different figured worlds. On one hand, the figured world of her childhood painted a normative view of a "good" student, and the scripts from her own childhood described a classroom scene where children can excel if they have the right ethics and work hard. This heavily influenced her (mis)conception of her students. These scripts- these visions and expectations - set up a view of what was "normal," which then automatically set up a contrast (Graue, 2005).

> I think just working with the population of kids that I work with, and not having grown up in that kind of environment, like growing up in a home where I had both parents, and they were loving, and they cared about what I did, and I had extended family who cared, and they showed up for me and they were there and seeing that some of my kids don't have that in any sense, or in a little bit of a sense, or mostly just watching when they are upset.

White middle-class teachers often stereotype families of color and what their attitudes are about school. Similarly, Sarah had preconceived notions of who her students and families were, portraying pity and sympathy. "I went into teaching because I liked the consistency of being able to be there for kids who don't have people all the time, being able to be there for them." In her eyes, students from particular racial and cultural backgrounds represented monolithic groups – with the racist trope of what that means about who was "there" for them. She saw herself as the consistent, always "there" adult in their lives. Sarah mirrored Emdin's (2016) description of White teacher misperceptions of a caring teacher. Matias (2016) describes how White innocence can be maintained by disguising emotions that are socially inappropriate with superficial notions of empathy and compassion. The scripts of Sarah's own childhood, learned in her own nuclear family, led to significant racist misperception and oversimplification about her students. This powerful script further entrenched her resistance to being seen as a "white savior."

On the other hand, colliding figured worlds within the teacher education program did provide Sarah some opportunities for improvisation around racial awareness. For example, the integration of the mindfulness script opened the potential for improvisational moves reflective of a more nuanced racial awareness. Much like the moment during the "Hangman" story where an

improvisational move sprang from Sarah's use of a pause to check in with her emotions and re-evaluate, Sarah could have employed the same script from mindfulness - "take a breath, girl." Responsive teaching can be difficult for new teachers because the cognitive load is so high at the earliest parts of a teaching career, which is so full of complex demands that happen so rapidly it can be hard to figure out when, how, or what to reflect on in practice - especially in the moment. But Sarah had previously demonstrated the power of practices taken from both the figured world of mindfulness and the figured world of the classroom that intertwined to reshape how she worked through her emotions in order to be more responsive. During the Hangman situation, the pause opened up a possibility for Sarah to reflect on her own actions, instead of the reactive blame-game that can often happen in classrooms. It held the potential to help Sarah be more reflective about her own teaching practice:

> I think being reflective, although I'm really sick of it in this point in the program, it's obviously really important being able to step back and be like, 'what am I doing, how can I change it,' not being so set in your ways that you're just propelling the same things because I think I've always witnessed how that's happened in the bureaucracy of a school how it can be slow to change but it doesn't mean it has to be that way in your own classroom.

While it held possibility, the new script from mindfulness that had served her well during the Hangman moment was lost - this meant she couldn't improvise to hold new racial awareness which might have helped her recognize students' humanity to respond more humanely. In the case of Sarah's racial awareness here, improvisation took the form of resistance. While learning a new teacher education script (one which introduced white saviorism, for example), Sarah held

deeply to the racial counternarratives from her own figured world that did not fit with new learning or puncture the normative script that defined her views on students or school. This is what allows for contradictions like White pre-service teachers' ability to declare that they are social justice educators while at the same time exhibiting unresolved emotional discomfort (Matias, 2016) or disqualifing themselves from participating in conversations about race because it is "uncomfortable" or it seems not to be worth the "investment" (Leonardo &Gamez-Djokic, 2019, p. 13). Similarly, Leonardo & Zembylas (2013) explore the implications of the emotionality of whiteness – specifically Whites using "intellectual alibis" in the face of racism.

Cultural scripts about teaching that drive preservice teachers' experiences in a teacher education program are strong. Sykes (2010) writes about teacher education: "...not much could be expected from such a meager investment in relation to the other powerful influences on teachers" (p. 467). This is not to diminish the significance - or at the very least, potential - of a teacher education program, but to describe the power of socialization that exists outside the teacher education world in building a PSTs' understanding of teachers and teaching. By the time PSTs enter a teacher education program, they have already done thousands of hours of observation as students in school. These "non-analytical" observations (Gelfuso, 2018) of teachers, classrooms, and schools have already shaped their beliefs about teaching (Lortie, 1975).

However strong previous scripts are, there are moments of possibility when figured worlds collide. Rush and Feco (2017) say it is improvisations - "the creative ways that humans maintain and create a sense of self within these intersections where figured worlds mesh, bump, or sometimes collide - that we develop a better sense of how identities redirect themselves and find ways of coping within circumstances that feel alienating" (p. 128). Some individuals see these intersections as opportunities. Yet others find these instances challenging or even

threatening - as Sarah did in this case. As they noted of some teachers in their study, and which rings true for Sarah as well: “Most felt unmotivated to find ways to address their needs within a culture of learning that departed too radically from their accustomed norm” (Rush & Feco, 2017, p. 134). Sometimes the strength of previous scripts are stronger than the possibility and hope that new improvisational moves bring.

Emotions cannot be untangled from the complex process of learning to teach. Sarah had come into the University teacher education program with previous script abouts teachers, teaching, and learning that supported and guided her views and beliefs. Then those same scripts confronted the repertoire of practices from multiple new figured worlds in her process of learning to teach, as well the “real worlds of past experiences (Lortie, 1975), or projected futures” (p. 63). Sarah had to find her way, while navigating those simultaneous worlds. Sarah learned to teach by engaging in improvisations. Within her negotiation across different worlds, it was these improvisations - and the emotions that were framed in the process- that shaped who she was becoming as a teacher.

## Findings: Carina

In the previous chapter, I described the emotions Sarah experienced by exploring how they surfaced when scripts from her childhood met with the new figured worlds of learning to teach. In this chapter, I will foreground a different component of culture - identity - in order to explore the emotions that Carina experienced in the process of learning to teach. Identities are cultural artifacts that are created through interactions within specific figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998). In Carina's case, her race (White) and class (middle) were important parts of her social identity. Holland et al describe "positional identities" as "day to day and on the ground relations of power, deference, and entitlement, social affiliation and distance - with the social-interactional, social-relational structures of the lived world" (p. 127). Carina's race and class - her positional identities - were "linked to power, status, and rank" (p. 271) and mediated what happened in the figured worlds that she moved within and among.

In this chapter, I first illustrate how Carina's positional identity defined her sense of privilege and opportunities, her beliefs about school, and how she valued and controlled time. Then, I explore Carina's emotional experiences through three story narratives that show the ways she positioned herself as she navigated across and within these worlds, and the emotions that accompanied her making sense of those competing worlds. Last, I describe how Carina improvised to incorporate mindfulness in a way that aligned with how she thought about her identity as it related to others.

### *Section 1: Carina's positional identity*

Like Sarah, Carina was also a white woman in her early 20s. She came across as fiery, independent, and self-confident. But she also expressed deep self-doubt at times. What Carina

said about herself, and what she did in relation to her students and colleagues hinted at her positional identity - and had to do with "behavior as indexical of claims to social relationships with others" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 127). While she did not openly divulge much about her background, she shared evidence of her identity when she talked about her current views and her experiences of learning to teach. Largely informed by her race and class, these became prevailing scripts that she would bring into the figured worlds of learning to teach.

Carina's race and class were aspects of her identity that mediated what happened in her figured world (Holland et al., 1998), including defining what she believed about school and the opportunities that it presented her. She reflected on her school experience and identity as a White, middle-class female: "The school I went to did have great opportunities but it was because I was white and middle-class and the kids that weren't white and middle-class at my school were a minority but they didn't get the opportunities." While she didn't use the term positional identity, Carina did understand that her experience was rooted in these social positions in school, where opportunities were available to her because of the privilege afforded by her race and class.

One of Carina's scripts defined by being white and middle class was her expression as "traditional." She said: "I think I am more a little bit traditional and feeling like school is more for academic learning." Later in that same interview, she said,

> Like why does it bother me so much when a kid completely doesn't do what I say? Why to me does that feel very disrespectful, I think is an interesting thing like of how in my family you didn't do that and if you did you got in trouble so there's kind of a culture around my beliefs of what it means to be respectful and how you show that to adults in a classroom and how you should be respectful of the teacher.

Carina was bothered by disrespect. The underlying assumption was that she had already earned respect - by virtue of her positional authority. The fear of disrespect arose from not getting what she felt she had already earned. Aligning with her previous statement about how she was more "traditional," Carina's internal dialogue brought into question her own beliefs and where they came from. She understood that her beliefs came from her family values - "in my family you didn't do that and if you did, you got in trouble." Carina's family instilled "ethics" in her, which solidified into the scripts that formed a core of normative images for Carina about home and school (Graue, 2005). These are clear statements that convey strong beliefs about the importance in showing deference to an adult authority figure like a teacher. For Carina, the "traditional" script carried with it an expectation that school was about academics - to the exclusion of social-emotional learning, and also that the teacher was to be respected by being listened to. The use of "still traditional" contrasted herself against how she seemed to view education today, seemingly outdating herself. That would come into play as she negotiated between her more "traditional" views and the more progressive approach she would be introduced to in the new figured worlds of learning to teach. It illuminated how she saw herself in relation to the teacher education program - for example, these words convey a feeling of someone who may think she is out-of-step with the program.

Another script stemming from Carina's positional identity as a white, middle-class woman was her conception of time, wasting time, and judgment of how time should be spent.

> I think I realized time is really precious to me, so when I'm told what to do with my time, where I don't think something is a good use of my time, that's really touchy for me; especially because we have class and we have the ed-TPA and we have so little time that

> then, when it's like, 'you're going to go organize another teacher's book room,' I'm like, 'hmmmmmm, can I say no?'

Improvisation is where "cultural norms and individual agency interact" (Rush and Fecho, 2017, p. 124). As a White woman, and similar to Sarah, Carina was driven by the cultural norms around the importance of productivity and efficiency. So, as a PST who regularly referenced the busy-ness of her life and constant juggling of expectations, assignments, and workload of the teacher education program, time felt "precious" to Carina and, as a result, needed to be highly protected. Within the cultural norms that drove her, her improvisational moves were dictated by how she chose to protect and control her time when time was limited.

Carina's positional identity helped define what Carina believed school to be about ("traditional"), her norms around how she spent her time (productively and efficiently), and finally, her competitive drive: she described herself this way when re-telling a story about an activity she participated in as part of the mindfulness training:

> Well we did an activity with the beach balls about stress where you try to keep them up for as long as you can and then we talked about our reactions to stress and I did realize that I am really a go-go-go-go-go person, and I am competitive, so as soon as they said 'we're doing this beach ball game' I was like, 'yeah we're going to keep it up for super long and we're not going to drop it at all.' So I realized that when I see a challenge, I'm like, 'yeah I can do this at first,' and then at a certain point if I realize that I can't do it then there's that moment of, 'do I keep going or do I just give up?'

The “go go go go go person” comment described her tendency towards productivity and making use of precious time, mentioned previously. But here Carina also planted a strong assertion as someone driven by competition - her competitive spirit was even activated by a silly game. She took up a sense of her relative social position to others (Holland et al., 1998) that manifested in an intense competitive drive. As a driven, competitive White woman, her identity was closely linked with doing well in competition with others, so much so that her in-the-moment decision to keep going or give up became tied to her self-concept (“if I realize that I can’t do it”).

*Section 2: Carina’s positional identities across the figured worlds of learning to teach*

The navigation of multiple worlds - the figured world of the teacher education program and the figured world of the classroom - played a significant role in Carina’s process of learning to teach (Verghese & Snyder, 2018). The scripts that Carina brought into her experience of learning to teach, and that I describe above (her self-description of being “traditional,” her sense that time was precious, and her highly competitive nature) came into contact with new experiences in the figured worlds of Carina’s practicum classroom and the University teacher education program - each of which had their own values, accepted behaviors, and artifacts. As Rush and Fecho (2017) say, we are never part of one figured world, but “slide among them constantly” (p. 127). The ways Carina positioned herself as she navigated across and within these worlds I describe here through the emotions that accompany her making sense of those competing worlds. The most intense emotions that Carina exhibited were in relation to her identities of power as she learned across these worlds, which I will explore through three narratives of dichotomies.

*Narrative 1: Discomfort and fear of being disrespected: The "traditional" versus "responsive" debate*

One of the specific elements of learning to teach that Carina verbalized was the divide between her "traditional" outlook and her experimentation with responsive teaching. Here is an exchange where she really wrestled with a script (being "traditional") and new, more progressive ideals about student responsiveness and agency:

> Carina: We went to a panel and the teachers were very more about letting kids have agency which I think is good, but I also still have this more traditional feeling of, 'I am the teacher, when I tell you you need to do something you need to do it,' but then that leads to a lot of conflict when kids push back and say, 'well I don't want to.
>
> Interviewer: So how do you resolve that within yourself? How are you reckoning with that?
>
> Carina: I don't know because I think it's partly because I've had CTs that were very wishy-washy and so that has been hard on me where I'm like, 'well they tell the kids you should all be sitting on the carpet and some kids don't…and some of the kids get in trouble and some of the kids don't. So like that, if I told the kids to go on the carpet they would kind of just look at me and be like, 'no…' So to me that seems disrespectful, but I also couldn't really blame them because yes it was a classroom rule, but it wasn't enforced all of the time. And then we talked about, 'well maybe you don't need all of the kids to be on the carpet. If they can pay attention from this point of view, maybe that's okay,' but then there's the issue of, 'well what if all the kids want to sit at this one table

> and there's only six spots, do you just let the biggest, bossiest kids get to sit there and everyone else just has to sit on the carpet?' So those kind of things, they are small little pieces [Interviewer: but they're really complex] they are, and when you have to deal with it every day of the kids not following the rules I think it could get very frustrating [laughs].

Scripts from a figured world that framed Carina's orientation as "traditional" opened up the possibility of conflict when kids would "push back," and the likelihood that she would be "disrespected." Carina's interest was piqued when she was introduced to the idea of giving students more agency. Her improvisational move was her attempt to meld this new theory with the practices that she was observing in the classroom, asking herself what responsiveness and agency might look like within her frame of being a traditionalist. Her improvisational moves played out in her head as she tried to improvise a comfort zone (Rush & Fecho, 2017) for herself in between these worlds. When Carina imagined what a more student-centered and responsive approach to seating freedom might look like it quickly turned into a logistical mess for her, where she became the arbiter of seating privileges, risking a situation where the "biggest, bossiest kids" would dominate. Here again the fear of disrespect and kids pushing back comes from the expectation that she had already earned "respect" (and their deference to her authority?) based on her White and middle class positional identity.

The "traditional" script defined what Carina believed about her role as a teacher, yet these beliefs then were challenged to reform when faced with an alternative perspective of teaching. Holland et al. (1998) point out "it is in the improvisations - the creative ways that humans maintain and create a sense of self within these intersections where figured worlds mesh,

bump, or sometimes collide - that we develop a better sense of how identities redirect themselves and find ways of coping within circumstances that feel alienating" (Rush and Fecho, 2017, p. 128). So although Carina tried understanding the perspective of a student (ex: an expectation ambiguously enforced could be confusing), as she made sense of what it would mean to give students agency, she reverted to her fear of getting disrespected, and of having to "deal with it every day of the kids not following the rules." Carina's navigation of these relations of power can be seen through her mental unpacking of how agency and responsiveness work in real situations in the classroom, wrestling aloud with how it aligned with the scripts that had previously defined teaching as "traditional."

The responsive versus traditional discussion continued to be a place of tension and also potential growth for Carina as she voiced how to juxtapose what she had been learning about community and responsiveness, with her traditional view that centered strict academic learning and controlling behavior. She admitted to not knowing how she felt about the suggestion from the teacher education program to sometimes "stop instruction" to "deal with community problems." In her words, "we're told community is so important," but she was still hesitant. There is evidence that she was in the midst of figuring that out:

> One the one hand, if kids are just talking to each other while we're having a math class discussion, but they're talking about their soccer game and their whatever - it's not that I have a problem with them talking about those things, it's that I don't think they can also be learning math. So, if there's a way to bring it together I'm all about that, but I think it ultimately comes down to learning. So stopping - and I know social -emotional learning is learning, too, that's where I'm just like, 'aaah! I don't know!' I think I am more a little bit traditional and feeling like school is more for academic learning but I'm still getting

used to the idea that maybe it still is more social-emotional, and that's pretty important, too.

Carina's improvisations centered around mental revisions of her traditional framing as she tried to expand her own thinking and what she saw as possibilities within the classroom. Responsive teaching would have required Carina to re-position herself - or rethink the "relative positionings the teachers occupy" (Moore, 2008, p. 687) - in relation to her students by flattening a power hierarchy that a more traditional stance kept in tact (i.e. respect is listening to the teacher authority figure, and classroom learning is about academics, not social-emotional development). Yet although responsive teaching was not yet a deeply held practice or orientation for Carina, she had started to reckon with what responsive teaching would mean in practice. Carina used these moments to expand her own thinking and understanding of the role of a teacher. She came to the program as a traditionalist, but neither gave herself over completely to that world nor to the idea of responsiveness and agency she was learning from the figured world of her teacher education program. This wrestling aloud, most evident when she exclaims mid sentence "aaah! I don't know!" is insight into this improvisational space for her, and of the emotions that rose to the surface in this productive space where she was grasping to understand herself as an emerging teacher in relation to her students.

*Narrative 2: Anger and frustration about what felt "worthwhile": The theory versus practice debate*

From Carina's positional identity as a White woman stemmed the script of control over time, in an effort to exert maximum productivity and efficiency. There were several instances where Carina communicated frustration about tasks that were asked of her - both from her CT at practicum, and also from the teacher education program: "So, times where they [the program] said, 'you need to come in on a Saturday to do something,' where like I work on a Saturday. *I don't think I should have to come in*." Carina was a PST who did not usually like getting told what to do, especially if the ask hampered her ability to put her energy into something she deemed more fruitful or worthy of her time. The script that time was precious and productivity was king was an undercurrent, regularly eliciting strong emotions in her process of navigating multiple worlds in learning to teach. On helping pre-service teachers learn to teach for social justice, Cochran-Smith (2004) says,

> One approach to preparing student teachers to work against the grain is to create *critical dissonance, or incongruity based on a critical perspective*, between what students learn about teaching and schooling at the university and what they already know and continue to learn about them in schools [original emphasis] (p. 25).

Carina experienced this critical dissonance with the frustrating mismatch between what students were introduced to in teacher education classes (theory), versus what she saw in her practicum classroom (practicality). Much like Sarah, Carina gave insight into the frustrations around the perceived lack of "practicality" in the University teacher education program. The anger and frustration that arose when feeling like her time was not being spent in a "worthwhile" manner was magnified by the discord she sensed between theory and practice. In her words:

- It's been a little frustrating because I haven't felt that my practicum placements have been giving me a lot of strategies…it's a little discouraging to see that as much as they can tell you the theory of it, it's the practicality.
- With our methods classes, I think we spent a lot of time - again - on theory and not -- we needed more applicable, 'this is what you should actually teach, this is how you design a unit, this is how you design the beginning, the end, the middle; the different pieces'...sometimes it gets to the point where I'm like, 'give me more strategies or new methods.'
- I say we spend a lot of time on theory, like a lot of time on theory. And theory is great if you have an idealized classroom where all of your students are at the same level and don't have anything going on at home that's distracting them and you don't have to worry about your kids coming to school hungry, and there's a million other problems, so if you get rid of all of that and you can just focus on having this perfect curriculum that you can implement…but that's not the real world, so I feel like the theory is sometimes disheartening because it's like, we're saying that you should be able to do all of these things without looking at the real context of where you're working and what you're doing on a day-to-day basis.

These teaching dilemmas (theory vs. practicality described here, but also traditional vs. responsivity described in the section above) were Carina's experience of critical dissonance and played a role in her identity formation and emotional experience. As Maulucci (2013) notes, critical dissonance "implies an emotional response - such as frustration or anger - and the resolution of critical dissonance implies feelings of satisfaction or solidarity" (p. 472), whereas

Cochran-Smith's focus is absent of a discussion of identity and emotions. Carina clearly exhibited strong emotional undertones of frustration and anger as she fought to maintain control over how her time was spent. She sought strategies and learning that could be "applicable" to her practicum setting, which she viewed as separate from more idealized, theory-driven learning from her methods classes. In this space of dissonance she tried to reconcile these two worlds, which seemed to operate in two separate spheres, each guided by a different reality. Ultimately, the finality of her statement, "it's a little discouraging to see that as much as they can tell you the theory of it, it's the practicality" pointed to an allegiance to the classroom life as the standard by which value is measured.

*Narrative 3: Defensiveness and self-doubt when competence is challenged: the "do I keep going, or do I just give up?" debate*

> So I realized that when I see a challenge, I'm like, 'yeah I can do this at first,' and then at a certain point if I realize that I can't do it then there's that moment of, 'do I keep going or do I just give up?'

Carina came into the teacher education program with a self-described competitive spirit - and along with scripts tied to her positionality as a White, middle class teacher candidate, she exhibited some self-assumed competence. However, the question of, "Do I keep going, or do I just give up?" - had been a binary for her. While her competence, confidence, and competitiveness drove her to push through some challenges, if the road felt too untenable, her confidence was visibly shaken, to the point of wanting to "give up." Even buoyed by a

competitive drive, during the process of learning to teach Carina faced challenges that sowed some seeds of self-doubt, stress, and uncertainty. Some of these moments of emotion arose during reflection about parts of the program where she faced interpersonal issues - these moments where the figured worlds seemed at odds, and Carina struggled with power and control in relation to others and her own efficacy.

One of the ways Carina's sense of competence was challenged while learning to teach was the experience of feeling surveilled under the guidance of her CT. Of being in the classroom with students, she said, "It would be a little better if my CT wasn't there. Sometimes I feel like she - I just feel like my boss is looking over my shoulder for eight hours a day and it's exhausting." Holland et al. (1998) refer to positional identities as "day to day and on the ground relations of power, deference, and entitlement, social affiliation and distance" (p. 127). Carina's comment pointed to an awareness of a definite "on the ground" power differential. Carina was learning to teach in her CTs classroom, under her CT's routines, norms, and structures. While there was varying degree to how much responsibility and autonomy PSTs were given while in practicum, there was no escaping that it wasn't "their own" classroom. Although the CT's role was to mentor and guide the PST, Carina's reference of her CT as a "boss" looking over her shoulder pointed to Carina's felt positional identity that her CT was there to evaluate and monitor her. Holland et al. (1998) note that people can take up a positional identity - a sense of their relative social position - that can lead to silencing themselves in a certain figured world. As an example of this, Carina said: "My CT is like, 'this is what the expectation is that we teach, so we're teaching it.' So that's what I do." Similarly, she said,

> We have to do team planning so if I don't follow exactly what the team plans then she'll be like, 'oh, we had talked about doing this and you didn't do that,' and so, that to me is

> frustrating because I don't always in the moment have a reason even though it's one of those things where it's a decision that is based in something, I just don't have my response or rebuttal prepared.

Carina seemed both frustrated by her "boss" questioning her but also by the fact that she could not deliver a "rebuttal" to explain the rationale behind her teaching decision. The "boss" title and her use of terms like "rebuttal" and "defend my teaching" evokes an adversarial relationship bound by power relations. For Carina, whose own figured world to this point had supported her sense of competence and the power that came with it, this oversight felt exhausting and frustrating because it pierced and challenged that vision of competence. This emotional reaction - defensiveness, frustration - might have also been magnified by the strong power dynamics she felt governed her relationship with her CT.

Second, Carina began to feel dejected by the overwhelming responsibilities of teaching, and especially how to be responsive to the needs of students:

> It's way too much to ever do well. To try and meet all your students' needs when you might have some students that don't speak English and some students that have differing needs, like a disability of sorts, and then you also might have some gifted and talented kids that you want to make sure you're challenging them, too, so it's just so many different levels of things that it seems like almost an impossible task.

Carina wanted to do everything well. But calling it an "impossible task" revealed how overwhelmed Carina felt, and how much self-doubt had creeped in about her ability to teach. In that moment, it all felt like "too much to ever do well. As Carina learned to teach - including

understanding her role of a teacher in addressing a wide variety of needs in the classroom - she became overwhelmed by the enormity of the task, realizing that she was not sure she was up to the task:

> I didn't realize how challenging it would end up being...to the point where I'm scared that I won't be able to do it. I know what it's supposed to look like but I don't see it happening. I leave practicum feeling really discouraged. It's sad because I care about the kids and I want them to do well and I just see that they're not getting what they need but then it's, 'well maybe I won't be able to do it either.'

Like many new teachers, Carina was trying to figure out what the art of teaching looked like in practice. It was through the discouragement in bringing these two worlds together: her own sense of the "ideal" teacher and also what teaching looked like on the ground, that she was making sense of who her teacher self might be. Yet in her eyes, if actual teachers were not able to do it all, what would make Carina think she could do it? Carina's positional identity had so far made her believe in her own competence and power. She did not view herself as someone *learning to teach*, but as someone who *already needed to be competent*. Moore (2008) writes that positional identity centers how race, gender, class, etc, frame how one positions the self in social contexts like a school. Grant (2019) captures this exact phenomenon:

> American society is organized to reproduce and reinforce White racial ideology, interests, and perspectives, and Whites are at the center of all matters considered normal, universal, neutral, and good (Di Angelo, 2016). Any change to that personal equation may be too much to bear. When the daily routine in a setting [with students who are] predominately Black, Brown, low income, and homeless, do White teachers become

> stressed out because they've been socialized to feel superior and entitled, to not admit to themselves that they are reinforcing a racist system? Does the flight of White teachers from the classroom have something to do with their unwillingness to challenge their own racial reality and deal with their realized self? Emotions of stress and anxiety developed in such a setting, I contend, have a great deal to do with race: the race of the teachers and the race of the students and the racist system in which both teachers and students are operating (p. 16).

When Carina's entitlement and superiority were challenged, giving up was a more palatable solution than challenging her racial self. The stress and anxiety of recognizing the limits of her power made her feel uncomfortable, powerless, and dejected.

> Carina: I think I have to compartmentalize it. I think I have to just say, "I can't think about this right now,' because it's survival mode of I just need to get through this day and I can't think about all of the big institutional things like the school is underfunded...you know, all of those kinds of thoughts. I would like to say that I get more motivated to help students but I don't think that's the case. I think I get more dejected. Cause you're only there a day and a half a week so it doesn't really put you in a position of feeling like, 'yeah! I can come in and really change something with my one and a half days a week.'

Her "traditional" and deficit-orientation to schools and students that she came into the program with met the realities of classroom life where she viewed students as being "behind" and needing to catch up - and herself as someone who could help with this. The scripts created around her race and class manifested in a white savior mentality. The sense that this was an

impossible task, coupled with her assessment that she was not in a position to "change something" with merely one and a half days a week, left her feeling even more dejected and filled with self-doubt.

The stress and self-doubt that emerged for Carina led to more questioning and self-doubt about teaching as a career choice for her. When Carina projected the lifestyle of a teacher out a few years, she remarked, "It's definitely not sustainable. I can tell that I'm doing a good job mostly while I'm student teaching, at the school, and I think my lessons are well planned out and everything, but I don't think that I could do this for years and be happy." The keeping-it-together mentality took a toll on her. Not wanting to be stressed all the time, she wondered if teaching was the right profession for her.

> It makes me wonder if all of the stress of my program is worth it if I'm not going to be happy...I'm starting to really consider 'is this really what I want to be doing?'... not that I don't think that I would be able to help some kids, I do, but I also think I could be really, really unhappy; just stressed all of the time, which is not what I want in my life.

To someone who had previously said she kept going or thought about giving up, hers is an admission of partial defeat - she had yet to figure out how to reckon with the hard truth about projected realities of the life of a teacher, nor reckon with how her race and the emotions she experienced were intertwined deeply. She was the embodiment of what Grant (2019) described above – that for a White teacher unable to deeply reckon with her racialized self, it was easier to simply leave the profession.

*Section 3: How Carina used mindfulness to frame her emotions in the process of learning to teach*

In the midst of navigating between the multiple figured worlds of learning to teach, and the world of her past experience, Carina also made meaning across a new figured world of mindfulness in a way that made sense to who she was becoming as a teacher. Here I describe, first, the usefulness of mindfulness to Carina. Then, I show how she improvised to incorporate mindfulness in a way that aligned with how she wanted to move through her emotions.

*Mindfulness' usefulness to Carina:*

Carina's productive struggle around the usefulness of mindfulness centered around how she valued some aspects of the practice yet also recognized its limitations for her. As a competitive and driven individual who always liked to maximize - never waste - time, but also as a PST prone to feelings of self-doubt, stress, and overwhelm, Carina appreciated how mindfulness allowed her to focus on herself rather than her lengthy and continuously curated to-do list. After the day-long intensive mindfulness retreat, she said:

> The day of the intensive, just to take the time and focus solely on myself with something that I don't think I do often, or if I do I feel guilty about it. Yeah, I always feel like I should be working on something. I have my to-do list in the back of my head, so just taking that time and space for myself I think has been helpful.

Carina was admittedly a "competitive" person who also embodied the white expectation around the importance of productivity and efficiency. Time felt precious to Carina and, as a result, needed to be highly protected. Every moment seemed to be a test of efficiency.

Mindfulness provided a respite from the constant churn of productivity and allowed her to break free - momentarily - from the trappings of the need to exert an emotionally exhausting amount of power and control over her productivity. Similarly, as someone who was driven by planning and completing tasks, mindfulness drew Carina in by helping her rest in the passing moment:

> It's like being aware in the good moments. Of not letting yourself be distracted of 'oh I have a paper due tomorrow,' when you're having dinner with your family. Just focusing on the goodness of being able to have dinner with your family. Or being outside in nature and just being able to appreciate the environment and not be thinking of your to-do list.

It was difficult for Carina to dis-attach her drive for efficiency. For her, the value of mindfulness was in the reprieve of always needing to be figuratively leaning forward. Yet at the same time, Carina also continued to wrestle with the ways mindfulness seemed misaligned with her way of being. As someone driven by efficiency, she wondered how mindfulness supported her drive to *do*, to figure out, to change things. When asked how the mindfulness intervention was stacking up to what she expected going into it, she said:

> I thought it was more about changing how you're thinking, like calming yourself down or changing how you're breathing to calm yourself down or to change your emotions, and I think I've learned it's less about change and more about awareness of those things, which I'm still kind of struggling with because I'm sometimes at the point of 'well. If I am aware of it, is that enough?' I still have that urge to want to change things, so just being aware is sometimes uncomfortable.

Realizing that mindfulness was simply about awareness was a struggle for Carina - to her, the value seemed to be what happened after becoming aware, instead of merely the awareness itself. She questioned whether simply being aware was "enough." To this point, she exclaimed: "Like what do we *do* once we notice this!"

Carina valued mindfulness but also recognized its limitations for her. Simply resting in awareness did not support what she usually wanted out of each moment, which was to move forward and - especially with difficult situations - change something or "do" something about it. Even though previously she mentioned appreciating the ability to step back from the "doing" and just enjoy a moment and take time for herself, she was still largely driven by her competitive need to accomplish - and in that sense, mindfulness partly stood in the way of that. Carina demonstrated a push-pull between wanting to step more fully into each moment as a reprieve from the constant churn of efficiency, and also wanting mindfulness to serve her need to maximize efficiency at the same time.

*How Carina took up mindfulness to frame her emotions:*

The "PST Well-being Training (2015) strove to ingrain mindfulness as the "habitus" (Holland et al., 1998) - yet PSTs took up practices in varied ways depending on how they saw its value to their teaching practice, and then improvised it into their teaching. We see Carina's improvisation in the way she started to re-evaluate the role her emotions played in her relationships with others. Whereas her previous scripts left her feeling defensive and negotiating power dynamics with colleagues and ineffective with students at times, she improvised within mindfulness to reflect and re-engage in a different way with those around her.

The way stress manifested in Carina's life became also her impetus to change. Carina's previous scripts had met the figured world of the teacher education program where the experience of learning to teach, and the self-doubt and stress that accompanied this experience for her, drove her to new understandings of how she might need to work with her emotions. When asked how she coped with stress, she said:

> Usually if I'm stressed about a paper I'm like, 'just get it done,' so if I'm stressed that I have a lot to get done I just try to get everything done and then I can feel like I've accomplished it and I don't have to stress about it anymore but that doesn't work with unknown things that aren't in your control.

Carina's way of working with stress was to eliminate the factors causing the stress. She realized that strategy would not work with factors out of her control - factors that she could not simply check off her list as being dealt with. And with many factors out of her control in the teacher education program, she knew she needed to seek a different strategy: "I think for me it does still come down to change a little bit. If I'm aware that I'm stressed all the time I need to make a change in my life to not be stressed all the time." What led Carina to realize that she needed to "make a change" in her life to deal with stress seemed to relate to interpersonal interactions. It was through improvising with the "pause", as I describe below, that allowed her to make this change.

*I. The pause: How Carina used the pause to preserve interpersonal relationships*

One tool from the figured world of mindfulness that Carina found value in was the "pause." In the training, the pause was introduced in the first session and built upon throughout the training. Mindfulness teachers discussed the physiology of stress response as a way of understanding what was happening psychologically and biologically in the body with stress reactions, and the benefit of calming the mind through the pause to help reduce one's stress response ("PST Well-being Training," 2015).

Carina appreciated how the pause allowed her to preserve her interpersonal relationships by helping her work through stress and frustration in order to respond more intentionally. She said, "I mean I think it's the pausing that's helped that I haven't yelled at my CT and just been like, 'what are you talking about!'" Carina used the pause to avoid emotional reactions to her CT. In addition, she commented:

> I think it's that recognition of my feeling and being mindful of, 'okay, I'm getting pretty frustrated right now,' and then that pause of just taking a breath before I respond just to kind of calm down a little bit and kind of choose how I respond versus responding out of frustration.

Improvisation explains how individuals piece together "existing cultural resources opportunistically to address present conditions and problems" (Holland et al, 1998, p. 277). The way Carina usually responded out of frustration was not benefitting present conditions, so she used the pause - a new resource to her - to improvise in her interactions with others. The ability to attune to her emotional state in the moment - just by recognizing the emotions that were coming up for her - allowed her a brief moment to "choose" how she would respond "versus responding out of frustration." Mindfulness allowed her to frame her emotional reactions in a

way that held real relevance to her, especially for someone who needed to see something productive of the practices (the idea that just being aware was "not enough").

The curriculum focused on emotional awareness as one of its key concepts, communicating the idea that when we are preoccupied or consumed by emotions, we cannot be present with the situation in front of us ("PST Well-being Training," 2015). The pause allowed Carina to do just that. She commented on the value she saw in this emotional awareness:

> I think that the idea is that you first need to be aware of something before you can do anything or deal with it...and at first you might not be aware of all of the negativity you have but then it can pop out at a time you wouldn't want it to or expect it to, like in a bad situation, so if you're aware, 'oh I'm feeling very frustrated,' or 'I'm feeling this way. I'm feeling very tense,' I think they also talk about the pause and take a step back and look at your own experience before reacting. So I guess in that way you're aware of it and that awareness can help you shape what decisions you make or actions you take.

The value of the "pause" was in how it allowed Carina the space to make a decision borne out of thoughtfulness by really looking at her experience, as opposed to responding reactively. Instead of stress building up and leading to an emotional explosion, which governed her past interactions, Carina reflected how mindfulness might have helped her preserve interpersonal relationships that might have been otherwise strained by the way Carina tended to explode after a build-up of stress. For example, here is how she imagined she might have used emotional awareness as a way to respond more effectively in these situations:

- And so that was one of the things for me that I didn't say anything to our leadership until it got to the point where I exploded, where it would have been better for me to talk to

them ahead of time and say, ‘look I’m really upset about this - why is it going this way?’ but I didn’t do that. I waited too long and got really upset, and then had to go into the meeting and say, ‘well this is why I’m really upset’ but had already the really bad part happened.

- I think if I had started this right away there might have been times where I started noticing, ‘I’m upset about this, but I’m not really upset about this, I’m actually upset about this other larger thing,’ and then being able to articulate it in a better way than what I have done in the past.

Although Carina was not yet regularly using the pause as a tool to help her in these situations, the way she talked through its potential usefulness showed how she might have improvised by bringing mindfulness into the interactions within her world of teacher education - into relationships with program leadership, for example. The “pause” had helped Carina develop emotional awareness that had the potential to help her strengthen interpersonal relationships.

### *II. The pause: How Carina used the pause to reflect on social power structures of the classroom*

Although mindfulness itself did not explicitly change a situation - what she originally desired - Carina was able to tie meaning to the practice of cultivating “awareness” by using the pause to actually untangle what was causing her distress, and avoid the emotional buildup that ended in an explosion. One example of how this played out in the school environment is what she explained here:

Carina: Yeah, I think part of it is the pausing, so I had an observed lesson with kids that were just crazy. They were, we had a substitute teacher and it was my observation day so I did a hands-on activity, but they were so excited that they were just like 'woooooo' crazy. So being able to pause and recognize, 'I'm getting upset about this and I'm upset partly because I'm being observed and I'm upset partly because I don't feel like they're learning and I'm upset partly because it feels like they are being disrespectful to me and looking at the different pieces of it I think can help you figure out how you should respond and also keep me from just blowing up and yelling at them. Like being mindful when I start to get upset that maybe I should take a step back before reacting. This is also a good practice.

Interviewer: That's really powerful. Do you feel like you were able to do that in the moment? It seems like a high stress situation where you were being observed.

Carina: Yeah I was able to not yell at them and that's my proudest moment was that I just made it through. We did the lesson and I was really upset but I didn't start crying or start yelling, I held it together. But it definitely did feel like panicky and upset of 'this is not going well and I'm being observed.' It was a learning experience.

Carina's improvisational move here was how she used the pause to probe her emotions in-the-moment to address her discomfort, untangling the elements behind her upset: was it about the kids "disrespecting" her? Was it about the frustration of feeling like they were not learning? Or was it about the stress of being observed and possibly judged? All of these elements that were causing stress could have provoked one blowout reaction - but each one would have necessitated a different response. Using the pause to take a step back and untangle these elements was "good

practice" for Carina partly because it helped her avoid yelling at them and helped her engage in some reflection about what was actually causing the stress, which proved to be a "learning experience" for her. She was also highly aware that during an observation when she was lead teaching, she was expected to be the teacher in the room - with that, comes the positional authority and responsibility of being the main teacher. Unlike the positional identity of deference and silencing herself (Holland et al., 1998) she usually - albeit begrudgingly- took up while in her CTs classroom, when she was lead teaching *she* called the shots, and students' learning was her responsibility. For Carina, who also held the fear of her competence being challenged, she likely felt added pressure to look like she had it all together.

She reflected further on the situation:

> Yeah, I definitely see it like...it will be helpful for my own being mindful of like why does it bother me so much when a kid completely doesn't do what I say? Why to me does that feel very disrespectful? I think it's an interesting thing like of how in my family you didn't do that and if you did you got in trouble so there's kind of a culture around my beliefs of what it means to be respectful and how you show that to adults in a classroom and how you should be respectful of the teacher. So I think being mindful of my own responses and biases in those ways (Carina W4I2, Pos. 28)

Carina used the "pause" to help her reflect on the productive struggle she felt in negotiating multiple figured worlds. For example, the pause allowed her to begin questioning her previously held traditional values and the previous "relative positioning" that teachers occupy (Moore, 2008) with new learnings from the teacher education program. Carina used the tools mindfulness

provided to look critically at how her emotional response to being "disrespected" was rooted in her own positional identity. While she did not use the term "positional identity," she was aware of the value in stepping back from her innate reaction to students being "disrespectful" - to realize that her perspective was indeed linked to these relations of power.

### *III. The pause: How Carina used the pause to begin to interrogate wider systems of power dynamics (racial identity)*

Like the situation above, Carina used a tool from the figured world of mindfulness to begin to help frame and make sense of her emotions around racial discomfort she experienced in the teacher education program.

> Carina: When it comes down to things where then it becomes about race then all of a sudden it's not just you have an issue with the supervisor, it's 'you're a racist,' and that is not something people want to be told or have to deal with, and then, I mean, ideally we would all take a step and think: 'okay, maybe this is this true,' but your first response is always going to be like, 'that's not true!' And I do think maybe—I think mindfulness may have helped in that way.
>
> Interviewer: Oh, tell me about it.
>
> Carina: Oh being able to realize, 'oh, I'm just getting defensive, I'm not thinking about if this is true or not, maybe I am biased in this way.' I don't think I made the connection of mindfulness in the moment I'm thinking of, but there was one time where I got called out on something and I first got very defensive about it because I was really surprised, and I don't think her response was appropriate in how she went around it, but I then realized that my response made it a lot worse so then eventually I just apologized and owned up to

> it. And I still don't like what she did, her side of it, but I at least felt good, or slightly better, that I took responsibility and admitted to it.
>
> Interviewer: Could you explain how mindfulness connects to that, again?
>
> Carina: Yeah, I just think maybe that realization of 'I said what I said because I was trying to defend myself, because I was feeling attacked,' so recognizing how my emotions were playing into what I said, and it wasn't really what I value or want to value and believe and say, but it was just recognizing that more of my response was very emotional. (Carina W4I3, Pos. 120-122)

In this situation, Carina used the pause to interrogate her own discomfort around her racial identity. Boler and Zembylas (2002) have written about using the pedagogy of discomfort as a means to expose racism. They say a pedagogy of discomfort "offers direction for emancipatory education through its recognition that effective analysis of ideology requires not only rational inquiry and dialogue but also the excavation of the emotional investments that underlie any ideological commitment" (Zembylas & Bolder, 2002). Carina admitted that she naturally reacted with defensiveness to being called a racist ("that's not true!") but that mindfulness helped her see the defensiveness as an emotional reaction that actually obscured a hidden truth. Mindfulness allowed Carina to reflect back and realize that her reaction was borne out of a desire to defend herself because she was "feeling attacked," (yet again the attack on competence). However, her emotional reaction did not allow her to respond in a way consistent with the values and beliefs from which she wanted to act. The pause allowed Carina to, however momentarily and after-the-fact, "transcend intellectual analyses about race" (Ohito, 2016, p. 462) that led her to more nuanced understandings of the workings of racism.

In this way, mindfulness was a powerful antidote to the cultural artifacts of whiteness (ie defensiveness, fragility, etc) that act as barriers to engaging in deeper racial awareness. The hope for Carina is that mindfulness would allow her to more deeply interrogate her emotions (and especially discomfort) as they relate to her own racial identity so she could, in turn, walk back into the world and operate with greater awareness. To that point, she said, “maybe just awareness of my emotions is also helping me become more aware of other people’s emotions and interpretations” (Carina W4I1, Pos. 117).

## Findings: Stephanie

*Section 1. Script of home: the Figured World of Stephanie's childhood*

Steph catapulted through the door at our first interview and plopped down in a chair. She was high energy, seemingly bursting at the seams. She was profusely apologetic for being late, but was actually 15 minutes early. After taking a few chocolates when offered, she alternated between doodling on her notebook and folding and then tearing up the chocolate wrappers as we talked. She spoke quickly and without preliminaries, and engaged openly in reflection about herself. She struck me by her commitment to figuring out herself.

While offering a glimpse into her background, family, and education, she shared some ideas about the scripts that had helped define her relationship with education and herself - these would play a significant role in her navigation of the figured worlds of learning to teach. Stephanie embodied a not uncommon type of PST in the teacher education program, similar to both Sarah and Carina - the middle class, high-achieving, perfectionist White female. The need to improvise is borne out of the incompleteness of current cultural resources or scripts to address a present problem (Holland et al., 1998). But, like her peers, being White and middle-class helped Stephanie easily fit with the educational system in which she excelled, so improvisational moves were not necessary or provoked by any mismatch between scripts of home and school. She shared,

> I've always been very good in school, that's who I was. I was valedictorian of my high schools and I have a 4.0 and I think a lot of it is it makes my parents so happy and I love my parents. They're just so proud and the thing is the difference between a 4.0 and a 3.99 is there really is not one in reality, it really doesn't matter, but it's having that perfect

> grade has become such a big part of my identity. I've always been good in school. That's who I was, was someone who was good at school. And so I feel like that's why I get so stressed about school too is because if I'm not good at school, what am I doing?

Stephanie was a high school valedictorian with a 4.0 GPA, and someone who had "always been very good in school, that's who I was." Even though she knew, rationally, the difference between a 3.99 and a 4.0, her emotional attachment to being "very good in school" became a significant part of her identity, to the extreme of needing that 4.0 perfection to preserve that identity, and to the exclusion of other potential facets of her identity: "If I'm not good at school, what am I doing?" Stephanie explained her entanglement between caring about something and perfectionism:

> Well, the thing is I think I can recognize that I do put a lot of pressure on myself and I want everything to be perfect right away, but I wouldn't want to tell myself to change that because that's just—I don't want to *not* strive for perfection. I understand that I won't get it, but I don't want to be okay with that, even though I should be. It just feels like I am not doing the best I can if I'm admitting defeat to a perfect lesson or this perfect thing, you know?

Although Stephanie realized she put a lot of pressure on herself, she also clung tightly to that part of a gendered "good girl" identity. She did not want to be "okay" with not striving for perfection, even though she recognized it put an extraordinary amount of pressure on herself. In one of her first interviews, in fact, she stated, "I think I've always had a strong always-gotta-improve-myself type mentality and so I think that if I'm not who I want to be I need to change to

be who I want to be." This always-gotta-improve-herself mentality encapsulated her perfectionist nature.

Parental involvement also amplified Stephanie's self-imposed pressure. It was evident to Stephanie that her parents were proud of her for her school success, and because it made them happy, the pressure to continue to live up to those expectations or continue to please her parents weighed heavily on her.

> Stephanie: And it's really hard letting go of that knowing it matters a lot to my parents, too. And I've talked to my mom about it and she's like, 'oh Stephanie.' And I want her to say that she doesn't care but she does.
>
> Interviewer: Care about your professional track or grades?
>
> Stephanie: Yeah, grades. And it's just these egotistical perfect grades and that's the thing where it really doesn't matter but it makes her really happy.

Stephanie had a hard time "letting go" of her parents' expectations because she knew school success mattered to her parents. And if it mattered to her parents, it mattered to her. As a natural consequence of assuming this relentless pursuit to be high-achieving, Stephanie was extremely goal and task oriented. She embodied the white expectation around feeling good when feeling productive - magnified by an intense perfectionist bent.

- I'm feeling anxious about not doing something, or not being productive, not checking something off the list, which—and then it's funny, too, because I'm constantly go-go-go-go-go-go, and once I get this, which is normally Friday afternoons, I have a couple hours but then I'm sad again because I'm like, 'well what am I doing?' I think I am a very goal-driven person and if I have a task that I

am working on it really stresses me out and it doesn't make me feel good, but I feel purpose in doing it, so when I don't have that, I'm like, 'what am I doing?' This typical thing. (Stephanie W4I3, Pos. 36)

- See, it's interesting because I feel if I'm not stressed I'm not caring enough. So I feel this push to not be stressed is kind of a cop-out. You should be caring so much about it, and part of that is school. School's always been a big part of my identity, and so I don't know, I get stressed a lot and it's funny because when I'm not feeling stressed then I get stressed because I'm like, 'I really need to be more stressed about this. What am I doing? This is important! Why am I not worrying about it!' ...But it's the second I don't have something on my plate that I don't have to do, when I don't have that something to do it's so unsettling. It's really – it's like the summer downs they call it.

The cultural script of being productive and task oriented was so ingrained in Stephanie that any free time (where she did not feel any "purpose") felt unmooring to Stephanie. The constant churn of productivity and "checking something off the list" signaled to her that her anchor was, indeed, solid - that her identity as someone who cared about school and success was in alignment with what she was doing. Stephanie used "stress" as a sign that she was what she thought she was – the "good girl" facade. And as long as this was in alignment - as long as she was feeling the stress that accompanied this confirmation - she might not have to question that part of her identity.

Improvisations are needed when our past "meets with a particular combination of circumstances and conditions for which we have no set response" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 17).

On one hand, Stephanie held tightly to a set response - a script - that had worked for her so far. She relied on this script so much that she was not able to improvise when the script was gone. In other words, she was able to accommodate situations with a well-established "habitus" (Holland et al., 1998) so in moments where she had nothing to do, it was difficult for her to stop and take stock, or pivot to try something new. On the other hand, if performing exists in the same space as improvisation, then her reliance on these scripts helped her avoid being *her.* Stephanie was so captured by those scripts (the gendered niceness and "good girl" façade) that she stapled them together to create a Stephanie.

Stephanie also felt emotions strongly and the internal pressure to express certain emotions over others. She placed pressure on her own emotions - something that would come up as she melded the world of teacher education with the world of mindfulness. For example, she had self-imposed rules about what emotions were permissible for her to feel, and which were not.

> I think that I can empathize well with people, if they're feeling a certain way I can respect that, but if I'm feeling a certain way and I don't think I should be feeling that way I feel like I don't have that empathy for myself because I'm like, 'you should not be feeling this way.'

While she felt she could empathize well with others, she was very judgmental of her own emotional state and expressed difficulty in feeling empathy for herself. She self-censored her feelings in order to optimize the "right" emotions to feel ("if I'm feeling a certain way and I don't think I should be feeling that way"). As with the control and pressure she exerted over her academic pursuits, she exhibited similar tendencies with her emotions.

Emotional labor is the management of feeling and expression of emotions in order to produce or drive efficiency in the work place (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). Sociologist Arlie Hochschild describes emotional labor as the display of "social engineering" (p. 33), using the example of female flight attendants who were explicitly directed and then taught how to suppress their anger at passengers. In this way, emotions are commodified as labor. Sometimes this emotional labor is explicitly taught, as in the flight attendant example, but sometimes it operates covertly by way of "feeling rules," (1979) in which the individual implicitly "measures experience against an expectation often idealized" (p. 565) that governs what one should feel, wants to feel, and tries to feel in order to do their work. Stephanie showed adherence to "feeling rules" when she measured what she was feeling against its appropriateness. In the next section, this will come up as Stephanie described "feeling rules" as emotional norms of the workplace, that, in turn, regulated her perception on the appropriateness of emotions and emotion expression as she learned to teach.

*Section 2. Script of teacher ed program: Stephanie's improvisations across the figured worlds of learning to teach*

In this section I show how Stephanie navigated her emotions as she worked across multiple figured worlds as she learned to teach. In this process, she brought with her scripts from her previous figured world, that I explained above (perfectionism, being goal and task oriented, and identifying with and being governed by emotions). These met with the figured world of learning to teach, with its own values and assumptions. In the merging of these worlds, Stephanie experimented with new scripts that continued to shape her emotions and emotional expression.

Seglem (2015) describes the idea of the space of authoring as "the multiple internal dialogues that people engage in to make sense of their selves" (p. 23). In the space of authoring, PSTs can question, reject, adopt, modify, and negotiate their figured worlds - and in doing so, their own identities as teachers are reshaped. We can see Stephanie questioning and negotiating multiple worlds as she reflected on the emotions she drew on, and that were drawn out of her, as she learned to teach. Her improvisations are explained here in the way she merged the scripts from her past, with the newer scripts of learning to teach, and the "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1979) she relied on to do this. Hers was the story of the resulting intense emotional labor and effort that manifested. I divide this next section into exploring the emotion rules that governed herself and then the emotion rules that governed her interactions with others.

### *Emotion rules that governed herself*

The scripts that had so far defined Stephanie were described in the first section. She identified as a "good" student, so in her teacher education program, she also wanted to fully embrace being a good teacher. This included enacting attributes that she believed were part of the teacher script.

> Stephanie: I think that the absolute most important thing is you have to have that passion for it. And that passion goes multiple ways. You have to really care and feel personally invested in your kids. You love your kids and you love that your kids are learning and progressing and becoming better kids, and so it's that, I think it's that desire— I think that you have to have kind of an intrinsic desire there otherwise you can't fully put

yourself into it. That's why I love it so much is because I have that. I really, really like spending time with my kids, it makes me so happy just thinking about it tomorrow.

Interviewer: I remember feeling that from you in the last interview.

Stephanie: [laughing] yeah.

Interviewer: So, passion.

Stephanie: Passion is for sure, for sure, for sure.

Passion was a necessary attribute - in the way teachers demonstrated love, care for, and felt personally invested in children. Stephanie noted passion as an attribute that teachers "have to have," calling forth a vision of teaching that defined, for her, what she should have. Louie (2017) described these ideas as orienting resources. These resources shaped Stephanie's learning by "defining what it is that they should know and be able to do." Because identity and learning is intertwined, an orienting resource like the attributes Stephanie associated with teachers also shaped her "professional identity, setting standards against which teachers can measure themselves" (p. 15) - and which Stephanie did. The idea that passion was a prerequisite is the way "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1979) covertly drives emotional labor. Feeling rules are when an individual implicitly "measures experience against an expectation often idealized" (p. 565) that governs what one should feel, wants to feel, and tries to feel in order to do their work. Stephanie identified "passion" as an emotional norm of the workplace, necessary in order to fully "put yourself into it." This emotional norm easily took root, given Stephanie's perception on the significance of emotions in the workplace.

Stephanie: It's, it's, it's, I don't know, it's such an emotional job for me and I'm sure for a lot of other people.

Interviewer: What do you mean by that?

Stephanie: Where you just feel so much, you care so much, you know, you just…and then I understand why that's probably why there's a lot of burnout, too, is because you care so much and—but actual skills? I personally feel like it doesn't, the skill set doesn't even matter as much. I think it's just that feeling that's most important, which maybe isn't speaking so highly of the profession, but I mean it from a good place.

As a high-achieving perfectionist, it bothered Stephanie to admit that the "skill set" did not matter to being a good teacher as much as having the "feeling." This seemed to be an internal struggle for Stephanie, yet she remained consistent in her commitment to the importance of feeling and emotion. However, the expectation that teachers needed to have specific emotions and feelings became a standard to which she constantly measured herself.

Stephanie: I'm sick of—it's all the social rules you have to follow, like putting effort into, and I'm sure I'm a broken record, I've said this so many times, just smiling at people and laughing at things that aren't funny. All of these kinds of social rules that you do that it's like I'm fed up, I'm tired of it. I do that all day. I just want to look at someone and not have to smile when I'm talking to them. I want to just be—and if I'm grouchy, then be grouchy; instead of having a nice intonation in my voice, if they say something that annoys me I want to be able to just be like…[motions with her hand].

Interviewer: why can't you?

Stephanie: Because I think that's rude. And it's more than just rude. I think that it's treating other people well—it's almost kind of like supporting other people, too, like

they're talking to you and you're not smiling or whatever—cause smiling a lot can bring them up, and together you're here.

The social rules Stephanie felt she had to follow, including smiling and laughing, supporting others, and not being "rude" were emotion regulation goals that stemmed from her beliefs about the role of a teacher as passionate and caring for others. This adhered her to norms, or "display rules" about acceptable emotions to be displayed under particular situations - like laughing at things that aren't funny - and "feeling rules" about what is appropriate to feel and when (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino, & Knight, 2009).

Here is where some of the scripts she brought into the program - namely, her high degree of perfectionism and success - intersected with her experience in and motivation to be in the teacher education program. She stated, "I am very confident. But I think part of that, too, stems from I don't want to be one of the ones that doesn't do it. I think I take this as egotistical selfish pride and going through with things. I *don't quit*." As a profession, teaching deeply resonated with her. Even though she felt she connected emotionally to students, and loved the practicum experience, her confidence in teaching was entangled with her expression of identity that she was not a quitter. Stephanie's "egotistical selfish pride" propelled her even if there were questions about whether teaching felt right or the degree of emotional exhaustion that accompanied it. For someone afraid of failing, emotional self-regulation allowed her to override emotions in the moment in order to help her attain longer-term goals that were more closely tied to her sense of effectiveness as a teacher (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino, Knight, 2009). Self-worth is a large motivator for teachers (Parker, Martin, Colmar, & Liem, 2012). However, this puts teachers in a

perpetual state of vulnerability, as they are constantly analyzing their self-worth (Zembylas, 2003).

*Emotion rules that governed her interactions with others*

In the process of learning to teach, Stephanie merged previous scripts with newer scripts about what it meant to teach and be in relation with students. She now faced new situations where neither the scripts from her past figured world nor the new scripts from the world of teacher education worked. This required her to improvise - and Stephanie did so by relying on emotion and feeling rules to govern herself, helping to prevent her from feeling like a failure (the ultimate nightmare for a perfectionist). In order to understand this through a particular classroom situation, it is helpful first to understand how deeply Stephanie felt connected to others. The emotions Stephenie felt in connection with her students came across very strongly, and in her experience of learning to teach, love and joy took a front seat. Here are two exchanges that captured her emotions in relation to her students.

- Stephanie: I do think this program I feel a lot of investment in it. I was invested in school but here – I really I love teaching, I love it. I'm in a great placement right now, I'm in a second-third-grade class and they just make me so happy...And I've always enjoyed it but this is the first time where it's like if I'm having a bad day I get to see my kids tomorrow, I'm really pumped about that.
- Stephanie: I feel so much love for them. And just watching them and talking to them. I always think of this one kid's face – seriously I cannot get over, he's just the cutest kid and he's always so happy and goofy all the time and I just feel like

> so much for him. When we were supposed to write someone we care about, someone we want to be happy in life, he was one of the ones I thought of. So I feel a lot of that. I feel like I feel so much of that during my day.
>
> Interviewer: I hear that in your voice.
>
> Stephanie: There isn't a set moment but I do feel it very strongly a lot just looking at them. And seeing them happy. And smiling with each other.

When she spoke, Stephanie seemed to overflow with warmth. The unfettered love and joy that seem to adhere her to teaching may have been present as she decided to pursue teaching, as they often are. In fact, many PSTs give reasons for going into teaching "without understanding the emotional requirements and the labor that love requires" (Grant, 2019, p. 13). Her emotions were closely tied to the relational aspect of teaching, which further solidified the emotional rules that regulated her. She felt such a strong emotional connection to others, so much so that these feeling rules (Hochschild, 1979) - and the emotional labor that came with following them - were magnified.

> I've seen visually a line from me to the other person and so here in my room I don't have any responsibility there, there isn't another person. But when I'm at school all day, I have 15 kids with 15 lines that you're trying to keep up, and it's really tiring, and you go home and the last thing you want is to keep lifting up, you know? (Stephanie W4I3, Pos. 66-73)

Stephanie's analogy of a line connecting her to 15 other people that she had to try to "keep up" was visually telling of how strongly she felt connected to others' emotions. However, Stephanie exemplified one of the problems Louie et. al (2022) noted in their illustration of

radical belonging, which is the “tendency to treat feelings of belonging as separate from academic learning” (p. 4). In all of Stephanie’s proclamations of love and connection, academic learning is “backgrounded.” Absent is a nuanced perspective of how love and care are connected to learning. In fact, White teachers that profess these emotions are often enacting "racist love" and "colonial care" (Leonardo & Gamez-Djokic, 2019, p. 9).

This attentiveness and responsiveness to reciprocating the emotions of her students was also emotionally exhausting. In order to maintain this connection, and to continue “lifting up” students that she felt was part of her job, she would continue to expend the energy of emotional labor. As an agent who stifled, controlled, suppressed, and managed emotions in order to do this work (Hochschild, 1983), she again exemplified the display of “social engineering” (p. 33).

*Example from the classroom: The “Jonathan situation”*

It was the following interpersonal situation that captured how Stephanie navigated between her childhood scripts and the figured world of learning to teach. Here is what Stephanie described happening in her practicum classroom, and the role she experimented with as an emerging teacher, which captured the feeling rules that governed her:

> We got some writing done and everything was good and then we got to Spanish class and he was drawing for a really long time, and I was like, ‘Jonathan, maybe we can – let’s work on the rest of them and then you can come back to it and you can draw and spend all the time.’ Cause it was a whole worksheet and he was stuck there the whole time, and he didn’t want to do that and he was just sitting there and I felt very guilty afterwards, it was guilt that I felt, because I told him – and I didn’t raise my voice or anything but I was

> like, 'Jonathan can you look at me?' and he wasn't looking at me. And I was like, 'Jonathan can you look at me?' 'No.' I'm like, 'Jonathan look at me,' I wanted to tell him, 'Jonathan you can do this. You'll get this done, it'll be so good,' and I felt it was better if he would have looked at me, but I feel in that moment I kind of crossed some line because then he – what breaks my heart is I remember him turning towards me but he wouldn't look at me and it just felt this very corrupt power struggle where I was like, 'Johnathan look at me,' and he didn't want to. Then he left and just sat down and looked forward and just checked out. And I felt really bad, that was not helpful for him and I feel like the relationship I had with him is now ruined and I feel like traumatizing is a big word, but I felt like in some way I was responsible for traumatizing him, for lack of a better term.

In the moment where Jonathan initially avoided her requests, she was faced with a choice about how to respond. Her response escalated into an order to "look at" her - and as she stood her ground, resulted in a power struggle that was traumatizing for him and tarnished their relationship. It is possible to be both responsive to students' needs *and* try to meaningfully engage them in learning (Louie & Pacheco, 2021), especially as part of the act of love, which Stephanie professes to have in abundance. However, her directives at Jonathan were absent of both. As she worked aloud through the disappointment of that moment, and the guilt she felt afterwards, you can almost visibly see the collision of multiple worlds. She began by talking about the "strict" expectations of her CT, and then shifted to reveal her thoughts on some of the seemingly competing ideas from her teacher education program that complicated the Jonathan moment for her:

> In her [Cooperating Teacher's] class, she has expectations and if they do not meet those expectations even a little - like she universally holds people responsible which is interesting because at first I'm like, 'man she's super strict, wow! I wonder how all of the kids feel about her,' but then it also kind of fostered this mutual respect even though it's kind of opposite of…I feel like [in the program] we're learning more of the, 'oh everyone can kind of do their own thing and it's fine,' so at first it was very 'ah! This is super rigid and strict! What's happening!' and so anyway I was thinking about that and when I was talking to him [Jonathan] and he wasn't answering me, I was thinking, 'if I walk away right now then I'm setting the precedent that he doesn't have to listen to me.' That expectation if I walk away I'm saying that he's in charge and he doesn't answer me that's fine. And so that, I was very aware of that, and I kind of was in the moment when I said, 'Johnathan can you look at me,' that I could feel it but that whole you gotta hold your ground thing was I think was what kept me doing it but I don't think it felt right in the moment because we read something where I think in some culture or in some certain circumstance kids feel very uncomfortable looking at authority. And then in the back of my head that was there but in the front of my head was 'you have to keep these expectations.'

In her drive to learn and do teaching correctly and well (perfectionism), Stephanie tried on strategies she learned from her CT (to hold "high expectations" and hold people "responsible"), positioning herself as an authoritarian figure even though it did not feel right. Her teacher education program opened her perspective to cultural differences in ways of relating to "authority" - even though she was not quite interrogating what "authority" meant in the first

place, nor untangling the nuance between "high expectations," mutual respect, and power. However, in thinking retrospectively about her teacher moves in this emotional moment with Jonathan, we see her start to reason across these multiple worlds. The emotions that surfaced for her - namely, guilt - as she reflected on this mistake with Jonathan reified what she professed to care about, which was Jonathan's feelings. Here are two comments she made in perseveration about this incident that offer a glimpse into what governed her:

> See for that one it's hard for me to let that one go. If I do a lesson and maybe they're not engaged I'll be like, 'ugh, okay. Well I didn't do so good there, I'll try and do better,' but with this one it was affecting how this child felt and how it made him feel and that's harder to just be like, 'oh that's okay!' it's harder for me to forgive myself for.

> There's a standard I have where every kid is super happy and everything connects and it's just this big, joyous thing, and I recognize that that's not the case, and I recognize that it's impossible, and I recognize that it's not good for me to feel stressed or sad when that doesn't happen; but I don't—it would feel irresponsible and it would feel like I'm not being the person I want to be if I'm just like, 'yeah, can't be perfect, so that's fine.'

Stephanie was unable to implement her CT's script or the more culturally sensitive teacher script. Because teachers invest themselves in their work, they do feel a sense of failure or success due to their perception of self-efficacy (Nias, 1996). Stephanie's perfectionism and fear of failure would not allow her to forgive herself for the mistake she made with Jonathan and made her feel "irresponsible" to accept anything less than the ideal. This proved to be a very difficult place to be, emotionally. While on one hand her guilt was productive in that it helped

her realize the damage that was inflicted with such an authoritarian approach, it also prevented her from being able to "let that one go" and resulted in internal emotional battering. Although she recognized the impracticality of her vision, her standards set her own stage for disappointment and frustration when she inevitably made mistakes in the process of learning to teach. Lazarus (1991) points to appraisal as part of the emotion component that drives feelings of self-efficacy. Appraisal includes recognition of how an experience interacts with an individual's goals and motivations. Goal incongruence leads to negative emotions, and goal congruence leading to positive emotions (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). And as a goal-oriented perfectionist, the Jonathan situation resulted in goal incongruence and a slew of negative emotions.

### *Emotional labor and exhaustion*

The social norms Steph referred to had become codified rules that she exerted effort into following. They guided and controlled her emotional expression by defining how she should regulate her own emotions, and how she should emotionally interact with others - both described above. To understand the ways in which these emotional expression rules she ascribed to played out, here is what she described when talking about how student teaching was going:

> Steph: I feel genuinely happy when I'm there, I also feel a lot of pressure when I'm there, and it also makes me really tired and it makes me on edge because I'm constantly having to project this enthusiasm and that kind of puts me on edge because it's really tiring being super happy and excited about everything in the day.
>
> Interviewer: And you've been getting that expectation from yourself, your students, your CT? Or it just feels inauthentic?

Steph: Well like there's times where I'm purposefully trying to do it for my kids and sometimes it's like that conscious decision and sometimes I'm really genuinely just super happy. A lot of times it is that. But it's just because, something I love about kids, is there is so much life and so much joy and so much excitement and so much light and I feel like I'm there and I'm guiding them, the worst thing I could do is to try to dip that or deflect that or something like that. So if they are excited about something, I want them to stay excited about it and I do that by being excited for them and with them, for it.

Interviewer: Even though it's exhausting to you.

Steph: Mhm. And it can get really tiring, even though it's really enjoyable at the same time, you know? But I think that's my biggest hardship with it is just for so many hours kind of having this act.

By labeling her happiness as genuine *at times*, Stephanie actually drew attention to the moments where she felt like she had to project inauthentic emotions. She referred to this tiring inauthenticity as an "act" - for example, she felt the pressure to "constantly" have to project enthusiasm. Younger teachers like Stephanie find themselves "at the bottom of a hierarchical structure" that make them feel restricted as they learn "appropriate" ways to express their emotions (Liljestrom, Roulson & Demarrais, 2007, p. 287). The emotional impacts of teachers' regulation of emotions can be explored through two pathways – deep acting, in which individuals change their experienced emotion, and surface acting, in which individuals regulate their expressed emotion (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). To Stephanie, reciprocating students' emotions - by feigning excitement for them and with them - was surface acting that

helped her maintain her students' happiness. However, this "act" caused Stephanie to feel "on edge." She was tired from having to do this for so many hours. She went on:

> The kids - they bring me joy and that—reciprocating that with them takes a lot of energy and it makes me tired. I go home, and I just want to chill. It was funny, I had a couple of realizations with how tired I am and how draining it is, because it is a very draining profession, you're constantly on for the kids, and there are times where I'm putting actual effort in to my work, I'm not genuinely laughing at their joke or I'm not genuinely excited about something and yeah, that obviously takes energy. And so I constantly feel like I'm taking so much and then I get home and I just want to stop. And I'm tired of people. I don't want—I'm so sick of having social interactions where it's like if someone says something that isn't funny, I still have to smile and laugh. That takes energy. That's more energy and I'm so tired and I don't want to keep doing that.

Stephanie was guided strongly by social rules about emotions. Her improvisation became feeling rules that required emotional mirroring which then became her script. Stephanie referred to the actual emotional "effort" of reciprocating students' emotions. For example, she mentioned she had to "smile and laugh" even if someone said something that was not funny. Lavy and Eshet (2018) found that increased surface acting paired with teachers' negative emotions, while deep acting was associated with less burnout, more adaptability, and more self-efficacy. When the production of an emotion was not genuine but fabricated, it took energy and effort - or labor. She could not authentically be herself because she was caught in these emotion rules and scripts that she had stapled together (from the "good girl" façade, from teacher education, etc) to create herself. The improvisations we see are in the performing of this self.

This is the untold labor of caring professions like teaching, which is magnified for teachers like Stephanie. The emotional exhaustion of this labor might have been a clue of some discord between her own authentic emotions and what was expected of her from the figured world of teaching. Bodenheimer & Schuster (2020) invoke Hochschild (1983) when they contend that "when emotions become a commodity, individuals may lose touch with their private emotional selves - what Hochschild calls alienation - as they routinely enact emotions that conform to workplace expectations rather than align with their inner feelings" (p. 69). As they become "alienated" from their authentic selves, exhaustion amplifies.

Last, Stephanie commented on both the emotional burden *and* the emotional satisfaction she felt as she learned to teach:

- It's like I'm not going to go home and beat myself up about it, but I think that I feel—like every single day I get to school really early because I'm still worried that I'm not going to do well. And I'm not afraid of failure, I'm not afraid of failure, but maybe I am as a teacher. I guess maybe because it's the responsibility of the kids as well, and it's what I've been working on for for so long.
- But, I seriously, I do love, I love it. I just feel like it's where I'm supposed to be. Like my kids, they mean so much. That's the word, it's so meaningful and it can be tiring when something is so meaningful and you're working on it all the time.

While her perfectionism and expression of identity that she did not "quit" helped her approach teaching with zeal, it also caused high emotional stress and exhaustion. With the fear of failure ever present, especially with the Jonathan situation a stain on her conscience, Stephanie relied heavily on her commitment to continue emotionally "lifting up" others. This repositioned

feeling rules as central to how she displayed emotions – which emotionally exhausted her. However, Stephanie might have been willing to expend this emotional labor because of some emotional rewards. Feelings of excitement and joy were central to Stephanie's job satisfaction, as others have shown (Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996). Like Zembylas (2004) had found in his study of the emotional experiences of a high school science teacher, Stephanie also made the most of positive feelings, and spoke often about how gratifying the profession felt to her. Like the high school teacher in Zembylas' study, "she seems to be willing to do the emotional labor because there are significant emotional rewards" (p. 316).

*Section 3. Script of mindfulness: How Stephanie used mindfulness to frame her emotions in the process of learning to teach*

In the previous sections, I first described the script of Stephanie's childhood. Then I discussed how she brought her own cultural scripts into the world of the teacher education program. In the midst of navigating between the multiple figured worlds of learning to teach, and the world of her past experience, Stephanie also learned about the new figured world of mindfulness. In the same way that Stephanie made meaning across the figured worlds of teaching, I will show in this last section how Stephanie continued trying to make sense of her emotions as she used the language of mindfulness to figure out who she was. In doing so, Stephanie took up mindfulness in ways that framed emotions in particular ways. Stephanie's improvisational moves took shape in a space of authoring, where she questioned, rejected, adopted, and negotiated across the figured world of mindfulness and of teaching. As she explored the new world of mindfulness, hers was the story of both curiosity and resistance.

To explain how Stephanie used mindfulness to frame her emotions in the process of learning to teach, and why her improvisation took the form of resistance, I will explore Stephanie's pervasive feeling of discomfort in how mindfulness distanced her from her authentic self. I will discuss how she spoke about how mindfulness framed both her emotions (looking at empathy as an example) and her thoughts (looking at equanimity as an example). In the last section, I will discuss why that framing led to her resistance.

*Emotions*

Stephanie was initially drawn to the idea that mindfulness would help her gain "control" of her emotions:

> I went into this [mindfulness intervention] because I wanted to have control of my emotions. Thinking about it now it's like – it's like this weird thing where I want to be in control of my emotions but I feel like in a sense being in control of emotions isn't letting you completely feel them because if you're deciding how you're going to feel, it's not coming from you; it's coming from your head. It's not coming from my heart. And so if I'm in control of it it's not really there, I'm just fabricating it, it's not real. It's not – like it's not me, in a way.

Although her intention was to use mindfulness to control her emotions, Stephanie quickly realized that in trying to learn emotional control, she actually felt more distanced from her emotions, and *less* of who she was. In the way the "PST Well-being Training (2015) curriculum taught emotional awareness as one of its key concepts, she was introduced to the idea that we cannot be present with the situation in front of us when we are preoccupied by or consumed by

emotions. To facilitate qualities of non-judgment and equanimity, mindfulness taught Stephanie to recognize her emotions as felt experiences, as opposed to identifying with, or *being* the emotions (i.e. clarifying the difference between "I *feel* anger" and "I *am* angry"). For Stephanie, the space of emotional awareness that the mindfulness curriculum intended to help facilitate actually created a distance for her that disallowed her to truly *feel* her emotions as she was used to. Being in control of her emotions - i.e. being in her "head," meant she was not in her "heart" - which was the real her. Controlling her emotions did not let her be *her.*

Similarly, course instructors read the Rumi poem "The Guest House" to orient PSTs to the idea that emotions come and go. Yet Stephanie's reaction to that poem and her similar sentiments about "neutralizing" her emotions captured the fear she had of losing her sense of self if distanced from her emotions:

- I really didn't agree with it that your body is a house and emotions come through it, so by merit those emotions aren't you—and if those emotions aren't you, what are you? If you're just a house are you just a shell? Is it literally just your body and all these thoughts and emotions that you experience that's not—so who are you then? To me, those emotions and those thoughts define you and so—oh man.
- I also got worried that I would then lose those times that I'm super happy and super pumped because they talked about – I thought it [mindfulness] was maybe going to neutralize my emotions and I don't want. I don't know. It's definitely not the best where it's like super high energy and then you crash down but that's me and I wouldn't want to change me

Mindfulness provoked in Steph a fear of a separation of herself from her emotions, as well as a "neutralization" of her emotions. The emotional peaks of "high energy" and a "crash down" defined her. The course introduced participants to the key points of practice, which included these points: "We can find ease and well-being even in the midst of turmoil.
To find the above, we learn to see that while we experience thoughts, emotions, sensations etc., we are not these. ("PST Well-being Training," 2015). Yet Stephanie resisted the figured world of mindfulness' attempt to ingrain the "habitus" (Holland et al., 1998) of *experiencing* as opposed to *identifying with* emotions. As someone whose feelings were extremely important to her, any separation from them, or a charge to observe them objectively and without judgment – as mindfulness language instructs -- caused her so much discomfort that she resisted the practices. Zembylas (2007) explores how teachers and students participate in how culture, power, and ideology create discourses by "adopting or resisting dominant discourses" (p. 296), and this resistance is exactly how Stephanie participated in this new learning from the figured world of mindfulness.

*Example: Empathy*

As an example, mindfulness did not allow Stephanie to genuinely feel an emotion like empathy:

> Stephanie: Like there is empathy but to me it's not as genuine as empathy. You're not actually feeling it, you're just recognizing it. And I think that recognizing it is very strategic and useful because feeling it you're going to be hurt a lot, because when your kids hurt then you're going to be hurt. So practically it makes a lot of sense and I'm not saying you should approach it in the way that I do, but I feel like that's a big part of how I

see the world is through feeling that way. I feel like feelings are extremely important to me.

Interviewer: And do you feel like mindfulness doesn't necessarily get you to feel them in a way that's helpful to you?

Stephanie: Yes. That's the big divide is when I do mindfulness I feel like I'm not feeling I'm just, and I'm not thinking either. I'm not feeling and I'm not thinking, I'm just kind of there. Like an empty thought, an empty feeling, because if you're objectifying how you're feeling you're supposed to kind of step back. If you're supposed to be this house and this guest is in your house you're not truly letting yourself feel it.

In having Stephanie recognize her emotions, mindfulness seemed to "objectify" emotions, making it impossible for her to "actually feel" them. She was an individual who felt deeply and thrived on emotional connection with others (remember her description of emotional "lines" connecting her to others). This was part of who she thought herself to be: "I feel like that's a big part of how I see the world is through feeling that way." Objectifying thoughts and feelings, or letting them come and go as the Rumi poem illustrated, was a "step back" from the genuine emotion that she so strongly identified with. In her words, "I think there isn't so much empathy in mindfulness." In open disagreement about the Rumi poem, she commented: "And that's the thing is you feel them, and you are them and that's fine, but you shouldn't treat them as passing guests. That's who you are."

She seemed to feel that the way mindfulness encouraged recognition and awareness of emotion caused separation from the emotion itself, which made it somehow less authentic, and thus delegitimized the importance of the experience of the emotion itself. She said, "I don't see

how following your breath is going to teach you about you," conveying her stance that this distanced way of being with emotion was somehow preventing her from accessing her authentic self.

*Thoughts*

Similar to her discomfort about distancing herself from her emotions, Stephanie was disquieted by mindfulness practices which were meant to increase awareness of thoughts. Here she referred to the feeling, again, of being disconnected from herself:

> Yeah, it's been really interesting. I'm definitely exploring my thoughts about it, how it makes me feel. The first day we did it, it actually freaked me out a little bit. I got this weird – I felt like I turned my brain off and I could turn it back on and it was kind of freaky for me. I feel like a lot of times I'm just checking out. In a weird way, like I'm abandoning myself. It's like I'm not present in a way, which is funny because I think that's the opposite of how we're supposed to feel…

Stephanie associated so strongly with her thoughts that when distanced from them, she did not know who she was. She conveyed a sense of loss and disconnection to her true self when she remarked: "I feel like I have a lot of thoughts in my head all the time and to be like, 'no thoughts!' I don't know. I feel like then it's not me. My inner-dialogue is off and so then where do I go." Even the Thought Parade practice when participants were instructed to let thoughts pass through the mind like a parade ("just watch them go") - was unnerving for Stephanie. Although mindfulness practice was supposed to help her be more present, all she felt was an abandonment from herself. Later in this interview she said, "I feel like it's a little death. It's like a death.

Because that's who I am and if I turn me off then where do I go? It feels like a mini-death in that way."

*Example: Equanimity*

The way mindfulness approached the framing of emotions did not sit right with Stephanie. Stephanie was an academically high achieving, problem solving, perfectionist. Her disappointment with mindfulness came partly from its lack of utility to align to those goals. The teacher script stressed the basic mindfulness tenets of non-judgment and equanimity. "When you are okay with your stress or your emotions, you will come to find that you really are okay. Whatever is happening, however challenging, you are okay" ("PST Well-being Training," 2015). However, this acceptance did not square with perfectionism and her drive to want to improve:

> Oh and then it brought up this practice is being very accepting and kind to yourself and so it's like you're accepting yourself for who you are but what if who you are isn't who you want to be? And so then, are you saying that you should just be someone you don't want to be because it's who you are, or is it your responsibility to change yourself to be who you want to be? It's this kind of struggle-thing that I think about, too.

The qualities of non-judgment and equanimity being practiced in the mindfulness intervention sounded to Stephanie like a resignation to accept herself even if who she was was unacceptable. She was someone who liked solving problems and figuring things out. She was bothered by and felt irresponsible for problems left unsolved. To Stephanie, mindfulness' version of "acceptance" did not leave room for the responsibility of self-improvement.

*Explaining Stephanie's resistance to mindfulness*

In the above section, I described how Stephanie felt mindfulness separated her from accessing her authentic self. Yet in how mindfulness framed Stephanie's emotions, we also see her continued reliance on feeling rules, seemingly contradicting her desire to - and disappointment in - using mindfulness to connect with her authentic self. An explanation for why she resisted mindfulness can be found in her description of how mindfulness failed to do either. For example, Stephanie wanted to be able to fully *feel* acceptable emotions (like empathy), yet wanted to *analyze* and problem solve the feelings that she felt were unacceptable to have (like anger). She resisted mindfulness' approach to accept and "be kind" to her anger. The course guide prompted this script for instructors: Instead of "I am my thoughts, my emotions, my stress" which is completely overwhelming and actually not true, we come to experience "I have thoughts, stress and emotions but I can work with them, even be kind and calm with them." ("PST Well-being Training," 2015). However, Stephanie felt she should not be "kind" and accepting of *all* feelings. She commented, "I don't know if I like that because then it's like you're saying it's okay to feel that way but it isn't okay to feel that way." Instead, she hoped mindfulness would have helped her *analyze* her emotions..

> I feel like my brain, well my natural approach is different to it, it's a lot more analytical. They'll tell us to think about the emotions that we're feeling but the thing is, there isn't a judgment there it's just looking at it instead of analyzing it, you know what I mean? It's like you're looking at it, it's right there, I see that it's there, and then that's it. I feel like there isn't that 'why is it there, should it be there,' you know what I mean?

Stephanie self-described as analytical. The non-judgmental awareness of mindfulness ("just kind of like looking at it") did not help her analyze a situation or rationalize her feelings. This was a problem for Stephanie because she was reticent to accept feelings (like anger) as she rationalized herself out of those feelings. She continued to adhere to "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1979) when she measured what she was feeling against its appropriateness. It did not feel useful to simply observe her emotions. Stephanie had a strong drive to want to "figure out" or find a solution to a situation. Especially when it came to teaching, she wanted to use tools that helped her analyze, take a different perspective, gain a new insight, or figure out the "why" behind a child's emotion so she could understand the behavior. According to Stephanie, mindfulness did not help her do what she really needed to do as a teacher:

> I feel like even in that empathic situation you're making a judgment of, 'oh I don't want the kid to be feeling this way, I don't want the kid to be upset, or how can I alleviate that,' and I think that's a lot of it, too, is alleviating it. You see how they're feeling, and you understand it, and you use that to move towards something whereas mindfulness I feel like you see it and you understand it but then you don't do anything to address it. It's just there. And especially as a teacher when it's your job to be helping the kid, to help them through it, I think just kind of leaving them there isn't, is like—it feels like you're just letting them suffer.

Like the participant in Benesch's (2018) study, Stephanie "modified her reliance on an authentic self and internal emotions" (p. 62) to bring feeling rules in line with her behavior as a teacher. She used feeling rules to govern when and where she should lean in to authentic emotions, and where she should analyze unacceptable emotions in order to more effectively

fulfill her role as a teacher. This is why her improvisation in the space between herself, teaching, and mindfulness worlds took the form of resistance: because mindfulness did not allow for either strategy. If Stephanie saw her job as a teacher to "alleviate" a child's upset, the utility in mindfulness' non-judgmental approach was lost on her because it did not address the issue at hand. Her responsibility was to fix and solve situations, as she was used to and had experienced success with. And in her estimation, only by truly feeling empathy in a connected sense (their hurt is her hurt), or by analyzing and problem solving through emotions, could she perform what she believed to be the duties of a teacher to alleviate students' suffering.

There were times when Stephanie authentically felt an emotion (ex: empathy) - and in those cases, she wanted mindfulness to allow her to truly *feel* it (which it did not). Other times, authentic emotion and display rules [cite] clashed, resulting in "emotional labor" – the idea that a teacher should have a certain emotional state (empathy), which is conducive to achieving a professional goal (to alleviate a student's suffering). Yet mindfulness not facilitate this goal, either. Liljestrom, Roulson, and Demarrais (2007) summarize Hargreaves' (1998) theoretical framework for the "emotional politics of teaching," which is based on several assumptions that "embed individual experiences of emotions within the sociocultural contexts of schooling," including this one: Teachers' emotions are inseparable from their moral purposes and their ability to achieve those purposes (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 319). Stephanie's commitment to her purpose - being a high-achieving teacher - further tethered her to emotion rules that would fulfill this purpose for her. Mindfulness was not part of that equation, *because it neither allowed her to feel fully the appropriate emotions, nor analyze the inappropriate ones in order for her to do her job.*

However strong previous scripts are, there are moments of possibility when figured worlds collide. Rush and Fecho (2017) say it is improvisations - "the creative ways that humans maintain and create a sense of self within these intersections where figured worlds mesh, bump, or sometimes collide - that we develop a better sense of how identities redirect themselves and find ways of coping within circumstances that feel alienating" (p. 128). Some individuals see these intersections as opportunities. Yet others find these instances challenging or even threatening. The fact that mindfulness did not align with what she perceived to be an expectation of teaching may be a reason why she expressed resistance to mindfulness as she grappled with making meaning of the figured world of mindfulness. Stephanie's emotional experiences and the way mindfulness framed them can partly be understood by the phenomenon of teachers who manufacture emotions to the degree that they are disguising their true feelings (i.e. "deep acting"). This deceives others and themselves. Hochschild (1983) captures this here:

"In the end, it seems, we make up an idea of our "real self," an inner jewel that remains our unique possession no matter whose billboard is on our back or whose smile is on our face. We push this "real self" further inside, making it more inaccessible. Subtracting credibility from the parts of our emotional machinery that are in commercial hands, we turn to what is left to find out who we "really are" (p. 34).

# Cross-case Analysis and Conclusion

## Discussion: cross-case analysis

I have so far explored participants in this study as separate cases that reflect how individual PSTs experience emotions around learning to teach (RQ1), as well as how PSTs use mindfulness to frame their emotions in the process of learning to teach (RQ2). In this discussion, I look across the three participants in an attempt to answer my two research questions, allowing me to see the individual cases a different way through comparison. Through this comparison, I surface themes across cases. In order to discuss this, I will explore themes from a few key elements in the figured worlds framework: identity, the figured world of teaching, and improvisation. The final section - on racial resistance - stands alone as a capstone cross-case analysis theme that emerged to show how emotions and mindfulness intersected across the PSTs within all of the elements of the figured worlds framework.

### *Identity*

"Teacher emotions ... are performative—that is, the ways in which teachers understand, experience, perform, and talk about emotions are highly related to their sense of identity" (Zembylas, 2005, p. 937). Because exploring emotions is critical to how emotions contribute to teacher identity, I start first with identity to understand my three participants.

Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie embodied White, female, middle class identities. Growing up in their childhood figured worlds, where their schooling experiences reflected White racialized dominance, these identities were further reinforced and solidified. "White children are reared not only by their own parents but by institutional forms of Whiteness that provide an extended system of guardians. Whiteness as mother alienates the White child within the

protective walls of Whiteness and against the threats of White racial shame and guilt" (Leonardo & Gamez-Djokic, 2019, p. 7). They learned to feel and be White through inculturation into the White culture around them – including family and schooling.

Each self-described as perfectionists afraid of failure, to some degree. Each directly or indirectly expressed the desire to feel competent. This manifestation of their racial identity would fuel the emotions that accompanied the friction between their desire to feel competent and the new figured world of the teacher education program that thrust them into new situations and challenges. This is similarly reflected in Lachuk's (2019) description of emerging teachers:

> Today, prospective teachers struggle to find exactly the right strategies to engage youth and provide them with a springboard to learning. Choosing the "wrong" practice…can leave teachers feeling anxious and labeled by families, administrators, and/or other school staff as "failing." (p. 6).

To varying degrees, whiteness as a positional identity had made them feel entitled to competence, power, and respect. Carina especially showed strong emotions tied to her positional identity as a White female. As she entered the figured world of teaching, her emotional need for respect (or her fear of disrespect) was magnified. Maulucci (2013) notes that teachers,

> …have agency to position themselves in particular ways in particular social contexts. Yet, through passivity and openness to the world, oppression, privilege, and power may serve to position, or limit positioning of, individuals. The idea of positional identity is important in understanding the role of agency and passivity in the development of science teachers' identities. Overlaying a focus on emotions helps to highlight the risks teachers assume when they try on new identities… (p. 457)

Maulucci (2013) uses some foundational ideas from Keltchermans' (2005) work on emotions in teaching, one of which is that "emotions reveal teachers' sense-making about their teacher identities, moral beliefs and values, and the social, cultural, and political context of the school" (p. 456). But what this perspective fails to include is the way Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie's identities shifted as they moved into the new figured world of teaching, and the emotions that were stirred in the process of navigating among these different worlds. Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie's identities were shifted and re-formed in these news worlds. According to Holland et al. (1998), people are repeatedly positioned in specific ways. These three participants had been positioned as White, female, and middle class in the figured worlds of their childhood. These positional identities shift as individuals are situated across different worlds, as I explore in the next section.

*The figured world of teaching: PSTs emotional experiences of shifting identity as they learn to teach (linked to RQ1)*

"Emotions are not reactions to the world; they are your constructions of the world" (Barrett 2017, p. 104). Emotions were constructed in the spaces where Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie were reforming their identities as they shifted between multiple figured worlds. The emotional experiences that were created as they moved among multiple figured worlds became a way of understanding their shifting identity. Identity helps us understand the individual, yet identities are "constructed through culturally available descriptors, narratives, and archetypes, embedding and linking the individuals in the contexts around them" (Horn, Nolen, Ward & Campbell, 2008, p. 62). As each individual moved into and interacted with their new contexts -

or, new figured worlds- their shifting identity was accompanied by and explained by their emotional experiences.

For all three participants, whose racial identities solidified in the figured world of their childhood, moving into the new figured world of the teacher education program introduced new challenges to White expectations around power, respect, and competence. And although they all embodied White, female, middle class identities, they embodied it slightly differently in their experience of learning to teach. Their figured worlds also emotionally challenged and reformed them in different ways in response.

Sarah desired the continued feeling of competence that had accompanied her childhood, yet she did not initially have the "authority" of a teacher. As Graue (2005) explained, "Being a professional was the key to their authority" (p. 173). Sarah struggled to find her role in this transition, which manifested in anger and some resistance to author herself into a new script because it challenged her efficacy and competence. The discomfort she felt in the ambiguity between theory and practice was captured by the anger she leveled at the teacher education program. This perceived "mismatch" problem (Ma & Singer-Gabella, 2011) became an emotional scapegoat as she wrestled with these feelings of ambiguity and incompetence. Lachuk (2019) similarly notes this in highlighting that "as teachers come to grips with the moral ambiguity of "good" teaching, they experience emotional tensions" (p. 8).

Carina also experienced a similar shifting of power when her identity as a White female was challenged in new ways. For example, she was emotionally attached to the expectation of being respected because she was White. When Carina did not get automatic "respect" in this new world of learning to teach - especially because she felt it was already earned - discomfort and fear accompanied her trying to make sense of her shifting role as a teacher. She was similar to

the teacher in Maulucci's (2013) study, who engaged in "sense making as they evaluate the relative agency or passivity of their positioning, or the extent to which they can actively position themselves or find their agency truncated as they are positioned by the social, political, or cultural context" (p. 473). As Carina tried on new identities and wrestled with, for example, being a traditional or responsive teacher, she evoked what Cochran-Smith (2004) termed a teaching dilemma.

Usually, these teaching dilemmas are absent a discussion of identity and emotions. However, critical dissonance "implies an emotional response - such as frustration or anger" (p. 472). Although there was no satisfactory emotional resolution to this dissonance, Carina began to interrogate the emotions behind power relations that had scripted so much of her life so far. But the desire to feel competent (ex: the feeling of pride that she "kept it together") meant that her answer for ambiguity as she tried to fashion a "comfort zone" within her teaching dilemmas was falling back on some self-preservation and control of the classroom environment.

Unlike Sarah and Carina, whose emotional experiences revolved around their identity being reformed in new ways as they challenged, modified, and even railed against the system, Stephanie centered on fighting herself. She, too, was marked by fear of failure, perfectionism, and a need for control. Yet the emotional experiences for Stephanie were complex because, unlike the other two, she was not fully centered in her multiple figured worlds. Instead, she was a different kind of person-in-progress. She was actively working through many emotional investments and entanglements, and largely relied on social and feeling rules as scripts that defined her identity. Like the participant in Benesch's (2018) study, Stephanie "modified her reliance on an authentic self and internal emotions" (p. 62) to bring feeling rules in line with her behavior as a teacher. She used feeling rules to govern when and where she should lean into

authentic emotions, and where she should analyze "inappropriate" emotions in order to more effectively fulfill her role as a teacher - actively avoiding feelings of failure. More so than the others, she was continuously analyzing her self-worth and efficacy, which further adhered her to social and feeling rules that became scripts more powerful than those of the figured world of learning to teach.

*Improvisation: How PSTs took up mindfulness and the way it framed emotions in the process of learning to teach (linked to RQ2)*

When Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie were introduced to the figured world of mindfulness, they did not copy mindfulness practices verbatim into their teaching. Instead, as other scholars have found, they made meaning from and took up the curriculum in ways that made sense to who they were (Graue et al., 2015). Improvisation (Holland et al., 1998) was a useful element of the figured worlds framework that helped highlight how they took up mindfulness to frame their emotions in particular ways.

Improvisation is the space where agency for a learner exists (Holland et al., 1998), and can take the form of resistance, or trying to fulfill identity expectations (Horn, Nolen, Ward & Campbell, 2008). The three participants' improvisations within the mindfulness figured world were oriented around trying to make the practices relevant in relation to their beliefs and identities. The mindfulness curriculum was designed to give PSTs power over their emotions in order to interrupt the script of pressure and stress in teaching, and instead build resilience. Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie recognized the familiarity of this mindfulness script because stress was already familiar and ever-present for them. Their identities impacted how they saw mindfulness practices: as opportunities, or a challenge, or even threatening. As Horn, Nolan, Ward and

Campbell (2008) similarly found, their adoption, modification, negotiation of, and even rejection of practices in some cases, is an expression of their identity and linked to the kind of teacher selves they were figuring themselves out to be.

For all three participants, life before entering the teacher education program did not require much improvisation because their former scripts, which prioritized control in order to get things done right, had worked. But their attempt to translate those same scripts of success to the new world of learning to teach caused anger, frustration, and initial resistance to author themselves into new scripts. The "mismatch" problem between theory and practice was an anger focal point for both Sarah and Carina, who were desperate to latch on to something tangible to help them feel competent as novice teachers. The emotions that surfaced - the frustration, perplexity, and even curiosity - were signals that helped them become aware of particular "unfavorable" conditions (Benesch, 2017). For them, this was the discomfort in making sense across these different worlds that challenged who they thought they were: as successful, competent, in control White women with authority. For emerging teachers who were highly competitive and driven by a need to have it all figured out, the space of making sense of multiple figured worlds that did not necessarily honor their previous successes, was itself a place of discomfort. It was emotional because it was uncomfortable. Their repeated frustrations about the theory versus practice divide can be mined for its promise to promote change, as they continued to wonder aloud why the "gap" existed, and how to dwell in that emotionally unmooring space of learning.

It was in this emotional space of learning that Sarah and Carina sought improvisations of the mindfulness practices that would help them "try on" different approaches to teaching that ultimately helped them understand their relationship with authority and power. For example, the

pause was a foundational practice introduced in the mindfulness curriculum as “a way for us to stop even if it is only for a few seconds. When we pause we gently interrupt what we are doing or thinking so that we can be more aware of what is happening” (“PST Well-being Training,” 2015, p. 5). The pause was intended to interrupt the stress cycle, and Sarah improvised with this practice. She used it to be less of an “act now” type of person and reminded herself to “take a breath, girl” to attempt to be more responsive to students as she tried on a new role as a teacher and possibly used mindfulness to try to retain power or re-negotiate it. In the hangman story, taking a breath helped her perspective-take. Using the breath in this way was what gave her enough pause to help her reason and investigate the emotions behind her intentions, both in the moment and afterwards.

Carina also improvised with the “pause” to interrogate her emotions behind her actions in an effort to trouble her authority and power. Improvisation explains how individuals piece together "existing cultural resources opportunistically to address present conditions and problems" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 277). The way Carina usually responded out of frustration was not benefitting present conditions because it was eroding some interpersonal relationships. She used the pause to check in with her emotions and choose how to more thoughtfully respond instead of react from a place of frustration and built up stress. How Carina improvised with the pause also allowed her to begin questioning her previously held traditional values and the previous “relative positioning” that teachers occupy (Moore, 2008) with new learnings from the teacher education program. Carina used the tools of mindfulness to look critically at how her emotional response to being “disrespected” was rooted in her own positional identity. While she did not use the term “positional identity,” she was aware of the value in stepping back from her

innate reaction to students being "disrespectful" - to realize that her perspective was indeed linked to these relations of power.

Sarah and Carina's improvisations with the pause helped them modify teaching practices themselves as they experimented with their new roles as teachers - it helped them check in with their emotions and intentions, perspective-take, and question their own authority and power. Mindfulness helped open up possibilities for them to author themselves into new scripts as they learned to teach.

Stephanie's improvisations within the figured world of mindfulness took shape in the form of more overt resistance. In general, Stephanie clung tightly to scripts and had difficulty pivoting or trying something new. Unlike Sarah and Carina, whose use of mindfulness helped them start to try on new approaches to teaching as they navigated the multiple figured worlds of the teacher education program, Stephanie relied heavily on "feeling rules" to govern herself. Gomez and Lachuk (2019) said of new teachers that they "often remain steadfast in their devotion to an image of teacher that enables a romantic, warm, and playful set of interactions" (p. 7). This image bound Stephanie to a "mythology" (Micciche, 2007, p. 27) of a teacher that limited her in exploring other ways of being. Because of her attachment to the scripts of "feeling rules," she challenged mindfulness' approach to reframing her emotions. To Stephanie, the mindfulness curriculum seemed to pathologize her emotions (Boler, 1999, p. xiv) and prevented her from engaging fully with what she saw as the necessary emotional work of teaching. Her resistance to mindfulness was borne out of her struggle to see how mindfulness aligned with her feeling rules script (letting her feel fully "acceptable" emotions like empathy as opposed to neutralizing them, as well as rationalizing through "inappropriate" emotions like anger). Instead of devising improvisations of mindfulness through adopting and modifying the practices, she

actively and inquisitively resisted and questioned the messages she perceived from the curriculum as being in tension with the emotional relationship she had with herself and the ways the feeling of emotions facilitated the role she expected of her teaching self.

*Racial resistance*

This last section of my cross-case analysis explores how identity came into contact with the new figured worlds of learning to teach, and the specific emotion experiences related to racial awareness that came out of it for each individual. While this study was not designed to directly probe the intersection between PSTs racial awareness, emotions, and mindfulness, and no questions were specifically written to address racial identity, white racial identity came up for Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie during the interview process. All three of them mirrored what Leonardo and Gamez-Djokic (2019) found about resistance to talking about race. “By leaving the discussion, they stay within the comforts of Whiteness” (p. 13). Yet each of them avoided and resisted deep emotional racial reckoning in different ways – below I explain how Sarah avoided confronting it, Carina scratched the surface, and Stephanie sidestepped it by adhering herself to emotional rules.

Sarah expressed that it was “hard” to be a White teacher. She avoided white racial discomfort by resisting her white identity through instead highlighting her Ukrainian and Jewish identities and repelling the idea of her involvement in white saviorism. White middle-class teachers often stereotype families of color and what their attitudes are about school - similarly, Sarah held racist notions of who her students and families were, portraying pity and sympathy. "These behaviors and emotions develop [in white teachers] because of the ongoing presence and persistence of racism" (Grant, 2019, p. 9). Although mindfulness held promise to interrogate the

emotions behind Sarah's racial discomfort, she held deeply to the racial narratives from her own figured world that did not fit with her new learning in the teacher education program, nor puncture the normative script that defined her views on students or school. Emotions about race add a layer of complexity to "race talk" that are not part of other forms of communication (Gomez & Lachuk, 2019). Instead, "race talk is generally filled with intense and powerful emotions, creates a threatening environment for participants, reveals major differences in worldviews or perspectives and often results in disastrous consequences such as a hardening of biased racial views" (Wing Sue, 2015, p. x). Since cultural scripts about teaching that drive PSTs experiences in teacher education programs are strong, Sarah was not able to improvise to hold new racial awareness. Sarah's resistance and discomfort to mine the overlap between racism and emotion mirrored the teachers in Rush and Fecho's (2017) study, who mostly "felt unmotivated to find ways to address their needs within a culture of learning that departed too radically from their accustomed norm" (p. 134).

Carina's positional identity as a white female had made her believe so strongly in her own competence and power. The push back on power relations in the figured world of teaching when her CT questioned her competence made her question her own for the first time. Carina did use mindfulness to begin to re-evaluate the role emotions played in her interpersonal relationships by helping her pause to be less reactive. She was partly aware that her emotional reactions were based on the emotionality of defensiveness and fear of being labeled a racist. But she also was unable to fully untangle her "affective investment in Whiteness" (Leonardo & Gamez-Djokic, p. 2019, p. 12) that she held.

For Carina, the newness of navigating classroom dynamics and the introduction of some mindfulness practices helped to call into question the notion of "disrespect" and power. She

wondered why it bothered her so much when students seemed not to "respect" her. Through this wondering, Carina surfaced the "fear based narratives" (Emdin, 2016) about students of color that she held about her own students. These stereotypes were solidified in the figured world of her own upbringing and her White identity. These emotional attachments are "performed within a social and cultural context in which African American and Latinx persons are regularly portrayed as "deviant" and to be feared" (Gomez & Lachuk, 2019, p. 14). As Feldman Barrett (2017) noted, this fear is not natural. Rather, it is conditioned by past experience. Carina's fear about disrespect and losing classroom control translated to fear of her students, where she was "designing and constructing their own affective reality about who their students are, where they come from, and what they might do" (p. 13). Zembylas & Papamichael (2017) acknowledged that such work calls on teachers to examine what may be feelings of "guilt, embarrassment, and uneasiness" (p. 14) once they understand their complicity in creating and maintaining challenging circumstances for some students. Whereas more emotional untangling may have helped Carina sit productively within this discomfort, her previous cultural scripts were strong, and she continued to rely heavily on tightening control and managing the classroom.

Stephanie also faced reckoning of her racial identity yet wrestled with it in another way. While she did not speak as directly about her racial identity, she nevertheless was trapped by the same emotional investment in Whiteness that Carina and Sarah were. Stephanie's emotion experiences were largely guided by deep emotional self-regulation guided by "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1979). Leonardo and Gamez-Djokic (2019) use Eng and Han's (2000) idea of *racial melancholia* to explore White racial melancholia to "understand better the role that the ideology of Whiteness plays in regulating White emotions" (p. 3). The definition that they use from Spanierman and Cabrera (2015) is:

> White melancholia is defined as an affective condition growing out of a fear of loss of racial dominance, paired with a romanticization of Whiteness as an innocent and magnanimous force (p. 5).

White melancholia then propels Whites to identify with and know the "other" yet are "doomed to fail" (Hubinette & Raterlinck, 2014, p. 509) because the context of these relations is still racism. bell hooks (1992) refers to this emotional entanglement as "eating the other." Stephanie demonstrated a desire to connect and identify with her students' emotional lives to the point of feeling like she needed to mirror their emotions, and saw invisible "lines" connecting her to them. She justified her expenditure of emotional labor that she saw as a necessary part of fulfilling her role as a teacher (and, consequently, as White woman). As a White woman, she exhibited both gender and racial melancholia, manifesting in deep regulation and control of her own and others' emotions:

> ...by contrast White women come to embody, maintain, and reproduce the affective technologies of Whiteness (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013). Socialized by the ideological, mothering hand of Whiteness, White men act as the sentinels of Whiteness, and White women take up symbolic arms as silent sentinels. That is, in contradistinction to White men's masculinist role in Whiteness, White women's affect largely performs the emotional labor that allows Whites to control emotional exchanges… (Leonardo & Gamez-Djokic, 2019, p. 6).

And control of emotions - her own and others - was a significant part of what Stephanie verbalized as her emotional experiences in the process of learning to teach (see the Jonathan

situation, for example). Stephanie also attached herself to certain emotions that she saw as important to the role of teaching, like empathy, which also were not devoid of deeper racial undercurrents. Even in asserting her empathy and caring and even love towards her students, Warren (2015) found that teachers are caught in self-delusion. Warren and Hotchkins (2015) coined the term "false empathy" to convey the "failure to consider the wants, needs, and desires of individuals most vulnerable in any given interaction" (p. 267). In fact, some scholars point to the violence of love and care, or *racist love* (Leonardo & Gamez-Djokic, 2019) when relations of race are not placed at the center.

**Limitations and Validity**

Before I share the significant insights of my study, I will point to my study's limitations. This research might be considered limiting by some because the scope is limited in representation. This study captures the experience of only three participant PSTs in one cohort, which may not be representative of how mindfulness and emotion are experienced in teacher education contexts, broadly. However, in keeping with the notion that qualitative research does not set out to produce truly transferable results (Shenton, 2004), this study is aimed at instead seeking a depth of understanding of these particular cases. In constructivism, every "theory, model, or conclusion…is necessarily a simplified and incomplete attempt to grasp something about a complex reality" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 43). This case is unique – and its uniqueness is precisely critical to the understanding of this case (Stake, 1995).

The available data is one limitation of this study. I would have liked to conduct more interviews to pursue follow-up themes, probe questions more deeply, and conduct member-

checks. Similarly, collecting artifacts from or making observations of participants' experiences in the "PST Well-being Training" (2015) would have helped me triangulate the data more.

A major limitation is the voices that are represented in this research. The majority of U.S. teachers are White women, and study participants largely reflect that exact demographic. The three stories I presented in this research meant that their perspective is centered by my attending to both gender and racial positioning, to the exclusion of PSTs from other identities.

Last, in knowing that "emotions are power," I worry that my study did exactly what Grant (2019) cautioned against when he said that "to study emotions in the classroom and the emotions of White teachers who teach Black and Brown students without centering race is flawed" (p. 23). Although talking about race showed up in many of the interviews and became a central piece in my analysis and write-up, race was not centered in the conception or design of this study. How much richer and more impactful this research could have been if it had been centered.

I responded to threats of trustworthiness by consciously seeking disconfirming evidence, or what I may have ignored, paying attention to the limitations of using theory that may cause oversight to other important ways of looking at the data. Yin (2018) also suggests examining plausible rival, alternative explanations of what is going on in the data. Good case study "is patient, reflective, willing to see another view" (Stake, 1995, p. 12). Stake (1995) says, "in our search both for accuracy and alternative explanations, we need discipline, we need protocols which do not depend on mere intuition and good intention to "get it right" (p. 107) – in other words, common sense to address validity is not enough. Rather, researchers need to employ protocols like triangulation. I looked across multiple points in time and across those involved in the study. I also relied on investigator triangulation by having a peer graduate student and my

advisor, both of whom were involved in this work, check and interpret excerpts and situations. This helped check my own biases and get a fresh perspective. I also debriefed periodically with my advisor during my intense data analysis phase to get feedback and discuss developing analysis.

Last, I engaged in "reflective commentary" to capture developing impressions, patterns, and thoughts as they emerged throughout the research process (Shenton, 2004). While external validity can be answered by relying on existing theory, this can be a double-edged sword to threats of validity if the conceptual framework is used uncritically. I tried to maintain a focus on recognizing my theoretical orientation's limitations and potential blind spots. Becker (1998) says, "a serious scholar ought routinely to inspect competing ways of talking about the same subject matter" (p. 149). I tried to make every effort to ground interpretations in the experiences, perspectives, and voices of participants.

**Significant insights**

> In using the figured worlds approach to frame my case study data, I was able to answer my two research questions: 1) How do preservice teachers experience emotions around learning to teach? And, 2) How do preservice teachers use mindfulness to frame their emotions in the process of learning to teach?

These findings were presented in each of the case study sections in Chapter 4, as well as in the above cross-case analysis discussion. In the following preliminary conclusions, I present a few significant insights that have come out of my research:

*Insight 1: Emotional experiences are social and cultural practices*

My research helped show that emotion experiences are "social and cultural practices" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 9) – in other words, emotions are created in response to identity in the environment. The three participants in this study helped provide insight on the value in bringing emotions out from an individualized, psychologized lens into a lens that embedded them in and helped explain their connection to wider systems of social relations and power. Critically oriented emotion and teaching researchers attend to networks of power and oppression, and agree that "emotions, like identity, emerge in relation, in the context of specific relationships" (Winans, 2010, p. 487). Emotions frame and are framed by the past, present, and future - and the figured worlds framework (Holland et al., 1998) was able to show how Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie move (quite emotionally) between many figured worlds as they learn to teach. Emotions were revealed as integral parts of teachers' sense-making about their changing teacher identities and values (Maulucci, 2013) as they navigated multiple figured worlds that sometimes reinforced their identities and also challenged them to reshape. Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie acted out strong previous cultural scripts of who they were and how they envisioned teaching, while at the same time they "constructed and troubled their own identities - in ways that felt consonant with their past experiences even as they reshaped themselves and the larger figured worlds around them" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 134). As Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie showed as they entered new figured worlds of learning to teach, deep emotional experiences accompanied and helped explain how their identities shifted - oftentimes uncomfortably for them.

*Insight 2: Importance of agency and improvisation*

Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie were actors who sometimes adhered to strong previous scripts, tried on new scripts from new worlds, or authored new ways of acting borne out of the

inevitable newness of situations where previous habitus (Holland et al., 1998) did not accommodate the novelty of the situation. Navigating the new figured worlds of the teacher education program and the classroom - as well as the previous scripts about teaching that were already part of their identity - meant significant changes to their identity as they constructed new meaning in these new worlds. The process of learning to teach challenged the views, values and identities that they came in with. For example, as Sarah and Carina navigated the newness of practicum classroom dynamics and the seeming "mismatch" between theory and practice, the challenge to their sense of competence and the fear of not being able to rely on past scripts of success embroiled them in frustration and stress. Emotional awareness was helpful for them to be able to use these emotions as a signal (Benesch, 2017) and as a site of knowledge that something was amiss. A self-consciousness is critical to be a thoughtful educator because it allows PSTs a consciousness about "who they want to become as teachers" (Fairbanks et al, 2009, p. 167). This is also true for how a consciousness allows for agency. PSTs who are "proactive and skilled in navigating places for themselves as teachers," and understanding emotional experiences, help them act more agentically. Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie exercised this agency by modifying, re-making, and even rejecting practices from various worlds as they learned to teach. In fact, the agency they exercised helped to show how teachers could participate in examining "the role of culture, power, and ideology in creating discourses" and how they themselves "participate in this process by adopting or resisting dominant discourses" (Zembylas, 2007, p. 296).

These three PSTs also improvised within the mindfulness curriculum in ways that aligned with how they were managing the emotional shift between new figured worlds and their identities. "Improvisations are the sort of impromptu actions that occur when our past, brought to the present as habitus, meets with a particular combination of circumstances and conditions

for which we have no set response" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 17). Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie were not passive recipients of the mindfulness curriculum, copying practices verbatim into their repertoire. Instead, they modified practices in unique ways. For example, they used the breath to allow themselves the space to interrogate interpersonal power dynamics and question their intention behind teaching. In another way, mindfulness also allowed them the opportunity to improvise with teaching practices themselves, as it gave them the space to perspective-take and respond instead of react. There was both agency in how each of them authored new behaviors and ideas as they paused to question their positions, and improvisations as they were able to act on new ways of being. The power of improvisation is as a "space that creates the potential for new identities - where culture and individuals interact responsively to create change" (Graue, Whyte, and Karabon, 2015, p. 15). It is where agency for a learner exists, and also where emotion gave Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie additional understanding in terms of how to navigate major shifts in identity as they learned to teach.

*Insight 3: Emotions and mindfulness can constrict*

Emotions did act as signals about favorable or unfavorable conditions (Benesch, 2017), and were indeed an important site of knowledge about how the three participants navigated within and among various figured worlds. Yet emotions also prevented and limited them from shifting into new worlds and growth fully. Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie often felt overwhelmed and drained by factors seemingly out of their control, and at the same time were driven by the cultural scripts of productivity and competence. These previous scripts were strong, and they could not quite always figure out to their satisfaction the new scene of learning to teach. This resulted in some emotional commitments borne out of the need for individual "survival" and

self-preservation. In this way, mindfulness was used for self-care and to manage stress and anxiety. While this self-protection seemed necessary to Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie at the time, it resulted in a felt need to fall back on emotional safety and survival, so it may have come at a cost of some moments of deeper emotional growth. For example, Carina's self-imposed time constraints and the pressure to have it all figured out intersected with the immediacy of acting and making decisions in real time as a teacher. While there were moments of reflective interrogation of her intentions and values, the discomfort of sitting with ambiguity was challenging. So, she fell back on the comfortable cultural scripts of control that were part of her "traditional" and safer teacher script. Instead of resting in reflection about teacher responsiveness, which she had begun to explore, the way she protected herself was to tighten control of classroom management. Ahmed (2002) says that "emotions can attach us to the very conditions of our subordination" (p. 12). When these participants turned away from emotional discomfort to rest in comfort and emotional safety zones, growth and the opportunity to live "at the edge of our skin" (Boler, 1999, p. 200) is missed.

Mindfulness similarly constricted Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie when the "spikiness" of emotions that it initially surfaced were so disconcerting that it repelled them from resting in the discomfort of those emotions. Spiritual bypassing (Sherrell & Simmer-Brown, 2017) is when mindfulness is used to avoid pain or discomfort, or the idea that the byproduct of mindful practice should be a sense of love, calm, or peace. This often manifested in participants' reliance on mindfulness for the "break" that it provided from the usual churn, stress and cognitive and emotional load of learning to teach.

And for Stephanie, the constriction of emotional control played straight into the hands of the emotional politics of emotions, where her expectation to be loving and nurturing as a female

teacher failed to combat these oppressive ideologies. Zembylas (2003) notes the emotional rules that permit some emotions over others, saying, "for example, confronted on a daily basis with a variety of emotions – anger, bewilderment, anxiety etc. – teachers must learn to control emotions of anger, anxiety, and vulnerability and express empathy, calmness, and kindness" (p. 119).

*Insight 4: Emotions and mindfulness can transform*

This final insight captures how emotions had the potential to be sites of social and political transformation (Zembylas, 2003) as they helped the participants shift into new worlds and growth. Maulucci (2013) asks how emotions become "strategies for social action?" (p. 457). In addition, how can mindfulness do the same? The mindfulness curriculum attempted to enculturate emotional awareness by stressing the challenge of being present with a situation when one is preoccupied or consumed by emotions ("PST Well-being Training," 2015). Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie started to notice emotions and increase their awareness of their own ecology of emotions. Females have been taught to view emotions as private, individual problems rather than a signal that something in the system or world is wrong (Boler, 1999). "Constructing an emotional landscape that subverts the prevailing emotional rules, as a means of questioning these rules and their assumed ideologies and truths, invokes vulnerability as well as resistance" (Zembylas, 2007, p. 305). Developing this awareness of emotions and emotion rules is the first step to challenging these rules, and then to the resistance that opens up possibilities. Although unrealized fully in this study, the awareness of emotions may be the precursor to seeing emotions as a site of social resistance and transformation (Zembylas, 2003).

Emotion can also transform by helping individuals unpack deeply held beliefs or ways of being that have dictated how they see (or do not see) things. Emotion can either be a driving

force or an impediment to this progress. “Our very motivation to explore or to avoid exploration of the unusual, unfamiliar, or uncomfortable - indeed, our ethical questioning - is often experienced emotionally” (Winans, 2012, p. 155). When individuals analyze “emotional landmines” (Boler, 2001, p. 1) they are better able to interrogate their emotional attachment and author new identities. For example, emotion is central to race talk - and for White women, race discomfort. Repressed emotional investments in Whiteness (Matias, 2016), especially if unknowingly indoctrinated and left “unmined,” will continue to reinforce and reproduce these social orders. For example, without critically understanding the relationship between race and emotions, the “fear based narratives” (Emdin, 2016) that emotionally “stick” to White teachers about students of color will leave teachers completely unprepared to teach in a way that does not harm (Leonardo & Gamez-Djokic, 2019). As noted earlier, emotions are "embodied phenomena that are profoundly social and cultural in nature” (Winans, 2012, p. 150). The answer may be to help PSTs develop a conscious and embodied awareness of their interpretation of the world and how they “negotiate their interpretive frameworks” (p. 151). Understanding and probing the full emotional spectrum is necessary in this work if emerging teachers are to work productively through emotions that have existed previously as roadblocks to justice.

Mindfulness was transformative in the ways that it began to help Sarah, Carina, and Stephanie interrogate their teaching practices, perspective-take, and become aware of their emotions related to the discomfort they were feeling as they learned to teach. But identities and emotional investments in Whiteness and previous cultural scripts are strong. Gomez and Lachuk (2019) write that “White teachers must be given opportunities to question the basis of their fear” (p. 14). Mindfulness practices need to be grounded in awareness of racism so that emerging teachers can understand and deconstruct these emotional investments.

## Implications

This research adds to scholarly and practical fields within the areas of teacher education, mindfulness, and emotions, as well as in the intersection between the three. The work in this dissertation contributes to both the mindfulness and emotion literature by exploring the experience of PSTs that connect these two fields together within teacher education. Here I will explain the implications this work has for research and teacher education.

### *Research*

First, this research contributes to a field of scholarship that usually is grounded in positivistic traditions within the fields of neuroscience and psychology, although recently that has expanded. This qualitative study contributes to the understanding of participants' experiences with a mindfulness curriculum, which is especially critical as mindfulness programs in education expand at a rate alarmingly faster than research is able to understand their impact as well as how it is taken up in schools. This study used the real voices and experiences of participants who engaged with and experimented with an introduction to mindfulness, which may inspire more qualitative, context-rich explorations to mindfulness research that attends to the complexity of mindfulness programs being incorporated into PreK-12 and pre-service teacher education programs.

In terms of emotion literature within teacher education, phenomena finding investigations are particularly important (Roeser et al., 2012). This is specially true in a field where, despite the growing interest in emotions as worthy of study, the research is newer. Similarly, emotions have historically been perceived as private and internal. Yet "if emotions are seen as culturally

relevant, public performances, reflecting power relations and mediating between subjective experiences and social practices, they are likely to be studied in specific sociocultural contexts" (Zembylas, 2007, p. 58). In taking the figured worlds framework, my study explores participants' emotional experiences in this wider context.

This research also strengthens the ties between critical race orientations and emotion studies within teacher education, as well as feminist orientations and emotion studies within teacher education. Rarely does research connect race and emotions within teacher education. Grant (2019) reflects on his process of writing about emotions while simultaneously holding the study of racism, as well as his recent book *Du Bois and Education* (Grant, 2018) where "race, teaching, and teacher education were centered, but not emotions" (p. 22). He uses Moisi's (2009) statement to underscore the need for both fields to be in conversation with each other: "One cannot fully understand the world in which we live without trying to integrate and understand its emotions" (p. x). The term "critical emotional praxis" (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008) is about how criticality is "informed by emotional resistance to unjust systems and practices in our pedagogies and our everyday lives. Few studies…have explored how preservice teachers navigate their emotions with respect to the social justice issues they identify, or the ways in which their emotions stem from their positional identities" (Maulucci, 2013, p. 454). My dissertation work sought to strengthen that research connection.

Similar to strengthening race and emotion research in teacher education, this research adds to the body of knowledge that Ahmed (2004) calls the "cultural politics of emotions." Because my work here uncovered the emotional experiences of my participants, it helped to add to the literature around how teachers "articulate their emotions and develop alternative emotional expressions that challenge oppressive ideologies" (Zembylas, 2003). Specifically, my work adds

to the understanding of the feminist politics of emotions (Boler, 1999) because it helped highlight the ways the identity of white female teachers and the emotional rules that are generated in the teaching profession together "shut down new pedagogies" (Zembylas, 2003, p. 119). This work added to feminist orientations of emotion where "traditional dichotomies between emotional/rational and personal/political in the context of teaching" can be interrogated.

*Teacher educators*

This research has implications for informing policies around pedagogies of contemplation within teacher education. Mindfulness programs embedded in teacher education should be responsive to the needs of pre-service teachers and aligned with teacher education goals tied closely with equity and social justice. Lachuk (2019) "urge[s] teacher educators to interrogate the emotional storylines that circulate within the narratives teacher candidates tell and to rewrite such storylines so that they can be interrogated for bias." Calling again on the concept of the pedagogy of discomfort (Boler, 1999), emotional awareness can be used to "trouble" comfort zones (Zembylas & Papamichael, 2017), pushing against the call that spaces for White preservice teachers need to be "safe spaces" for race talk. McWilliam (1994) notes that "the culture of teacher education has shown itself to be highly resistant to new ways of conceiving knowledge" (p. 61) especially in light of the fact that "issues of race…will continue to be marginalized while the teacher education curriculum is located in Eurocentric and androcentric knowledges and practices." The need for teacher education to continue to explore new ways to push preservice teachers' understanding of race and racism is significant. There is a need to understand the role of contemplative practices like mindfulness in how greater emotion knowledge can help "White people, White teacher candidates, and educators to *become*" (Grant,

2019, p. 21). Mindfulness might strengthen existing equity work by "providing a tool to deeply reflect on and interrogate one's personal experiences and the ways power and privilege show up in their interactions with students" (Romano & Chang, 2022, p. 9). In my own work as a field-experience supervisor within the field of teacher education, this research has indeed helped me become more aware of and keen on listening for their emotions behind race talk (and my own) in my attempt to push and support this identity development.

Teacher education programs are also in the position of having to take up the call to prepare PSTs to navigate many contexts and decisions for themselves instead of viewing teaching as a "ritualized and regulated activity" in the era of deprofessionalization of teaching and the rise of a technical orientation to teaching. Fairbanks et al. (2009) hope that teacher education can continue to move "beyond providing traditional forms of professional knowledge to promote more thoughtfully adaptive teachers" (p. 168) - including preparing emerging teachers with the strength and wherewithal to push back on these narratives that seek to both constrict and demand of teachers. Part of this task is for teacher education programs to help them become more thoughtfully aware of their emotional experiences that can help fuel necessary resistance to these social narratives. In addition, for a common PST perspective of the disjuncture between the more reform-oriented and theory-driven perspective of their teacher education program, and the more traditional and seemingly "practical" orientation of their practicum placements, the emotions and confusion that surfaced can be productive. Rather than it leading to frustration and stress and an emotional shutdown, a more robust pedagogy of emotions in teacher education could be better prepared to help them mine those emotions and work intentionally within that confusion (Ma & Singer-Gabella, 2011).

*PreK-12 Teachers*

As contemplative programs in schools are expanding rapidly, there are more teachers than ever using mindfulness practices. These programs dial into a very real need for teachers to have strategies and support to combat the cycle of stress and burnout. However, scholars (Barker, 2014; Ergas, 2015; Forbes, 2016; Hyland, 2013; Reveley, 2015) have pointed to the danger of orienting mindfulness interventions solely in the lens of individual deficiency that sustain narratives in which individuals are "the subject of their own therapeutic regulation" (Barker, 2014, p. 175). Or, as Forbes (2016) warned against, that "the self is both the problem and the solution for all social ills" (p. 1267). We see this problematic "responsibilizing" of the individual reverberate down to students themselves in the refrain of the "resilience" trope.

Mindfulness does have the power to help teachers with greater emotional awareness in order to innovate change at the same time it holds up and values teachers' work. It can help expand requisite teacher knowledge to include self-knowledge (like identity) and agency, and inspire educators to find the "courage to resist the control imposed by an educational environment governed by such strong sense of authority" (Zembylas, 2003, p. 120). Teachers can be valued by allowing them to develop an awareness of their emotions:

> Developing an awareness of their emotional responses as a valuable source of information about one's self, and using the power of emotion as a basis for collective and individual social resistance, teachers can sort their experiences, their anxieties, their fears, their excitements and learn how to use them in empowering ways (Zembylas, 2003, p. 121).

Last, the implications this work has on the impact of teachers on their students cannot be overlooked. Graue, Whyte, and Karabon (2015) explored the hope of improvisational teaching. Improvisation can be scary, especially for PSTs and new teachers, because it requires a response in the moment, without full control and without previous preparation exactly aligned to what the experience is calling for. But as these scholars note, responsive teaching cannot be scripted - it's improvisational (Graue et al., 2015, p. 14). Especially with the number of White teachers teaching students of color, the need for responsiveness *tied to racial awareness* as previously discussed, is critical: "Examining our deeply held biases, as well as those of which we are …unknowingly prejudiced, is of key significance for unpacking how teachers' emotions influence the quality and character of their engagement with students and their families" (Gomez & Lachuk, 2019, p. 12). This is where mindfulness can come into play. Listening, being present, accessing thoughtfulness and problem solving and connection are qualities that can only happen if you are in the moment and not being hijacked by stress. Mindfulness has promise to help teachers learn how to lean into the responsiveness that teaching requires.

Teachers are agents in constructing the culture around emotion talk in their classrooms. As classrooms feel the restriction of the increasingly "technical" approaches to education, preserving students' humanity becomes even more critical. Centering students - including their full emotional spectrum - is one way to honor students' humanity. And teachers who have worked to become in tune with their own emotions are far better positioned to do this effectively for and with their own students.

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## Appendix A: Sample lesson from the PST Well-being Training (2015)

Week 7: Working with emotions
Theme: To understand and experience the rising and fading away of emotions. Observing the experience of emotions in the context of the mind/body. Cultivating the attitude of patience.
Attitude – Letting-go
Materials: Yoga mats, cushions, chime, emotion cards
**********

**10 min:** Noticing, focusing, opening

- 1-3 minutes: noticing
  - Sitting or standing still, bring your awareness to whatever is happening right now without trying to change anything. This can be sound, feelings, sensations, thoughts etc.

- 4 – 6 minutes: Gathering and focusing attention:
  - Bring the full attention to breathing - aware of the physical sensations of the breath as it moves in the body - notice the movement in the chest and belly. Also notice the movement in the shoulders. Use the breath as an anchor.

- 7 – 10 minutes: Opening attention
  - Open up the field of awareness to include all sensation, sights, sounds, etc. Allow the mind to notice whatever is being called out to be noticed. Bring awareness to spaciousness - awareness has room for everything.

**10 min: Check-in about practice**

- This past week
- Practice today

**30 min: Standing Yoga and the view of practice part VIII**

- Movement and body awareness as a window into impermanence. Notice the body as it is now, before we begin. The sensations, the breath. Notice the mind, the quality of mind. Is it a waterfall, a river gorge, a slow moving river, a vast calm sea or like a mountain? If there are thoughts, do they change? As we engage this practice of concentration in motion, using mindfulness to check-in on the mind, notice whether the sensations in the body change, whether the heart rate or intensity change. And pay attention too to emotions, and to thoughts. Are they consistent or are they malleable. Do they come ad go completely or just change in intensity. We usually view our experience as solid and permanent; a scary thought if the experience is unpleasant, leading to the natural reaction to avoid or resist. How does noticing the subtle or not so subtle changing of our experience, the impermanence of our experience, alter our ability to be with what arises?

- mountain pose, full body stretch, cherry picking (one arm raised), shoulder rolls, neck rolls, twist, chair, balance pose, forward bend, mountain pose.

**5 min: Mindful inquiry -**

- What did you notice?
- How do you feel in the body?
- In the mind?
- Emotions?

**30 min: Emotions practice**

- spread emotions out on floor. "what do you notice, which ones speak to you... Look at these emotions and notice which ones you seem to be drawn to and which ones you tend to avoid or ignore. Notice how it feels in the body looking at the word. Does looking at a particular emotion change the breath? Notice preferences in the mind. Are there emotions that you are very familiar with and some that you aren't? Let's go shopping for emotions. Arrange emotions the way you want them. What did you choose and how did you arrange them? "

- Noticing one or 2 of these emotions in the body. Asking people about their experience of emotion in the body. Then handing emotions out randomly. Messing up people's piles. Emotions come and go.
- Poem - Guest House

**5 min: Practice for this week**

- 10 minutes of breath counting everyday
- Standing yoga x 3 this week
- Bring attention to emotions at least 1 x day –
    - notice sensations that accompany the emotions.
- Continue to set and really feel intention at least 1 x day

## Appendix B: Purpose and Vision of the PST Well-being Training (2015)

**Purpose of the PST well-being training:**

- To develop intrapersonal skills that support well-being, effective classroom management, and persistence in teaching.

**Key skills:**

- **Self-awareness**
  - Awareness of bodily sensations
  - Awareness of emotions
  - Awareness of thoughts
- **Self-regulation**
  - Learning to respond
  - Attention
    - Stability
    - Flexibility
- **Acceptance**
  - Able to rest into experience as it is in this moment
- **Non-judgment / Equanimity**
  - Not needing to change experience in any way, even if uncomfortable, at least for a moment. Able to maintain a sense of rest, ease, or calmness as positive, negative and neutral experiences rise and fall.
- **Mindfulness**
  - *Generally*
    - Remembering
    - To focus on what is arising internally, not just noticing the external environment.
  - *During practice*
    - Remembering to bring the mind back to object of the practice.
- **Kindness**
  - Getting in touch with and developing our basic sense of goodwill toward others (and our own condition)

**Key points of the view of practice**

1. Curiosity – be willing to look without knowing what you will find.
2. The qualities of happiness and well-being reflect the basic nature of the mind, so by looking and seeing with non-judgment, we are slowly allowing these qualities to come out.
3. We can find ease and well-being even in the midst of turmoil.
4. To find the above, we learn to see that while we experience thoughts, emotions, sensations etc., we are not these.
5. The second arrow. These practices as techniques for removing the second arrow.
6. The power of intention is mindfulness.
7. Awareness has room for everything.
8. All experience is impermanent.

9. Attachment and aversion.
10. Interconnectedness

**Background to well-being training**

The mind is the central cause of much of our suffering. To learn to be happier, calmer, and more at ease, we need to become familiar with our mind. Mindfulness meditation is a practice of becoming familiar with our minds. In the course of this training, we become more aware and familiar with the conditioned patterns and habits of thought and behavior that often do not serve us well. The process of becoming familiar with our habitual patterns of mind is a little like coming upon a dirty lake. The lake, neglected, whipped up from wind and storm, never cleaned, may be muddy and weedy. We may want to turn away from it thinking, "I don't want to swim in that lake!" Similarly, when we first turn our attention inward through these practices, we may find a very busy, distracted mind, a sad or emotional mind, or simply a restless, inpatient mind. It can be hard to "be with" these types of experience, when our usual response is to distract ourselves from these feelings with TV, texts, the internet, tweets and so on. As we begin learning these practices, don't be discouraged if you sometimes feel like you don't want to "be with" your experience, or if you feel like it is a little uncomfortable. It is natural to experience some aversion or discomfort when, really for the first time, we are directing attention towards what is going on the inside, instead of distracting ourselves from this awareness by focusing on what is going on the outside.

The basis for these practices is the understanding that although we have built up patterns of thought, behavior and reaction, the basic qualities of the mind are not changed by these patterns in any way. Just as the water itself is pure even when muddy or coated in muck, so too are the basic qualities of mind calm, happy, and content even when covered by strong emotions, stress or busy thoughts. If the weather is calm for several days and someone takes the time to skim the muck off the lake, the mud will naturally settle and the water will be revealed for what is really is and always was, perfectly clear, soil-free. In other words, the mud is not the water just as we are more than our thoughts, feelings, and reactions. Mindfulness and meditation practice is like providing the mind with calm weather and a thorough muck cleaning. As we get more and more familiar with these practices, we begin to experience the wellness that already is and was always present.

We usually approach our experience such that, when *we* are stressed out, everything *we* encounter is stressful. It's like when you wake up a little tired and unhappy and reactive. Everyone you encounter and everything you do seems to add to your frustration, as if it is all trying to make you even more unhappy. If we step back and really look at what is going on, it becomes clear that, at least for the most part, the people we encounter and the things we do are not at all trying to upset us, but because our mind is tight, agitated, and frustrated, we interpret what we encounter as an affront. I remember having days where, after walking into the classroom, it really felt like every student was against me, doing whatever they could to annoy me or make it harder for me. It is easy in these situations to reactively lash out, to treat students as if they are intentionally attacking us. We all know that this will not make us feel better, and will not lead to the type of classroom environment and student-teacher relationship that will support student learning. But when we are so caught up in our thoughts and interpretations of experience, sometimes we cannot find any space to look at our experience in a different way.

This training will develop in you, through practice, the skill to make that little bit of space in your experience to be able to view it in a different way. So instead of immediately reacting with frustration, you will be able to remember, in even a difficult moment, the reason why you wanted to be a teacher - to support kids. Even this kid, who you are so frustrated with, you can come to see, again in that very moment, that he or she deserves respect and your best help. We then have the opportunity to respond instead of react. This little bit of space and recognition can be the difference between a course of action that supports your role as a teacher and a course of action that works against your goals.

As we get more and more familiar with our minds and experience, and as we slowly train our mind to be focused, calm and stable, we begin to see through our own experience that it is possible to be simultaneously stressed out and content. Right now it may sound strange, but actually, when we allow all of our experience - even stress, pain, or judgment – the space to be fully experienced in a relaxed way, like the lake, we come to find that the mind can have what we normally would call bad experiences and still have a very basic sense of okayness. This is real well-being. When you are feeling overwhelmed by your course work, your certification requirements, the challenges of teaching and working with students, the mind tends to get very busy and agitated. We perseverate on thoughts and have judgments about our abilities, and all of this leads us to feel more tired and unhappy. Real well-being is not the complete removal of all stress and unhappiness from your life, but instead the experience of being okay, content, calm, even happy even when life is stressful or hard. This is the process of not being stressed about our stress, but simply noticing that stress is arising and being okay with that. When you are okay with your stress or your emotions, you will come to find that you really are okay. Whatever is happening, however challenging, you are okay. This type of well-being is always with you, no matter how challenging the classroom, the professional environment, or the personal relationship.

So the key as we begin is to simply try it and notice what happens. As much as you are able, commit to the daily practice recommendations, and like in a science experiment, take note of the changes. Children do not learn to read or memorize math tables overnight. Similarly, becoming familiar with these practices and the way our minds work takes time and effort. The more you put in, the more you get out. And always remember to relax. At the core, these are simply practices of noticing what is arising, and relaxing into that. As we begin, remember these words, the words of a great meditation teacher who said, “the key to meditation is to have no expectation for our meditation.” In other words, when we don’t expect anything, whatever arises is okay, and we can be with that in a calm, relaxed way.

## Appendix C: Interview protocols

PST First Interview

1. Can you tell me how training is going?
2. What did you expect of the training?
3. How has that matched up with your actual experience so far?
4. What do you find helpful/what do you think you're getting out of the training?
5. Can you tell me how your home practice is going?
6. Based on what you've learned, how would you explain mindfulness to someone who didn't know about it?
7. How has mindfulness been supported in your practicum seminar?
8. What connections have been made between seminar and mindfulness training?
9. How do you support teach other with your emerging mindfulness practices?
10. What tools have you developed to manage the stress of learning to teach?
11. What tools have you developed to recognize children's needs in the context of classroom life?
12. Teaching is more than technique. It's filled with emotions. Can you tell me about a time that you experienced an emotion, either positive or negative, in your teaching?
    a. Can you describe how you worked with that emotion in the moment?
    b. How did you work with it afterwards?

Supervisor First Interview

1. Can you tell me how training is going?
2. What did you expect of the training?
3. How has that matched up with your actual experience so far?
4. What do you find helpful/what do you think you're getting out of the training?
5. Can you tell me how your home practice is going?
6. Based on what you've learned, how would you explain mindfulness to someone who didn't know about it?
7. How do you support teach other with your emerging mindfulness practices?
8. How have you connected it with your educational practice? How does mindfulness fit with your philosophy of teaching or a broader context of learning to teach or your own educational philosophy?
9. How have you observed PSTs taking up mindfulness in seminar, practice, and assignments?

PST Second Interview

1. Can you tell me how the mindfulness class went for you?
2. You are in this teacher education program where there are lots of conversations about helping you learn to teach. What qualities and competencies do you think a teacher should have?
    a. What qualities, of the ones you mentioned, do you think you have at this point?

    b. Which are you working towards?
    c. How does the mindfulness training support/facilitate the development of these?
3. Being responsive is critical to high quality teacher-student interactions. What does it mean to you to be a responsive teacher?
4. How do you currently draw on mindfulness to be more responsive – how are you using it?
5. How do you think mindfulness training can help you become a responsive teacher (potentially)?
6. Imagine that you come across one of your students using scissors to carve her initials in a desktop. It's clear from her demeanor that she is unhappy about something. How would you respond?
    a. How would you use mindfulness as a resource?
7. This program was designed to be implemented in the 3rd semester to set up practice as you enter full-time student teaching. But, there are othe ways to have it scheduled. If this had been offered earlier in the program, how would this have supported your development as a teacher?
    a. What would be an optimal time to offer this to support your growth?

Supervisor Second Interview

1. Can you tell me how the mindfulness class went for you?
2. In this teacher education program there are lots of conversations about helping PSTs learn to teach. What qualities and competencies do you think a teacher should have?
    a. What qualities, of the ones you mentioned, are you observing in your PSTs?
    b. How does the mindfulness training support/facilitate the development of these qualities?
3. High quality, responsive teacher-student interactions are critical to student learning. What is your approach to helping your PSTs become responsive teachers?
4. Imagine a PST shared this scenario during seminar: "I came across one of my students using scissors to carve her initials in a desktop. It was clear from her demeanor that she was unhappy about something. I wasn't sure what to do."
    a. How would you respond to support their development as a teacher? How might you use mindfulness as a resource?
5. What are your general thoughts about mindfulness training being situated in seminar/teacher education program?

PST Third Interview

1. How is student teaching going?
2. Student teaching is an emotional time – how have you managed those intense emotions so far?
3. Can you tell me about your mindfulness practice? What is your current practice like?

4. One reason to give mindfulness training to PSTs is to build connections between teaching and mindfulness.
    a. How has that worked for you?
    b. How have you brought mindfulness into your teaching?
5. Looking back on last semester's mindfulness training, what are some strategies and lessons that stood out to you?
6. You're currently in your student teaching placement full-time. If you could now write a note to your last semester self about what to pay attention to and skills/strategies to develop, what would you say to yourself? (aka lessons that you can only learn now, being full time student teaching)
7. Imagine being in a job interview. How could you talk to a potential employer about how mindfulness training has added to your professional skills?
8. What would you add to the teacher education program, looking back on your experience?
9. How do you see yourself using your mindfulness training in the future?
10. What resources do you think would be helpful for you to continue your practice?
11. Is there anything else you think I should have asked about your experience?

Supervisor Third Interview

1. How are the mindfulness booster sessions going?
2. Can you tell me about what your practice is like?
3. What are the connections you are noticing PSTs make between mindfulness and their teaching experience?
4. What are your general thoughts on mindfulness being situated in seminar in a teacher education program?
5. Is there anything else you think I should have asked? Anything else you want to say?

Mindfulness Instructor Interview

1. Can you tell me how you got into mindfulness practice and teaching?
2. What qualities of teachers do you think are essential in order to teach a mindfulness course like this?
3. How did you explain mindfulness to PSTs?
4. What qualities do you believe are important for a teacher to have if they bring mindfulness practices to their teaching?
5. What was the implementation of this training like?
    a. For you?
    b. For the students?
    c. What were some of the successful moments?
    d. What were some of the challenges?
6. To what extent did you modify the mindfulness curriculum throughout the training?
    a. Can you tell us about those modifications? What prompted them?
7. How would you describe the PSTs at the beginning of training? How would you describe

them now?

8. How do you think the PSTs would describe themselves at the beginning of training? How would they describe themselves now?
9. What were the connections the PSTs were making between mindfulness and their practicum/classroom?