

Our Year of Dissonance: Teacher Identity and the Transition to Teaching Pre-K

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Dedication

For my children, Henry, Nicky and Susa, and my husband, Dan.

For my mother, Ann,

an incredible model of what it is to be a woman

who has it all and who has done it her own way.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

It is early Wednesday evening in January. It is dark outside – the school day having long since ended. A group of teachers are gathered around a table discussing how to use observation of children in play to gain knowledge for assessments. This is a challenge because there is always so much going on in their pre-K classrooms. In the background, several teacher educators are moving quietly between the tables, pausing to listen and respond as needed.

It is a warm Friday afternoon and Wanda, is sitting on the carpet, the children deeply engaged in play all around her. She is watching them, with a stack of papers on the floor in front of her, a clipboard on her lap. Theo is stacking bricks. “Look how tall it is!” “How tall is it?” asks Wanda. Theo starts to count, and Wanda looks over at me and smiles. “Twelve blocks!” Theo shouts. “I’m gonna add more.” “Ok, go for it!” says Wanda. Another child, Finn walks by, pushing a larger wooden stroller. He veers towards Theo’s tower, coming perilously close to the already leaning tower. “Finn, we have talked about not getting too close to other people’s work with blocks”, Wanda says. Finn swerves away suddenly. Sienna and Jayden are in the kitchen area, and they sound angry – is it real or is this a game? Tsheej’s nose is running, again. Wanda grabs a tissue, hands it to Tsheej and heads over to the kitchen area. “Don’t forget to wash your hands and put the tissue in the garbage, please” she says over her shoulder with a smile to Tsheej. He nods, wipes his nose, puts the tissue in the garbage and goes back to playing. Wanda sighs and starts talking to the girls. Her pile of assessment sheets and clipboard will have to wait for another opportunity.

The work of the pre-Kindergarten (pre-K¹) teacher is never done. Life in the pre-K classroom is an excellent model of kinetic energy – children, teacher, materials, emotions, all bouncing off one another, gaining speed and momentum, moving in unpredictable paths.

¹ Pre-Kindergarten has come to mean many different things in research and policy relating to the educational experiences of four-year-old children. In this dissertation, when I refer to pre-K, I am referring to publicly funded four-year-old kindergarten programs. In specific, the pre-K classroom that is the focus of this dissertation is within a public school.

Teaching public pre-K is also an act of teaching in a borderland. Pre-K is the place where two approaches to curriculum – elementary and early childhood – come to co-exist. Working in this borderland presents a unique practice opportunity for teachers and teacher educators. In this dissertation, I follow this transition from elementary to pre-K teaching with Wanda, as she and I traverse her move from eleven years teaching kindergarten to her first year teaching pre-K in a public elementary school.

Overview

In the past ten years, public (state-funded) pre-K learning opportunities have exploded in the United States, growing from 700,000 classrooms in 2001 to over 1.3 million in 2011 (W. S. Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald, & Squires, 2011). Along with this explosion has been a growing need for high quality teachers to provide meaningful learning experiences for the four-year-olds in these classrooms (Frede, Jung, Barnett, & Figueras, 2009). Defining what training, skills and dispositions are necessary for the teachers to make these learning experiences most beneficial, however, remains a challenge (Early et al., 2006). In part, this has to do with broadly differing conceptions of the purposes and goals of public pre-K (Brown, 2008; Zigler, Gilliam, & Barnett, 2011). Some policy-makers and researchers envision pre-K programming as a means for closing the achievement gap and focus solely on academic outcomes. Others view pre-K programs as an opportunity for all children to engage in rich, play-based learning experiences that will produce social, emotional and academic growth in young children (Burchinal, Bryant, Clifford, & Early, 2005; Locasale-Crouch et al., 2007; Winsler et al., 2008; Barnett, Friedman, Hustedt, & Stevenson-Boyd, 2009). Working to develop curriculum between these extremes is a challenge for any teacher practicing within a pre-K setting (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007).

What does seem to be clear from the growing body of pre-K research is that the quality of relationships between teachers and students is central (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Pianta, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001, 2005; Hamre, Pianta, Downer, & Mashburn, 2007; Rudasill & Rimm-Kaufman, 2009; Driscoll & Pianta, 2010). Based on this research, it is clear that warm, engaging relationships between teachers and children create opportunities for learning and development. These early experiences can also lay the groundwork for how children approach learning in future years (Pianta, 2007).

This is particularly important when we consider that a high percentage of public pre-K programs serve low-income or at-risk children with the intention of increasing their access to high quality early childhood experiences (Magnuson, Meyers, Ruhm, & Waldfogel, 2004). A great deal of evidence exists that the achievement gap in this country begins in the earliest years of life (Entwisle & Alexander, 1993). Many argue that providing high quality experiences for all children will help put low-income and otherwise at-risk children on more equal footing with their middle and upper income peers (Winsler, et al., 2006; Magnuson & Shager, 2010). Publicly funded pre-K, while not a panacea to cure all social ills, has been found to improve long-term outcomes for low-income and/or at-risk children in a variety of ways.

Given the powers ascribed to public pre-K, many school districts have begun to offer this type of programming within both public schools and community sites (Ackerman, et al., 2009). Studies into the efficacy of pre-K (as measured by academic gains) have indicated that those programs nested within public schools result in higher achievement than do those nested within community sites (Winsler, 2008). While there may be many reasons for this (ranging from how

and with what measures children are assessed as well as what motivates the curriculum), public pre-K within elementary schools is a growing trend (Barnett, et al., 2009).

As pre-K programs in public school settings continue to grow, school districts often find themselves with new pre-K classrooms and, as a consequence, new to pre-K teachers practicing in those classrooms (Bellm, et al., 2002). The teachers are licensed to teach children from birth through third grade, but in reality frequently have little experience working with children younger than age five (Bogard, Traylor, & Takanishi, 2008; Gormley & Gayer, 2005). However, where there is a pre-K classroom, there is a need for a licensed pre-K teacher. As such, teachers who were formerly teaching older children are moved into pre-K classrooms as the need arises.

The guiding philosophy seems to be that if a teacher is licensed to teach children ages birth to eight, then she/he should be able to teach with equal competency all children within these age constraints (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009). These are the constraints under which most school district operate in finding qualified and licensed teachers to staff pre-K classrooms (Frede et al., 2009). Although this appears to simply be a ‘bodies in classroom’ problem, it has in fact created a space where conceptions of high-quality early childhood practice, standards driven elementary curriculum and the realities of the pre-K teacher workforce within elementary schools come to clash.

Traditionally there has been a sharp distinction drawn between pedagogical practices in early childhood and in elementary programs (Katz 1995). Early childhood teacher education programs focus on children and a broad knowledge of child development as the basis for creating curriculum (Katz, 1995). For elementary programs, the source is content knowledge divided by disciplines (Hedges 2005; Hatch 2010; Stipek and Byler 1997).

The growing standards movement within all public schools has widened the gap between these two groups. Benchmarks and standards have become the driving force in elementary practice (Brown 2008; Goldstein 2007), whereas in preschool child development continues to be the main force (Hatch 2002, Bredekamp 2004). While high quality early childhood programs reflect the developmental needs of children within the curriculum, elementary school curriculum reflects learning goals that are centered on content areas and standards. Since most public pre-K programs purport to marry the developmental knowledge of high quality early childhood practices with the skills necessary to success in kindergarten and beyond, pre-K teachers in elementary settings find themselves working between two master narratives (Hammack, 2008) of pedagogical practice that have been framed in opposition to one another (Katz 1995). This is the borderland of public pre-K practice. For teachers who have been teaching within elementary schools for extended periods, their ability to reconceptualize their practice to reflect the developmental needs of four-year-olds presents a challenge that needs attention.

Problem of the Study

In this dissertation, I follow the transition of one veteran teacher – Wanda - from eleven years of teaching kindergarten (K) into her first year of teaching pre-K. Moving from a K into a pre-K position within the same elementary school, Wanda's transition serves as an excellent example of the move that many other teachers made within her school district in the 2011-2012 school year. Wanda's case, however is of particular interest for a number of reasons. Wanda sought change. In fact, she craved it. Wanda wanted professional support in her transition. Wanda envisioned pre-K as a very different kind of teaching practice when compared to the

work she had done in Kindergarten. Wanda pushed herself to consider new ways of practice, even when she felt uncomfortable and uncertain. Wanda was able to vocalize this uncertainty – giving voice to transition. For all of these reasons and more, Wanda is an excellent case study of a teacher moving into the pre-K borderland.

My position in Wanda’s classroom – at first as an observer and later as antagonist, friend and supporter – gave me a special perspective from which I was both a witness and a participant in Wanda’s transition. Another important position about my position in Wanda’s work was that I too was undergoing a transition – from graduate student to teacher educator. As such, Wanda and I were both in places of uncertainty in our lives – looking to form new identities and new relationships to our emerging selves. To document this transition, I use a case study approach. This case study is a study of Wanda’s evolution as a pre-K teacher and is bounded by Wanda.

Theoretical Perspective

I use Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1995) People Process Context Time (PPCT) theory as an analytical frame for this case study. The PPCT theory allows me to consider both the developmental and sociocultural conceptions of identity formation. PPCT is particularly suited to my theoretical perspective because it is predicated on the idea that through processes with one another, contexts, and time, we develop identities as individuals and also as members of groups and cultures.

At its heart, PPCT is a developmental model that is driven by ecological ideas about how humans become and continue becoming human beings. This conception of identity formation as constantly changing is central to my dissertation work. While grounded in psychological conceptions of human development, the PPCT theory takes a sociocultural perspective,

positioning the role time and timing, human and cultural interaction, in order to make meaning of the world around us and our place within it. Moments of identity formation do not happen only at certain times, but rather are constantly happening. Additionally, identity is formed through agentic acts of sense-making in context and practice with others (Wenger, 1998). In these moments, we undertake to situate ourselves within our cultural and social (even political) contexts. We do this through conversation, narrative, interaction and engagement with others and contexts – and in doing so, form emergent identities that are multiplicative and messy (Hammack, 2008).

A pivot point that I use for my theoretical perspective is the idea of processes in identity formation. To better understand the role of processes in identity formation, I focused my analysis of Wanda's case study on trying understanding how her interactions with people, contexts, narratives and her own practice influenced her sense-making process as she became a pre-K teacher. I use PPCT as a frame for bringing these two conceptions of identity formation together. I use the case study of Wanda's identity formation as a means for both examining and explicating this theory of dissonance and to develop a better understanding of her experiences in becoming a pre-K teacher.

Research Questions

As the number of pre-K classrooms continues to grow, understanding the experiences of teachers working within the pre-K borderland is of particular importance. As I began to further explore the teacher identity literature, I found that the experiences of veteran practitioners were lacking. Wanda's story, and the story of other teachers in transition, presents an opportunity to better understand how teacher educators might support veteran teachers as they continue to grow

professionally. Within this dissertation, I attempt to address this by asking the following question:

What sense-making processes does a veteran kindergarten teacher, Wanda, engage with as she transitions to teaching pre-k?

In addition, I ask the following sub-question:

What is my role in the story and story telling Wanda's emerging identity as a pre-K teacher?

In order to answer these questions, I observed and worked with Wanda for nine months in her pre-K classroom and within a professional development context. During my time in her classroom, Wanda and I developed a collegial relationship that evolved into a rich friendship. This evolution allowed us to move beyond the formal constraints of our relationship as observer and observed. As we began to trust each other through our work together in her classroom, we both became a part of our identity development processes.

In addition, in my analysis of the data that I collected, I became the storyteller of both of our experiences: as Wanda transitioned from a K teacher to a pre-K teacher, and as I transitioned from graduate student to teacher educator and researcher. Understanding my role in both Wanda's identity development and the telling of this story is a critical aspect of the work that I do in this dissertation.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Becoming a pre-K teacher means taking on a new approach to curriculum – one that balances academic expectations with the developmental needs of four-year-olds. Consideration of this practice space is particularly important to understanding how teachers will navigate their new roles and identities as pre-K teachers. As the pre-K trend continues to grow, we need to find a way to better understand and support the unique challenges that the pre-K year presents to teachers.

In this chapter, I review the literature from two bodies of research – conceptions of pre-K practice and teacher identity. In the first section, I examine how constructs of child development inform the field of early childhood education (ECE) and influence both curriculum and conceptions of best practices. I also examine the motivations for Elementary approaches to curriculum. Finally, I examine how pedagogical differences in what motivates ECE and Elementary curriculum and create a borderland for pre-K teacher practice.

In the next section, I review the literature of identity theory. In particular, I am interested in how identity theory has been constructed within the teacher education literature. Identity theory can provide meaningful ways for teacher educators to support veteran teachers as they navigate new teaching roles and responsibilities as a part of their teacher identity. I also consider how identity transformation can result from interaction with and sense-making of larger narratives and expectations.

Constructs in pre-K Practice

The pre-K year forms a fine line between the world of early childhood education and the Elementary experiences that are only one year away for pre-K students. Depending on the motivations of the school district or community implementing public pre-K, these classrooms can look like play-based preschools, or kindergartens filled with four-year-olds (Pianta, 2007). In pre-K, as Pianta notes, “school is school, sometimes” (p. 44). Frequently, what motivates these foci are both political expediency and public demand. Pre-K can therefore look very different depending on the primary motivations for pre-K within various communities, school districts and states (Casto & Sipple, 2011).

Pre-K has also been identified as an educational experience that might do any or all of the following: close the achievement gap (Winsler, et al. 2008), prevent bullying, help children learn school skills, and life skills such as sharing and problem-solving (Curby, et al., 2009). As public pre-K is still an emerging trend in the United States, much seems to hang on its successes. For pre-K teachers, at whose feet these goals are laid, often feel a great deal of pressure to meet both the needs of children and the demands of the broader social context (Brown & Lee, 2012).

While the variability is great, the public pre-K classroom curriculum is informed by constructs from both ECE (such as play and development) and Elementary practice (increasingly standardized and benchmark focused) (Brown & Lee, 2012). Knowing what motivates both EC and Elementary curriculum is therefore important for understanding how preK teachers create and implement curriculum that results in excellent learning experiences for their students. In the next sections, I examine motivations for both ECE and Elementary curricular approaches. I also

consider how these approaches position the role of teacher within the curriculum and classroom practice.

Motivations for Curriculum – ECE and Elementary. In many ways, the differences between ECE and Elementary approaches to curriculum can be understood as a divergence about what leads as we grow– learning or development. According to Hatch (2010), while the field of ECE purports to have left its developmental roots behind, most often approaches to curriculum continue to see development as the precursor to learning – a Piagetian perspective. This is evidenced by a general fear of content and explicit teaching of content knowledge within early childhood curriculum. In contrast, Elementary curriculum is focused on content. In some ways, this reflects a Vygotskian approach – where children are taught specific information and material and then receive scaffolding from their teacher to help them reach the point of rich understanding. In this section, I explore these approaches to curriculum and learning more closely and

Within ECE, the traditional motivation for curriculum has been child development that has emerged from psychological roots. Spodek and Saracho (1999) trace the relationship between the field of psychology and practice and curriculum in ECE, noting the influences of Hall, Gesell, Skinner and Erikson. While Vygotsky’s theories have gained influence the last 15 years, Piaget’s theories of child development have underpinned practice and curriculum in ECE for over 40 years and continue to persist in our current conceptions of what ECE teachers should be doing within the preschool and pre-K classroom (File, 2011; Walsh, 2005).

Jean Piaget created a constructivist theory of child development that conceptualized children as moving through stages of development. Piaget viewed his developmental theories as universal –all children who are developing typically will pass through these stages in a specific

sequence (Piaget, 1963). Piaget's focus on the natural emergence of the individual child's knowledge and understanding (also known as child-centered practice) positions ECE teachers as observers and responders rather than instructors or intentional provokers of learning (Stone, 1996). Teachers working from this developmental model aim to be aware of each individual child's development and respond in the proper ways.

Piaget's theories of child development also formed the basis for the first edition of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* in 1987 (Stott & Bowman, 1996). Known among some as "the bible" of early childhood practice, DAP linked many of the Piagetian derived developmental practices that had long motivated ECE teachers to a notion of best practices (Lubeck, 1996; 1998). This first edition of this text codified the notions of focusing on the individual child and development. For example, whole group instruction and large group meeting times and interactions were deemed as largely inappropriate (Bredekamp, 1987). Similarly, teachers were encouraged to not interfere with the learning of children, but rather observe and respond through the environment. Recent iterations of DAP (the third just released in 2009), have more broadly recognized contexts, social systems and cultures as having roles in the varied development of young children. While development is no longer the only or even main consideration, it continues to be an important motivation in curriculum (Grieshaber, 2008b; Langford, 2010).

While Piaget positioned children's development as individual and driven through natural discovery, Lev Vygotsky's theories of development envisioned growth as occurring through social engagement, interaction and the guidance of more knowledgeable peers and adults (Lourenço, 2012; Wertsch, 1985). Vygotsky was concerned with the sociocultural structures that helped children become knowledgeable participants in their cultural and social milieus (Wertsch,

1985). Through interaction with more knowledgeable peers and teachers, Vygotsky believed that children's learning would spur their development. Vygotsky's developmental theory positions the teacher and child as joint sense-makers. Teachers are the provokers of learning through the provision of new experiences and ideas, which in turn results in the development of the child. According to Vygotsky, the teacher is knowledgeable about what sociocultural practices and content knowledge are valued by the larger society and teachers therefore play a key role in educating children in these things (van Oers, 2001). This means that teachers should be actively helping children to learn (sometimes through showing children how to use materials or through explanation of a concept, other times through joint inquiry and problem solving), rather than waiting for observed developmental levels to dictate what children are ready to learn (Hatch, 2010). While many in early childhood have adopted Vygotskian theories of child development in regards to understanding the sociocultural influences of language, context and family, the idea of using content specific experiences within the EC curriculum remains anathema.

The Vygotskian model of the relationship between development and learning is reflected in a more Elementary approach to curriculum. In the Elementary approach, considerations of subject matter content are what lead the curriculum, rather than assumptions about development (Hatch, 2010). The content is chosen with a general sense that what being taught is appropriate to the developmental level of the children, but also the knowledge that as children learn, they will develop the necessary structures to understand and generalize new information (Van de Walle, et al., 2007). Within Elementary settings, teachers are less likely to base their curricular decisions around development (Stipek and Byler 1997). Instead, traditionally, the Elementary curriculum

has been focused around content areas and arranged in a scope and sequence format (Ediger, 2003). Development certainly has a role within the Elementary curriculum, however, this role is more in terms of understanding developmental readiness for specific content, rather than from a broader developmental perspective (Van de Walle, et al., 2007).

With the advent of the “back to basics” approaches of the 1980s and the advent of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, the motivations for elementary school curriculum have become driven by standards and benchmarks (Valli, 2008). Elementary teachers are now less able to design content specific experiences that reflect the interests and lived experiences of their students – the pressure of moving their students towards meeting specific benchmarks is every present (Van Der Heyden, et al., 2005; Cawelti, 2006; Marx & Harris, 2006).

Teachers who have gone through elementary licensure programs (usually pre-K thru Grade 8) versus those in early childhood programs (Birth through Age 8/Grade 3) are more likely to have been more focused on specific content areas rather than on broad developmental knowledge (Early & Winton, 2001). As a result, their understandings of the motivation for curriculum – even within pre-K and K classrooms - can be very different from their early childhood colleagues (File & Gullo, 2002). This certainly has an effect on how they envision their role as a teacher and motivations for practice within pre-K classrooms, as well as their effectiveness at implementing pre-K curriculum (Early, et al., 2006).

Particularly in the younger elementary grades, teachers find themselves trying to balance their knowledge of what young children need against the mandates of their school districts and the federal government (Goldstein, 1997; 2008). Pre-K may be one of the hardest places to balance professional beliefs, knowledge and independence with the expectations and

requirements of outside forces (Brown, 2007; 2009). For example, Graue (2008) notes that most kindergarten practice exists in a post-DAP world. In other words, kindergarten teachers are no longer able to think in terms of development, instead their contexts require them to think in terms of outcomes.

Pre-K is where early childhood and elementary school conceptions of curriculum and teaching come to play together – sometimes easily and sometimes needing a little help getting along. Depending on the motivations of the district or community implementing public pre-K, teachers may be expected to implement curriculum that is either more like early childhood – development driven – or more like elementary – standards driven (Brown, McCabe & Sipple, 2011). When elementary teachers move into pre-K, learning what the curriculum *should* be is particularly difficult. As a result, early childhood teachers working in elementary settings may find themselves working between two constructs that have been framed in opposition to one another (Katz 1995) - developmental knowledge and basic skills/academic expectations. In addition, while many school districts may want pre-K to reflect early childhood practices and principles, these approaches are often new to teachers who have been working in Elementary (File & Gullo, 2002).

Pre-K teachers face a number of challenges in terms of curriculum, and finding a balance that best meets the needs of students can be a difficult journey. Preparing students for the standards driven elementary school environment is a necessity. In addition, creating space within the curriculum for developmental differences and cultural responsiveness is important for preparing children socially and emotionally for the world. It is my hope that this dissertation add to the research literature in terms of understanding the unique challenges that pre-K presents to

teachers, teacher educators and communities as they determine how best to meet the competing needs of four-year-olds.

Identity

Identity has become a very common term in teacher education literature. In part, this is due to the varied definitions that teacher education claim when using identity as a theoretical construct for their work (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; D. Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). Neither the term nor the concept of identity has ever been easy to clearly define. While the theoretical underpinnings of *identity* – largely from Erikson (1959; 1968) and Mead (1934) – provide a rich source for both understanding and conceptualizing the term, how researchers have taken up the concept of identity is another matter. That being said, having read across much of the literature relating to identity in teacher education, I have found that three main conceptualizations of *identity* are dominant in the research. Here I give a brief overview of each of these conceptualizations in order to frame this paper. The first conceptualization of *identity* is closely tied to a psychological perspective. Not surprising, Erikson's (1959, 1968) theories of identity form a theoretical foundation for this conception. In the main, this research is focused upon the construct of “professional identity” and the development of a healthy and effective “professional identity” in pre-service and early years teachers (Beijaard, et al., 2000; Doyle, 1990). Studies in this first category are overall more likely to view identity as holistic, with professional experiences providing development towards a holistic and over-arching identity that is moving along a developmental trajectory. Studies in this view may also look at identity with a mind towards measurement and quantification of the development of professional identity (Chong & Lee, 2008; Settlage, Southerland, Smith, & Ceglie, 2009). While this

conceptualization does consider the process-oriented nature of identity (as in how professional identity is formed from experiences), its focus is largely on formation of an individual's identity along a developmental path.

One central question that arose from reviewing the identity literature from the psychological perspective was whether or not researchers were being careful enough in both their theoretical grounding of this type of work and their definitions of identity. I was struck by the fact that what the researchers perceived as professional teacher identity was instead more like what Erikson characterized as Ideology. Erikson describes ideology as “a coherent body of shared images, ideas and ideals which...provides for the participants a coherent, if systematically simplified, over-all orientation in space and time, in means and ends” (p. 157). Perhaps, instead of forming a professional identity, what pre-service and practicing teachers are developing is an Ideology that allows them to actualize their identity in practice.

However, the lack of a rich theoretical foundation in defining *identity* for many of these studies left me wondering what they meant when they used the term *identity*. And indeed, while some of the research reviewed above used the Mead (1934) and Cote and Levine (2002) to frame their work (Beijaard et al, 2000; Chong et al, 2009; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010b), in execution and conception, their work is much more aligned with Erikson. This may be an issue of popularity. Or perhaps misconceptions about both Mead and Erikson's conceptions of Identity. That being said, I do not think that any theorist can be made to fit any research study, but it certainly does appear that when it comes to Identity, it does happen. Every new study brings with it context specific details that reflect a unique reality. As a result, fitting the label of Identity

requires a detailed theorization of how the theoretical construct of Identity meets both with the methodological and contextual factors at play in a specific study.

Overall, the psychologically grounded, developmental conception of identity lends itself to considering teachers' professional identities as bounded and trajectory oriented. In terms of research into teacher identity, this may be a welcome and sometimes necessary simplification. There is no denying that it is difficult to consider the entire multitude of interactions and processes through which humans learn and develop and form identity every moment of every day. In addition, to consider identity as multiplicative and informed in varied and immeasurable ways troubles the question of how to develop effective teachers. Given this, focusing exclusively on the "I-ness" in the development of professional identity through professionally related experiences makes the understanding of identity much less messy. While I doubt that Erikson's intention was to cleanse the process of meaning making and interaction that informs identity, for many working from the psychological conception, this has been an outcome.

The second conceptualization of *identity* within the teacher education literature takes a more psychosocial and sociological approach. Using Mead's (1934) theorization of the constant and process oriented mediation between Me and I, these researchers are largely focused on the intersections between personal and professional identities of teachers (Britzman, 2001). The role of interaction between social structures/conceptions (in this case teaching or learning to teach) and the self is at the heart of this conceptualization (Wenger, 1995; Cote & Levine, 2002). This conceptualization focuses on the role of the relationship between the personal and the professional in identity (Danielewicz, 2001; Alsup, 2006), on the place of reflective practice to push and pull on identity formation (Larrivee, 2000; McLean, 1999).

Instead of a focus on *how* to move teachers to a certain level of identity development, these psychosocial and sociological conceptions consider the *why* and *what for* of identities development in teacher education. This distinction, especially in traditional sociological work on Identity, may be hard to make. For example, in teacher education some researchers working from the Meadian or psychosocial perspective still have a developmental focus that considers the *how* along side the *why* and *what for* (Borich, 1999). From this traditional sociological perspective, researchers may still focus on the development of salient teacher identities, including what qualities or effective strategies teachers with well-developed teaching identities utilize in their practice. This is related to the long history of connectedness between the psychological approach (measurement) in the social sciences and how it has influenced early (and current) sociological approaches to research (Cote, 1996; Cote & Levine, 2002). Whereas some sociologists still believe that identity development can be both every process oriented and still measurable (Cote, 2006), more post-modern approaches disagree that it is either possible or even useful to try and measure identities that never stop processing and therefore changing (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). There is no “I”-ness at the center of this conception that remains free from social influence and interaction. Social interaction is at the center of all things, and all things and all meanings and meaning-making are socially constructed.

Gee (2001) helped to link this conception of the socially constructed multiple identities that are a part of each person to the field of education. Noting the role that discourses and interactions play in the framing of who and what our identities are, Gee’s emphasis on the many-sided and multifaceted nature of identity and the role of external influences on shaping these identities (as well as how they work on each other) lent itself to new conceptions of the

relationship between learning and teaching and design. Specific to teacher education, this conception of identity as a process of sense-making between a personal identity and a professional identity has been taken up by a host of researchers (Britzman, 1991; Clandinin, 1992; Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997; McLean, 1999)

The intersection of the personal and the professional has become a common way for researchers in teacher education to better understand the dynamic formation of teacher identities and the experiences and knowledge that inform these identities. Manning-Morton (2006) posits that the personal is the professional and vice versa when it comes to identity formation for teachers – especially early years teachers. Manning-Morton argues that early years teachers must be guided in a process-oriented approach that helps them to both understand and merge with confidence their practical, theoretical and personal knowledge. Sisson's (2009) work with eight teachers in an early childhood setting reached a similar conclusion. Sisson found that engaging in the teachers in discussion, reflection and action around the ways in which teachers roles and identity are socially defined and constructed via policy, pedagogy and relationships, allowed the teachers to inform practice in their classrooms and work with families. Hedges (2012) has similarly found that teachers have, even without realizing it, taken aspects of their Funds of Knowledge – or personal lived experiences – and used this together with theoretical and pedagogical knowledge to inform their practices. This merging of the personal and the professional in the sense-making process is simply human nature.

In their examination of how school leaders can support the continued professional development of teachers within the school context, Geijsel and Meijers (2005) proposed a model for the 'becoming' process that balanced professional and personal identities. According to the

researchers, formation of teacher identity is a process that is continuous and largely nested within the professionally related experiences. In fact, “the learning of teachers not only should be viewed as a process of social construction, but also one of individual sense-making” (p. 420). This harkens back to Mead’s argument of the central role of the “I” and “Me” discourse in the Self (identity) formation process.

From the sociological conception of identity, both personal and professional identities are socially-constructed. However, entering into the world of teacher education, pre-service teachers may not recognize their own personal identities as socially constructed. The role of reflective practice, within this conception is to draw attention to this fact, while also helping pre-service teachers to accommodate and consider new challenges to their identities. According to Larrivee (2000):

Our [personal] beliefs shape our identity; hence shedding a dearly-held belief shakes our very existence. If a teacher tries to shed the belief that the teacher must be in control to be effective, it means revealing uncertainty and vulnerability (p. 295).

As such, the dissonance caused by meaningful reflective practice and the importance of the intersections between personal and professional identities cannot be underestimated. It is a difficult process – much like the resolution process that Mead suggests we undergo in reconciling “Me” and “I” into “Self” in a constant process of negotiation and renegotiation. And according to Larrivee, it is also transformative of teacher practice.

Korthagen & Vasalos (2005) also take up the role of reflective practice in the formation of personal and professional identities that support and inform one another. Having created a cyclical and process oriented model to help pre-service and practicing teachers engage in meaningful self reflection with supervisory staff, the authors also point to the role of self-concept

in aiding this process of reflective practice. The researchers have found that teachers with stronger understandings of the ways in which their own self-concept (or personal identities) shapes their professional work, also have an easier time with the reflective process. Indeed, the making of typologies or models for how to best engage pre-service teachers in meaningful and identity forming reflective practice is a central theme in teacher education at present (Jay & Johnson, 2002).

The third conceptualization of identity within the teacher education literature is more emergent. I use this term because approaches that fall into this conceptualization do not cling tightly to any one theoretical framework when it comes to the term identity. Rather, what literature in this conceptualization has in common is the focus on identity as multiplicative, socially constructed and messily process oriented. Within this conception, how pre-service teachers form identity is related to the processes, relationships, contexts, agency and actions in which they are engaged in all aspects of their lives. This conception of identity is much less individually or effectiveness oriented than either their psychological or sociological conceptions that I posited earlier. Rather the goal of much of this research is to create access to methodological tools that allow researchers to better understand the messy natures of identities formation in all humans (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995).

Researchers working within this vein take a post-modern sociological and anthropological (or socio-cultural) view of identity, framing identity as multiplicative in nature, dialogic and agentic (Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, Jr., & Cain, 1998; Holland & Lachicotte, Jr., 2007). The role of time/timing, process, context and cultural cannot be downplayed in this conception, nor the central role of agency and self-efficacy (Holland, et al., 1998). Research that

takes up this emergent conception tends to focus on examining the multiplicative nature of identity and how this affects teachers and teacher education (Bulloughs, 2008; Marsh, 2002), and how narrative and life history approaches to understanding teacher identity can add dimensionality to our understanding of its influences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; McDermott, 2002). Indeed, it is the literature that emerges from this vein that seems to hold the most promise for how to reconceptualize teacher education experiences and push upon the more traditional assumptions about how and why teachers should be prepared (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

The socio-cultural approach to conceptualizing identity formation lies at the intersection of many fields of research – anthropology, sociology, psychology, and linguistics (Holland & Lachicotte, Jr., 2007; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). It is informed by the works of Erikson, Mead, Vygotsky, Bakhtin and many other theorists who added to this broader conception of identity formation. According to Penuel and Werstch (1995) one main way in which socio-cultural approach to identity differ from either psychological or sociological conceptions is in the ways in which it is actualized methodologically in research. Penuel et al. (1995) notes that much of Erikson’s original theories on identity have been pulled and prodded into trajectory based models and a focus on measurement that are, in many ways, methodological misuses of his theory of identity. These methodological misuses of Erikson’s original theories around identity downplay the role of social, historical and cultural forces in Erikson’s conception of identity formation. That being said, within the psychological conception of identity posited by Erikson, identity is formed through the individual choices that people made in response to these forces. In contrast, the socio-cultural conception of development posited by Vygotsky is focused on the actions of

individuals in social contexts and activity and how the individual takes in and internalizes various social practices.

While Penuel and Werstch (1995) focus their socio-cultural conception of identity on a marriage between the identity theories of Erikson and Vygotsky, other researchers have taken a different tact in conceptualizing this approach to understanding identity formation. Focusing instead on the intersection of Mead, sociological and anthropological conceptions of identity, this approach to socio-cultural understandings of identities formation is interested not only in the co-construction of social and cultural meanings and symbols, but how these are engaged with, actualized, and replicated in interaction (Holland & Lachicotte, Jr., 2007). This symbolic interactionism – between cultural and social symbols and the meaning making process of reconciling these symbols and meanings in practice, is at the heart of the socio-cultural approach to identities formation. The role of dialogic engagement, agency and action cannot be ignored:

[It] is a continual process of heuristic development: individuals and groups are always (re)forming themselves as persons and collectives through cultural materials created in the immediate and the more distant past. In this process...culture and subject position are joined in the production of cultural resources that are then subjectively taken up (Holland, et al., 1998, p.18)

To understand the how of identity formation from this conception, Penuel, et al. (1995) assert, researchers must allow for methodological approaches to research that capture the richness of this process in action as people grapple with reconciling their identities with ever changing social and institutional tools, symbols and expectations through verbal and symbolic discourses that are constantly changing. It is clearly no easy task. Unlike the first and second conceptualizations of identity, this approach does not suppress certain aspects of identity formation in order to understand single variables or only consider a binary relationship between the personal and the

professional. Rather, from this perspective, to understand the professional identity of teachers, a researcher must also consider the people, contexts, processes and time with which teachers engage in practice. There are methodological repercussions to undertaking this sort of research – a survey and/or multiple-time point interviews will not suffice as might be the case in the first two conceptualizations of identity.

For one, this approach is so focused on the multiplicative nature of identities that it does not necessarily lend itself well to understanding *what* is most effective in training students to become certain specific types of effective teachers. The focus then is not on outcomes, but rather on how pre-service teachers construct these identities for themselves in the face of all of the other social, cultural, and personal dialogues, structures and interactions in which they are involved. Additionally, given the roots of socio-cultural theory as an analytic tool as well as a theoretical framework for conceptualizing identity, I found that most of the studies I read working in this vein were particularly well-theorized, pulling on the works of Penuel, et al, Holland et al, and the theoretical roots offered by Erikson, Mead, Vygotsky and Bakhtin.

Broadly defined, teacher education studies within the socio-cultural or emergent conception of identities formation are looking at a multiplicity of multiplicities. While this approach may require richer theorization and a more arduous methodological journey, it is also necessary, according to many teacher educators and researchers, in order to get beyond surface level and binary conceptions of the personal and the professional in the development of teachers identities (Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006; Bulloughs, 2008; Marsh, 2002; Tappan, Ying & Hendricks-Lee, 1993).

As Day et al. (2006), note in their review of research relating to teacher identity development, when it comes to a critical understanding of what identity means, engagement in the majority of the teacher education literature is surface level and benign. The researchers trace the literature on teacher identity development from its sociological conceptions as the relationship between social structures and individual agency to more socio-cultural conceptions of identity. The first, they note, frames identity as overwhelmingly stable, marked by moments of instability that are quickly resolved. The second and socio-cultural focus cast teacher identities as largely unstable, with small moments of stability.

Two studies are good examples of this approach. In many ways, the work of Monica Miller Marsh's *The Social Fashioning of Teacher Identities* (2002) has helped to push this dialogic approach to the fore. In two case studies of early childhood teachers that followed them from their pre-service education programs through their first years of teaching, Marsh examined the discourses at play in their own lives, their educational experiences and the contexts in which they first engage in practice as teachers. Using rich narratives, Marsh uncovers the dialogic nature of how these teachers pieced together elements of different socio-culturally constructed identities. The teachers are indeed, "fashioned together" both by their own engagement in these discourses and how the discourses of teaching act upon them. The process nature of the constant construction of both cultural and social symbols, and personal meaning making is central to this study.

Connelly and Clandinin (1996) proposed the use of narratives as a means for better understanding how the personal and professional knowledge of teachers are expressed in their teaching. Research using this methodology requires a much closer relationship with teacher

participants than many researchers may be comfortable taking. It requires in depth field notes, observations of practice and life outside of the classroom, autobiographical and journal writing by the teachers, interviews, family stories, teacher stories, and more.

Divergent master narratives of the many contexts in which we live and work also influences how we negotiate our identity (Hammack 2008). According to Hammack (2008) master narratives are larger, socially constructed messages and notions about who we are or should be. While we each experience master narratives, we also maintain personal narratives that sometimes mesh, but frequently bump up against master narratives. It is in the space between these master narratives and personal narratives that individuals engage in the real work of identity construction.

Indeed, it is the dialogic nature of the well-crafted narratives that helps us to see that individuals and groups, from a socio-cultural perspective, are constantly involved in the making and remaking of identity. Bakhtin, in particular, provides a theoretical based for considering the idea that groups or individuals can engage with more than one perspective at a time (Holland, et al., 1998). Within this dialogic frame, the multiplicative nature of identity and identity development cannot be simplified. It is in this constant dialogue that the self is made over into a self-other that engages in dialogue over the role of power, agency, position, culture and social structure in the construction of identities. For this reason, the narrative approach to understanding teacher identity construction can be a rich methodological tool for understanding the discourses in which teachers engage in their development of identities.

Studies by Soreide (2006) and Watson (2006), both focused on how teachers constructed both themselves, their work and social/cultural discourses and contexts surrounding teaching,

and found that in engaging in the narrative approach, teachers were “doing identity work” (Watson, p. 525). The dialogic process allowed the teachers to richly identify constructs, examine them, make sense and reconstruct them. It is in these narratives – constructed and reconstructed over time, that Soreide found that the teachers she studied began identifying and making sense of the subject positions and identity constructs that were hidden by a binary person/professional model of understanding their work. Both studies employed reflective writing and rewriting of narratives around a variety of topics related to teaching, learning, personal histories and imagined futures.

Sanford and Hopper (2004) conducted a multi-year study that reflected on the constructs of their teacher education practices, modifications to their practice, the context of pre-service teachers’ work and learning, and a focus on narrative accounts with the pre-service teacher participants. These narrative accounts, constructed by the participants and the researchers, acted in concert with the dialogues undertaken by the pre-service teachers within the setting of a required course taught at their practicum sites. One of the main benefits of this approach, the researchers found, was that the participants grew in confidence when it came to questioning both norms and ideals of practice and teacher identity. Their ability to question, discuss and deconstruct ideas of practice allowed the teachers to construct teacher identities that reflected lived realities rather than idealized trajectories.

Building on this idea of engaging teachers in narratives about practice as a means of deconstructing normative constructs of teacher identity, (McDermott, 2002) posits that engaging pre-service teachers in the narrative meaning making process is like asking them to collage an image of their multiplicative identities. Using this construct as an aesthetic tool for creating

narratives, the researcher found that the participants were better able to consider all aspects of their identities, the ways in which they were constructed for them or constructed themselves, as well as their role in being subject to or agent of certain identity constructs. While the uses of narrative approaches are powerful tools to helping teachers understand and unpack the socio-culturally constructed nature of their identities, another subset of the socio-cultural researcher in teacher education focuses on the role of agency.

The role of agency is also central to both socio-cultural theory and conceptions of identity. Wenger (1998), for example, envisions agency as being at the center of situated experiences of learning. Agency allows for the individual to participate when opportunities arise. Through agency, actors take up and put down different conceptions of self, roles and social and cultural mores. Holland, et al. (1998) notes too that agency is constructed by social and cultural norms that allow or disallow individuals to enact agency. This has constitutive effects on identities formation. Identities, and whether or not they are accepted or supported by the contexts in which we live, can become the mediating force for agency, and therefore exert control over action or inaction in the face of opportunities for change. While several studies (Lasky, 2005; Parkison, 2008) have looked at agency among teachers in practice (particularly in relation to the standards movement), only a few have begun to address the role of agency in identity formation within teacher education for both pre-service and practicing teachers.

A main claim of researchers working within the socio-cultural vein appears to be that it is through participating in teaching contexts that pre-service and practicing teachers build identities for themselves and can best make sense of discourses surrounding teacher identity (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Flores & Day, 2006; Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson & Fry, 2004). What is

also necessary in these contexts is the space for pre-service and practicing teachers to have room for dialogic engagement with the constructs that they are encountering as they make their way into and through the field of teaching.

Wenger takes up the identity as participation conceptualization in his text, *Communities of Practice*. Building on earlier work with Lave (1991), Meadian conceptions of “I” and “me”, and foundations of socio-cultural theory, Wenger is focused on the practice of learning and identity formation as verbs. Identity is something (or many some-things) that are being made and remade through interaction in communities of practice. Too often learning experiences are focused on individual goal outcomes, rather than on learning the mutually constituted and define practice of the community. Wenger’s most provocative idea may be the idea that learning happens. No matter what you do, something is being learned, and as such, identities are being formed and reformed. Learning is a constant and active state. Even if what you are learning is how not to do something, it is still learning.

In a piece by Coldron and Smith (1999), attention is drawn to the idea of *teacher as (fill in the blank)*. The blank could be filled by almost anything at any point – as enforcer, as questioner, as institutor, and so forth. The idea here is that as teacher are “acting as” that they are actively locating their “many selves” as teachers. Underpinning this notion is the sense that teacher identities consist of “various ingredients” (p. 711). Examining the trend towards standardization of both school standards and teacher practice, Coldron and Smith argue that we loose the important reality that teachers are constantly constructing themselves in practice when standards codify and unify a notion of teacher identity as a cohesive, whole state (and then measure where teachers are in this identity development). Instead, Coldron and Smith call on

teacher educators to recognize that there is not some seminal end identity that is to be reached for each and every teacher, but rather steps left, right, forward and back that help teachers to craft their true identities. For Coldron and Smith, experiences that build well-developed teacher identities are those that locate both the individual's personal and professional biographies within a space of practice that does not deny the socially constructed nature of all of those things, nor the agency of the individual to make choices and take up different aspects of the identities at different times and for different purposes.

Perhaps these studies point to the idea that there truly is a need for a discourse oriented space in which early years and practicing teachers can engage in dialogic practices to identify, discuss and deconstruct the many competing conceptions and realities, norms and expectations of teachers. This practice would work both ways to make clear the ways in which teachers benefit from and utilize theoretical knowledge as well as to understand the ways in which all contexts have social and cultural norms that construct participants in certain ways.

Bringing Together Identity, Teacher Practice and pre-K. When using identity as a lens for understanding teacher practice, context is particularly important. In early childhood, the category of EC provides a broad umbrella for many types of practice and hides many divisions in approach and curricula. As I noted earlier, there has traditionally been a distinction drawn between teachers educated in early childhood and those in elementary programs, as well as between those who teach in preschools and elementary schools (Katz 1995). Working to understand the contexts within (and between) which teachers are practicing is centrally important in understanding how they construct their identity in practice.

In both my review of the pre-K practice literature and identity literatures, a challenge was the intense focus of much of the field on pre-service and early years teacher education. While this was not necessarily surprising, I found that there was an overabundance of work focused upon pre-service teachers and a general dearth of work relating to teachers who had been in the field for longer than 5 years. In large part, I think that this is due to the intensive focus of many researchers of determining how to provide the best quality teacher education programming for new entrants to the field – be this from an early childhood training perspective or from an identity formation perspective.

Within the identity research, when I did find identity research as it related to practicing teachers and teachers with extended experience and tenure – so-called ‘veteran teachers’ - I largely found that these studies aligned (not surprisingly, in retrospect) with the third conceptualization of identity. Many of these studies took a narrative and life histories (Smith, 2001; Søreide, 2006; Woods, 1993) approach that highlighted the many dimensions, experiences, contexts and reflections that influence the emergence, support and malleability of multiple identities in long practicing teachers. This, in my mind, signals the need to have more research that addresses the identity experiences of veteran teachers, and to consider how these teachers make sense of teaching transitions that cross broad curricular and practice boundaries.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study. I begin with a rationale for an interpretive case study and lay out the characteristics of this approach. In the next section, I describe the context of the study. Following this, I go over the methods that I used for subject selection and data collection and I also detail how I analyzed these data. I also consider my own role in the design, implementation and analysis of this study.

Rationale for Interpretive Case Study

In this dissertation, I approach both data collection and analysis from a constructivist interpretivist epistemology. From an interpretivist epistemology, I recognize that each individual engages in sense-making processes that reflect her personal engagement with current context, past experiences, and the knowledge and memories that they bring to moments of engagement. The interpretivist approach also pushes the researcher to consider the multiple modes and means by which subjects make sense of their world and construct the reality around them (Glesne, 1999). The goal is to attempt understand experiences from the perspective of the participants, while being mindful of the researchers position in influencing and interpreting these perspectives (Crotty, 1998). As such, the researcher respects the knowledge of the participants and their unique expertise within the research site (Creswell, 2007). The research methods employed by the researcher must include data collection that will provide insight into these multiple perspectives during data analysis.

For this purpose I chose to use a case study approach in the data collection and analysis of this research. A case study is “a partial, historical, clinical study of a situation [that is]

presented in narrative form . . . [and] provides data...essential to an analysis of a specific situation” (Erickson, 1986, p. 726). These data, according to Erickson, are both process oriented and substantive. In other words, the data gathered reflect the multiple perspectives and views of participants – both those that they express and those that are exhibited through action or objects. Stake (1995) agrees that case studies are designed to bring out details from the viewpoint of the participants by using many sources of data. To begin, the researcher must first define their case – is it an individual or a context, an event or an experience? This in turn informs both data collection and analysis. The data gathered and analyzed for the case at hand should help to both inform this boundary and reflect it. The researcher too must be careful that the boundary of the case allows for data collection that reflects the multiple perspectives being considered within the case. This is another important characteristic of case studies.

The case study for this dissertation is bounded by one person - Wanda. By drawing this boundary, I consider how Wanda’s interactions within her classroom (with children, aides, and me), school, the professional development, and the broader district (experiences, knowledge, conversations, beliefs, and so forth) merged into the work that she did in her teaching practice. By bounding the case in this way, I consider how these varied elements of Wanda’s life and practice served as a context for Wanda to make sense of her new teaching experiences. All of us are tied up together in this case, and that is part of the hard work of the case study approach. The data that I gathered for this dissertation reflect this boundary – Wanda’s experience is the thread that ties these data together. For example, I use transcriptions of Wanda’s small and whole group participation within a professional development context, however, I link these to her practices within the classroom. Wanda is a part of all of these data. My use of these data is for the purpose

of better understanding the multiple contexts, sources of information and narratives that informed Wanda's daily practice in her first year teaching pre-K.

Qualitative case studies, are also naturalistic and occur within the everyday, focused on lived experiences rather than clinical settings (Stake, 1995). This case was informed by what Wanda brought each day to her work, as well as what her students brought with them – emotionally, physically, and experientially. I am also a part of this equation. Within a qualitative case study, the positionality of the researcher needs careful consideration and should be part of both the data collection and analysis processes (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). My role within Wanda's classroom and my interactions with Wanda, her students, and the professional development context all played a part in the sense-making I was observing in this case study. I am also the tool of data analysis, since it is my interpretations of the events of this past year that are being presented in this dissertation.

Another characteristic of case studies that requires attention is that case studies are particularistic. According to Stake (2000), this means that the researcher “takes a particular case and comes to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does” (p. 8). This case, as a result, will never be like any other case – it reflects beliefs and practices and perspectives at a certain time and place. As such, the analytical approach of this dissertation is my attempt to understand how Wanda made sense of this year of transition and change. In doing so, I also found myself analyzing my own experiences – both in relation to my work with Wanda and in my own personal evolution as a researcher and teacher educator. My sense-making process was therefore also a part of this year of sense-making and emerging identity.

As Wanda and I engaged with one another within the contexts of her practice, the classroom and the larger district (as well as our own families and cultural experiences) we pushed each other to forge emergent identities as teacher and as researcher. As Holland, et al. (1998) notes, “one’s history-in person is the sediment from past experiences upon which one improvises, using the cultural resources available, in response to the subject positions afforded one in the present” (p. 18). Who we were in this year together in Wanda’s classroom emerged from our intersubjectivity with one another, as well as with our past experiences, current contexts and ongoing narratives in daily life. Capturing this miasma of interaction is not easy.

To do this, I examine how all of our identities developed as we engaged with one another during this school year, bringing together our divergent lives, experiences, knowledge and levels of development to work together within the context of this classroom. I consider how sense-making in the face of conflicting narratives, experiences and contexts can drive us towards new identities and understandings of ourselves. I try to understand what processes helped us in this work.

A question that I have considered in writing this dissertation is, “What can we know from a case study?” In large part, this case study provides an insight into the deeply personal ways in which teachers experience change in their teaching practice. This may result from changing age/grade level, implementing a new curriculum or any number of other practice related reasons. While large scale studies – qualitative or quantitative – may paint a broad picture of the identity changes experienced by teachers, the case study approach brings us closer to the intimacy of this experience. While some might argue that this more intimate approach limits the generalizability of the research done through case study methods, others disagree (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Instead of

considering how a case study might limit our view, I think it is important to understand how a case study can personalize research and therefore possibly make it more meaningful and accessible to practicing teachers and researchers alike. Case study allows us to put a face and a story to a larger trend or shift, and that is important since research is really all about people in action everyday.

Context of the Study

The data for this dissertation were collected as part of a larger study on pre-k teacher professional development (4K-PD) in support of culturally and developmentally responsive early childhood mathematics teaching. The 4K-PD project worked in concert with the advent of public pre-K programming in a mid-sized, urban school district. In this next section, I introduce the context of the district and the 4K-PD project. I also introduce the context of Wanda's classroom within Fuji School, as well as give background information about Wanda, myself, and our relationship during her first year of teaching pre-K.

District. In the fall of 2011 the local school district implemented a state funded pre-K program designed to create pre-K classrooms within both school and childcare sites. For the school district, pre-K programming had been in the works for a long time. Nearly seven years earlier, the district had run a pilot public pre-K program that was well received by families. However, the local school board never allowed the pre-K program to move beyond the initial pilot program. Then, four years later, amid growing pressure in a state where more and more school districts were offering public pre-K, the school board issued their support for a mixed model, half day public pre-K program.

In this model, public pre-K classrooms were housed in community preschool sites, Head Start, and public elementary schools. This triad model resulted in community sites with community-based teachers (in other words not hired by the school district), community sites with district teachers (hired by the school district), and school sites with school district teachers. The community preschools sites were allowed to continue with their preexisting curriculum and assessments for pre-K. The elementary pre-K classrooms were required to follow district mandates in regards to classroom curriculum (the Creative Curriculum), and use district determined assessments for pre-K students.

In addition, the district sites used a schedule that provided teacher planning time and professional development on Mondays and student attendance Tuesday-Friday. Community pre-K programs, given their child care status, continued to follow their own schedules and did not necessarily send their 4K teachers to the Monday PD sessions. Within pre-K classrooms students were assigned to an AM or PM session that was two and a half hours long. For the first year of pre-K, the district limited enrollment to 15 children per section, and promised to provide additional staffing to support teachers. This meant (in theory) that in the district pre-K classrooms, teachers worked with thirty students and families across the two sessions.

The Monday PD sessions were focused on helping the teachers to implement the Creative Curriculum, use the new developmentally based assessment tools now required in the pre-K classrooms, and provide opportunities for learning to provide curricular experiences through play rather than directed centers or whole or small group lessons. The topics varied over the course of the school year, and teachers were welcome to attend those sessions that best fit their needs. However, a minimum number of hours were required for the district pre-K teachers.

4K-PD. The 4K-PD program was a National Science Foundation funded research project that provided professional development for pre-K teachers that focused on culturally and developmentally responsive teaching with a focus on early childhood. The research had a specific focus on early mathematics, but also aimed to serve as a means for helping teachers transition into new pre-K positions within the school district. The project consisted of a series of four courses focused on developmentally and culturally responsive teaching with an emphasis on mathematics through play. The teachers were asked to reconceptualize their relationships with families by building on family *Funds of Knowledge* (Gonzalez et al. 2005). Our goal was to have teachers view this knowledge as the basis around which they could build emergent classroom curriculum.

The 4K-PD program met weekly at a local elementary school for 2.5 hours in the evening. Teachers completed a broad range of readings (across early childhood, early math and approaches to FoK) and engaged in a mix of whole and small group activities. The teachers also completed written reflections based on readings and topics discussed in class. In addition, each teacher worked with a focal child in her pre-K classroom.

The Principal Investigators selected several of the teachers participating in the 4K-PD program to be case studies of pre-K classrooms in public school and preschool sites within the district. I was assigned to Wanda's classroom and was lucky enough to work with Wanda throughout the 2011/2012 school year as she transitioned to teaching pre-K.

Wanda. Wanda is a petite, Vietnamese-American woman in her mid-thirties. She was born in Vietnam and adopted as an infant by a white family in a mid-sized midwestern town about sixty miles from where she now lives and teaches. Wanda's father is a retired math

professor and her mother is a retired nurse. In her initial interview, Wanda described her family as follows:

I come from a very diverse family. I'm one of four children, three of whom are adopted multi-racially. I'm Vietnamese. My parents are white. My oldest brother's white. My sister's black, and my brother's American Indian. So we grew up very differently I think than most kids in my area at the time I guess. Luckily, I've lived in three different countries. The first was when I was seventh grade, I lived in Malaysia with my parents – my dad was on sabbatical teaching there. And I lived in South Africa when I was an exchange student after high school, which is where I met my husband. He's white South African. (Initial Interview, 9/26/11)

Wanda's descriptions of her childhood are fairly idyllic – filled with animals, a loving home, and parents able to be at home due to flexible work schedules. Her parents still live in her hometown, and she sees them often. Wanda's husband worked two states away for much of each week. Due to the economic climate, both Wanda and her husband accepted this situation. However, this meant that most of each week, Wanda was a single parent. Wanda often spoke of how this made her life more complicated in terms of being able to attend the 4K-PD programming on Wednesday evenings. Wanda relied heavily on friends and colleagues to support her and her son while her husband was away. For example, on the nights that we had PD class, her son went home with a school friend and had dinner with them. It was clear that it wasn't easy to balance work, single-parenthood and an evening course each week, but Wanda rarely complained.

As an undergraduate at a state University, Wanda entered the early childhood teacher education program during her sophomore year of college. She had had some prior work experience in community childcare, mostly during the summer as a teenager and in her early twenties. As she noted in her initial interview the last week in September, "I went in as undecided. I have always liked kids, but I think I went into education as a default. Not quite sure,

but you know, thinking, ‘I can do this.’ And I ended up just really loving it.” (Initial Interview, 09/26/2011). Wanda’s teacher-education program has a strong reputation for using child development as the frame for early childhood education.

Certified to teach children birth to age eight, Wanda went straight into teaching kindergarten – first at Applecrest Elementary for three years, for two years in Washington State and then at Fuji Elementary school for six years. According to Wanda, while she had enjoyed teaching at Applecrest, she often referred to Fuji as the “right place” for her as a teacher. When I asked her about this, she told me that Applecrest was a very white, middle class school. “Even though I am middle class, and identify with more white, middle class values, Fuji has the diversity that I really wanted as a teacher” (Observation, 10/13/2011). For Wanda, this diversity included children from various ethnic and language backgrounds, as well as socio-economic levels and family constellations.

The year prior to this study, Wanda had completed her eleventh year of teaching kindergarten. In all ways she was a veteran teacher – she had contacts throughout the district, was known and respected both by fellow teachers and student families, her principal relied on her to help other teachers, and, most telling, at dismissal time, she had kids in every grade who would swarm to her seeking a hug or high five. Parents of past students would stop into her classroom to greet her and give her a hug, and resource teachers within the school would often stop by to ask Wanda her opinion on an issue with a past student.

While Wanda’s kindergarten position at Fuji had been rewarding, she was excited at the possibility of a new challenge. When the district posted two pre-K positions at Fuji school, Wanda immediately applied and was accepted by her principal. At the same time, Wanda applied

to our PD program, hoping that the courses that we were offering would help support her in the transition to teaching pre-K.

Kate. At the time that I met Wanda, I was in my second year of working on the project supporting the professional development of pre-k teachers, and in my third year of doctoral work. As a Project Assistant (PA), I worked collaboratively with other PAs and the faculty members who were the Project Investigators (PIs). The PIs and PAs represented a cross-section of expertise – with PAs coming from mathematics education, ECE, and literacy education backgrounds. The two PIs (Anita and Beth) came from early mathematics and early childhood, respectively, research backgrounds.

As a PA, this gave me the opportunity to not only learn more about early mathematics, but to use my own expertise as a former preschool teacher and early childhood doctoral student. I spent much of the three years that I was on this project learning more about early mathematics and working to marry these theories with best practices in early childhood. While at times challenging, it was a transformational experience led by two gifted faculty members who planned and implemented the PD coursework for our participating pre-K teachers.

Prior to entering graduate school, I had been a preschool teacher in two community sites. The first was a University preschool that was linked to a large, well-known teacher's college. This is where I first fell in love with teaching. The second school where I taught was an inner city charter school on the near north side of Milwaukee. Both settings taught me invaluable skills. The first school was staffed with master teachers who used rich theoretical knowledge to help me to critically understand child development, individual child needs, and how to respond to and learn from parents. It was, in all ways, an idyllic training ground for an early childhood teacher.

It was also an early childhood site that served the children of university professors and staff.

While our students were from diverse ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, they were all privileged to come from homes with highly educated parents who had the time, energy, leisure and knowledge to demandingly engage our minds and hearts in the teaching of their children.

The second school was where I really learned to teach. In this school, I was on my own, in a classroom, designing curriculum that met the diverse interests and needs of my students. In addition, in this second school, 100% of my students were recipients of free and reduced lunch, were predominantly African American and Latino, and 100% of them came from single-parent or non-traditional households. In part, I can identify with Wanda's dissonance in switching to pre-K, because I experienced a similar dissonance in moving from a university preschool to a community preschool serving a much more diverse child and family population.

Unlike Wanda, I came to early childhood education through a non-traditional route. When I went to college, I needed a work-study position to help pay my tuition. I found, applied for and was hired to work as an Assistant Teacher at preschool that was affiliated with Teachers' College in New York City. In this setting, I met truly amazing master teachers in preschool classrooms. It was the first time that it occurred to me that teaching was an incredibly skilled profession – one that required both important training and an artfulness of practice that required the teacher to patiently watch, consider, reflect and respond to the social, emotional, developmental and cultural needs of each student. I worked at this preschool for 2.5 years, slowly gaining more responsibility for curriculum design, primary caregiver status of various children, and building wonderful working relationships with highly skilled teachers. I left college knowing that I wanted to be an early childhood teacher.

I am a white, young, middle class woman – like nearly 71% of the early childhood work force (LoCasale-Crouch, et al., 2007). Culturally, my family is of mixed European heritage and in many ways I was raised in a stereotypically white, middle class fashion. In other words, I grew up believing that my traditions and experiences were normal, accepted, and most prevalent. This was true even though I grew up in a community and schools that were incredibly, amazingly diverse in all ways – culturally, linguistically, ethnically and religiously. Like Wanda, I am married. At the time of this study, I had two children, but was pregnant with my third. My life was a whirlwind of work, study, commuting and family. Wanda and I also had these things in common.

I followed Wanda's afternoon session of pre-K for most of the 2011/2012 school year. I had originally been assigned to follow another teacher from our first cohort of participants. However, when this teacher resigned from the program, I was assigned to Wanda's classroom at the very end of September, and began my first visits with her in the early part of October.

An important methodological consideration for me in the analysis of data and the writing of this dissertation was the role of my own transitional position – as learner (as graduate student) and expert (in the eyes of Wanda), as ex-preschool teacher and soon-to-be EC teacher educator – influenced how I took up understanding Wanda's sense-making process. Teasing out this theme of uncertainty – of dissonance and not knowing – and balancing my own experiences and my observations and work with Wanda, was a central challenge in this dissertation.

Children. When I joined Wanda's classroom, there were fourteen children and one behavioral aide (Mrs. B) who was assigned to assist one student with special needs. The number of children in the afternoon session varied across the year, reaching a high of fourteen in late

October. From November through the end of school in early June, Wanda's afternoon class had twelve children. The district maximum for the pre-K classrooms during this year was 15.

Wanda's students were incredibly diverse, reflecting the overall ethnically diversity of Fuji School. In addition, there was a fair amount of language diversity – with four different primary languages. The table below illustrates this diversity (see Table 1).

Table 1. Wanda's Afternoon Class

| Child² | Gender | IEP | ESL | Primary Home Language | Ethnicity | Family Constellation | Enrollment |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Chingbo | Male | | X | Taiwanese | Ethnic Chinese | Two parent, married | Full Year |
| Fritz | Male | X (Speech, OT, Behavioral Aide) | | English | White | Two mothers, separated | Full Year |
| James | Male | X (Speech) | | English | African American /White | Two parent, married | Full Year |
| Jayden | Female | | | English | White | Two parent, unmarried | Full Year |
| Kameelah | Female | | | English | African American | Single mother | September to November |
| Kazadi | Male | | | English | African American /White | Two parent, married | Full Year |
| Kwame | Male | | X | Unidentified African Language | African | Two parent, married | Full Year |
| Marie | Female | | | English | White | Two parent, married | Full Year |
| Sienna | Female | | | English | African American | Grandmother/ Great- | Full Year |

² All names have been changed to protect the identities of children and families.

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|---------------|---|---------|---------------------|---|------------------------|
| | | | | | /White | Grandmother | |
| Simon | Male | | | English | White | Two parent, divorced | Full Year |
| Stephon | Male | X (Speech) | | English | African American | Single mother | October to December |
| Theo | Male | | | English | White | Two parent, married | Full Year |
| Tsheej | Male | | X | Thai | Thai | Two parent, divorced. Father remarried | Full Year |
| Virginia | Female | | | English | White | Two parent, married | Full Year |

All of the data provided on this table were from conversations with Wanda and the behavioral Aide, Mrs. B, who was assigned to a child in the classroom (Fritz) through his IEP. I had no other sources for this data. In addition, Wanda did not have access to data regarding the socio-economic status of the individual students. However, given that 68.3% of the Fuji Elementary school students qualified for free and reduced lunch, it is likely that this percentage is reflected within the pre-K classroom as well.

One other element of diversity within the classroom was family constellation. For Wanda, this was an important consideration when learning about children and families. She always made it a point to try to understand who lived within each home so that when the children referred to different actors in their home lives, she would know who they were talking about.

Data Collection

In order to answer my research questions, I first had to consider how best to gather and then analyze the necessary data. As I stated in the introductory chapter, my research question is:

What sense-making processes does a veteran kindergarten teacher, Wanda, engage with as she transitions to teaching pre-k?

In addition, I ask the following sub-question:

What is my role in the story and story telling Wanda's emerging identity as a pre-K teacher?

According to Stake (2000) multiple layers and sources of data are necessary to fully represent a case. In order to try to understand Wanda's experiences, I had to have data that represented multiple perspectives on her transition. These had to include how she narrated her experiences, frequent observations of her transition in practice, and also an understanding of what other contexts and experiences were influencing her practice and conceptions of practice in a pre-K classroom. As such, I collected data that I hoped would reflect Wanda's experiences within the PD and district training sessions, would help me to understand her transition from teaching Kindergarten to teaching pre-K, and would illuminate how she was bringing these strands together in her daily work within the classroom. To do this, I collected interviews, observations, transcriptions of PD class sessions, photographs of Wanda's classroom, reflections on my observations written following most sessions, child memos that were usually triggered by some event within the classroom and followed by conversations between me and Wanda about how to meet the child's needs, and email correspondence between Wanda and me across the year (see Table 2).

Interviews were conducted at the beginning and end of the school year. The initial interview largely focused on the personal history of the teacher, including teacher training experience and teaching history. The interview also asked about the teacher's expectations of the

pre-k year and how her first few weeks of teaching were going. In the middle of the year we also conducted an interview around the home visits that teachers were making with a focal child in their classroom. Finally, at the end of the year interview, teachers were asked to reflect on their experiences across the school year.

For my classroom observations, I wrote ethnographic fieldnotes to capture rich descriptions of Wanda's interactions with students, the educational assistants and other adults in her classroom and the larger school context. Throughout the year, I found myself focusing widely and narrowly on the context – sometimes on Wanda's interactions with students and other actors within the classroom, and other times trying to observe her interactions within the broader context of the whole school setting and/or community level. Often times it was other actors in the school – an Educational Assistant or a child in the classroom – that shifted my gaze to the broader setting, and then back again to Wanda. Other times, Wanda would tell me something that would pull me from a narrow focus on her interactions to trying to capture them within the larger context of the school, community, or even our PD.

These ethnographic field notes represent important sense-making for me as well. According to Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995), “this process of inscribing, of writing fieldnotes, helps the field researcher to understand what he has been observing in the first place and, thus, enables him to participate in new ways, to hear with greater acuteness, and to observe with a new lens” (p.15). In addition to ethnographic fieldnotes, I also took pictures of Wanda's classroom at each visit to have visual records of changes Wanda made to the classroom. While I did spend most of my time in Wanda's classroom observing, I did also make time each day to play with students, read books to them and generally follow their lead and get involved in their daily work.

Table 2. Data Collection

| Source | Setting | Time Period | Number | Project (P) /Dissertation (D) |
|---|--|---|---------------|---|
| Interviews | One on one | September, April, June | 3 | P |
| CLASS Observations | Classroom | October, June | 2 | P |
| Ethnographic field notes | Classroom/School Observations | Each visit - every other week from October thru June (with more frequent visits surrounding different events/activitie s) | 21 | P/D (While we were required to do bi- monthly visits for fieldnotes, I visited almost weekly to gather more data for my dissertation) |
| | PD Course | Intermittently throughout Spring/Summe r semesters | 5 | D |
| Small and Whole Group discussions | PD Course | Weekly, September thru June. | 210 | P |
| Photos | Classroom | Each visit | 20 | P/D |
| Reflections | Varied conversations, interactions, reflections on my visits to Wanda's classroom | Following most visits | 9 | D |
| Child Memos | Classroom | Intermittent | 5 | D |
| General Memos | Classroom/PD | Intermittent | 7 | D |
| Email Correspondence s with Wanda | | Intermittent throughout school year | 43 | D |

Some days I would be invited into rich play, others I was treated more as a teacher – being asked to resolve conflicts or get materials.

Following most visits, I also wrote a few pages of reflections. These have served as a useful additional source of data about my own focus and frame of mind during my observations in Wanda’s classroom. I did not, however, share these reflections with Wanda, as these were more informal “aha” moments that I wanted to maintain in order to draw my attention to what I had been thinking about/perseverating on at the time. As might be expected, these reflections often had more to do with me and what I brought into the classroom on any given day, than they did with Wanda or her practice. Wanda’s practice and the children within it in some ways became a new lens through which I began to try to understand what identity I was bringing with me each day as I observed.

When I began writing these reflections, I do not think that I realized how much they would tell me about who I was in Wanda’s dissonance and transition to teaching pre-K. These reflections became a site of my own sense-making about Wanda, her approaches to curriculum and our joint mean-making within her practice. They also served as a place where I was forced to recognize my own emerging identity as an EC teacher educator. As a data source, these reflections served the important role of making visible my own beliefs and assumptions about best practices in early childhood, and how I came – over time – to respect our different approaches to the pre-K year.

Memoing also served an important purpose and was the space where I began to bring together the multiple data sources – particularly my observations of Wanda, my reflections and my observations of students at work. I wrote two main types of memos – Child Memos and

General Memos. Child Memos were specific to individual children within the classroom. I used these memos as a means of foregrounding the experiences of one child within the classroom context. These memos focused on trying to better understand one child and his/her relationships within Wanda's classroom. These relationships included those between peers and with Wanda, other teachers, and/or Educational Assistants.

Child Memos usually emerged following moments or interactions that seemed to either provoke or in some way support conceptions that Wanda had about her own teaching practices. I usually wrote these Child Memos in moments when Wanda and I had been engaged in trying to make sense of what was happening either between her and a child, or two or more children. These served as an important sense-making tool when Wanda would ask me a question or ask for my advice in regards to one child or another.

General Memos were centered around larger analytical themes – for example race and culture, rules and rule-following and dissonance. These memos were important data because they served as evidence of some of the early analytical work I was doing as I collected data. They also served to help me see where I might need to gather more data or look more closely to gain better understanding.

The General Memos also highlighted my own dissonance and sense-making process across this year, as I tried to negotiate my roles and responsibilities in regards to working with Wanda. Whereas Wanda often seemed to regard me as an expert, I wanted to respect her own expertise both within this school setting and as a veteran practicing teacher. These memos served as a means for thinking through how I might offer the advice that Wanda was seeking, while also showing her that often times she already had the answer.

Data Analysis

I analyzed my data using Nvivo10 to code my various data sources. Saldana (2009) suggest taking a two-cycle approach to data analysis and coding. The first cycle, according to Saldana, gives the researcher an opportunity to become richly engaged with the data. There are many plans of attack for this first cycle. Since I take a developmental perspective on Wanda's identity formation over the course of the school year, I took a chronological approach in this first cycle of coding. In other words, I analyzed all of my data sources in the order in which they were collected (or written or recorded in the case of Wanda's assignments and transcriptions of the PD classes), thereby mixing together my observations with Wanda's written assignments during the PD, transcriptions of small group interactions during the PD and so forth. I also believe that this approach is important because of the role of Time/Timing in Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model of development that I am using as a theoretical framework for this paper.

Saldana (2009) also suggests that if a researcher is using a specific theoretical framework, coding within that framework can be a useful strategy. As such, I created top-level codes for each construct of the PPCT theory (people, processes, context, time). In addition, I added one more code, which at the time I labeled "transition", where I hoped to capture elements of dissonance between pre-K and K practice in terms of Wanda's work within the classroom, as well narratives from within the school, PD and district. My initial analyses of these data were into these codes (see Appendix A for coding specifics). Keeping my research question in mind, I tried to consider how I could best make sense of Wanda's transition using this strategic approach to my first cycle of coding (see Appendix A).

As I worked to code within this framework, I also developed sub-codes within each of these categories. For more information on my coding scheme, see Appendix A. For example, Wanda was working with several different groups of people that were influencing her identity in different ways – parents often treated Wanda as the expert, whereas in PD, Wanda was positioned both as veteran kindergarten teacher and novice early childhood teacher. Thinking about how these different groups of people, and other individual actors within the school context played into Wanda’s identity development was an important consideration in the data analysis. It was at this point that my data analysis really began to inform my research question. Working from the data analysis out, I began to bring together these bits of data towards a richer understanding of Wanda’s experiences.

It was in the transition from data collection to data analysis that the true work of this dissertation began. It was also the point at which my positionality within this work became more apparent to me. When I began the data analysis for this dissertation, I felt unsettled. I had spent a year with Wanda and her students, observing and participating in the emergence of new identities for all of us. Children who had been four at the start of the year, were now suddenly nine months older and had an infinite number of new and different abilities. By June, they inhabited their bodies in different ways, their interactions with peers reflected their security in the idea of “going to school”, and had formed identities both as members of the group and as individuals. Wanda’s wariness over her transition to pre-K peaked, and then waxed and waned over the nine months that we spent together. Her feelings of doubt and confusion had seemingly given way to a new found confidence in her ability to create responsive curriculum that met the social, emotional and academic needs of her students.

I too had changed – from a teacher educator so certain of what high quality early childhood experiences looked like, into one who recognized that quality and context are inextricably linked. Instead of seeing the ways in which Wanda was not an early childhood teacher, I was able to see what strengths Wanda brought to her classroom from years of working within this school, community and these families. I could see how Wanda had worked to gather new knowledge from our professional development courses, from our conversations and from her own research about best practices for four-year-olds. Given these wonderful developments, why did I feel so unsettled as I analyzed my data?

Perhaps it was the way in which I approached data analysis. As I noted, my first pass at the data was chronological. I wanted to look across the broad context of the year in order to gain a sense of global changes in Wanda's practice, the emergence of curriculum, and the children. But going back is never easy. And as I made my way through the data I began to realize something: we had all – teacher, children, researcher - been serving similar roles for one another throughout the year. Through our interactions (or processes, as Bronfenbrenner would say), we had each provoked the concerns, insecurities, and uncertainties – the dissonance - of one another. And over the course of the school year, as we began to better understand one another and our new identities emerged, this dissonance seemed to subside. Looking back across the data, I was able to see that my role was not so much as teacher to Wanda, but rather as questioner, sometimes model, coach and frequent antagonist. And that she in turn filled these roles in like kind for both me, and for her students.

By the end of the first cycle of coding, I had written five memos around the following themes: 1) the intersection of Wanda's cultural experiences and the notion of Funds of

Knowledge, 2) Wanda's perceptions of the differences between pre-K and K practice as a result of her work within the classroom, learning within the PD and direction from her principal and the school district, 3) the role of assessment in Wanda's work to design responsive curriculum, 4) an examination of Wanda at play within the classroom, and 5) a descriptive memo about what I began to call "dissonance". In addition, I wrote initial case descriptions of Wanda, myself, and of four students within her classroom. I chose these students because they seemed to be children who played important roles in triggering Wanda's dissonance – either through resisting her strategies for engagement, having four-year-old behaviors that made Wanda struggle with how to respond, or because the children were subjects of home studies that in turn Wanda used to inform her curriculum.

I also wrote a case description of Wanda's positionality within the PD course. These memos became a further data source for coding in the second cycle. According to Saldana (2009), "Second Cycle coding methods, if needed, are advanced ways of reorganizing and reanalyzing data coded through First Cycle methods...[t]he primary goal during Second Cycle coding, if needed, is to develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization from your array of First Cycle codes" (p.149). In the second cycle, I worked from within the initial first level codes that I had started with to recode data into relevant sub-nodes.

As I worked my way through the data a second time, this time taking an ecological approach to understanding the people, processes, contexts and time that worked in our daily lives within the classroom, this pattern became starker still. I began to confirm my initial instincts - that we had spent our year testing our uncertainty and our sense-making (what I was beginning to label dissonance). It suddenly came to me - I had been noticing and responding to Wanda's

dissonance just as she had been doing with her students. And likewise, the children had been noticing us and our practice, pushing back when they sensed our own uncertainties, forcing us to clarify, to look more closely, and to understand better not only what they needed from us, but we needed from them to form a classroom environment that supported all of our emerging identities. As I engaged in this second cycle of coding, I was working towards memoing final reports.

It is at this point that I began sharing some of my memoing with Wanda as a means of member-checking my analysis and interpretations. We mostly did this conversationally. During her second year of teaching pre-K, I was visiting Wanda for twice monthly observations of her students in play. Before the afternoon session would start, I would bring a couple of ideas from my coding to a visit with her and we would discuss what I was finding over lunch. I found this to be the best way to get Wanda's feedback on my work. She was so busy between work and home that documents I would send her via email would go either unnoticed or unopened. Through our lunchtime conversations I would check some of the details and greater themes that I had seen emerging through my data analysis.

Sometime during the second cycle of coding, three main themes began to become clear to me in regards to how Wanda managed her own sense-making process and how our work together allowed her to test and receive support for new approaches in her teaching. I continued writing analytic memos and returning to the literature and to my conversations with Wanda to triangulate my findings. This process of analysis and interpretation through writing was richly rewarding. Figures 1, 2 and 3 provides a schematic of how I used memos from my first and second cycles of coding as a means of developing first the themes and then my major findings in this study. The

arrows represent the analytical memoing that I used to make sense of the data and to develop my findings.

Triangulation of data. According to Stake (1995), triangulation of data is an important part of the analysis of any case study. In this dissertation I used data source triangulation, methodological triangulation and member checking in order to make sure that my interpretations of events and the themes that I found in the data were valid and reliable. Data source triangulation allowed me to see if “what we are observing and reporting carries the same meaning when found under different circumstances” (Stake, p. 113). To do this, I collected ethnographic fieldnotes of Wanda in practice in her classroom, audio transcriptions of Wanda engaged with her pre-k teacher peers within the context of the professional development courses, and Wanda’s assignments during the PD. Analysis of these sources together, along with my conversations with Wanda through the process, allowed me to better understand whether or not the dissonance and emergent identity development that I was observing in her classroom were occurring across settings (her classroom and the PD) and groups of people (with me within her classroom, in the larger Fuji school settings, and with the PD teachers).

For this dissertation, I used Wanda’s coursework assignments (which mostly asked her to reflect on her practice choices and new theories that she was encountering in her reading and learning within the PD course), my observations of her classroom and transcriptions of Wanda’s interactions in small group sessions during the PD, in order to gain a better sense of whether or not my interpretations were reliable. In addition, Wanda’s beginning of year and end of year interviews provided insights into how she may have seen her own identity developing, which is

also a good check against my observations within her classroom and of her within the context of the PD coursework.

Finally, I also began the process of member-checking while I was observing in Wanda's classroom. During my data collection period, I would ask Wanda each week if she wanted me to email her my notes from the day. Sometimes she would say yes and other times no. When I did email my field notes to Wanda, it often led to email conversations about the different things we had noticed during my visits. In addition, as I was analyzing the data and writing memos, I would discuss my findings with Wanda. Wanda has heard (I read them to her) large chunks of these memos, and been willing to allow me to ask her follow up questions as I was working through the data analysis.

Writing is a key attribute of the analysis cycle. Through memo writing, I was able to work through the analysis process, using writing as the analytic tool to interpret the data. Writing is the point at which I can bring together the many different data sources into an analytical frame. Through writing I wove together analytical findings with prose that (I hope) helped to give life and meaning to the case at hand. Given the theoretical perspective that I have posited here (Bronfenbrenner's PPCT), and my focus on sense-making as a central process in identity formation, I engaged in a process of analysis, writing, returning to and searching out further literature, reanalyzing and then rewriting. This cyclical relationship between analysis, literature review and writing was central to my work as I completed this dissertation.

Researcher's Role

From the data that I have collected, I draw conclusions about Wanda's identity development. While Wanda's experience is in some ways unique, it also represents a larger issue within schools today. I chose to study Wanda, and this past year in her teaching practice, because this experience represent something that is bigger than just Wanda. This study is meant to draw attention to the specific professional identity that teachers develop over years of practice. The goal is to consider how a preexisting identity may be pushed into a state of uncertainty in the face of new narratives, expectations and experiences, and how this state can be activated into an opportunity for professional and personal growth. Pre-K represents a particularly in-between, or borderland, practice space for both EC and Elementary trained teachers. Since public pre-K is a relatively new and growing phenomenon, communities are working to make sense of what exactly the pre-K year should aim to provide and achieve. Teachers at practice in pre-K classrooms are working in a contested space of somewhere in between EC and Elementary, and this in turn heightens their uncertainty about what constitutes best practices, appropriate curriculum and the teacher's role.

I take an etic approach to the analysis of this case, meaning that I place myself outside the culture that I am describing in this dissertation. In some ways, I share some of the cultural knowledge that exists within Wanda's case study. However, though I was a preschool teacher, I was never an elementary school teacher sited within an early childhood classroom. My practice was within a university lab school setting and a preschool classroom within an urban charter school. I also have never undergone the type of teaching shift that Wanda experienced in this

year. And lastly, I am not a member of the Fuji Elementary School community, whereas Wanda has taught at Fuji for nine years.

I do regard myself as a co-participant in the construction of Wanda's emerging identity. Wanda and I worked together throughout the past year to make meaning in her classroom and her practice. I cannot attempt to analyze these data without recognizing my role and my relationship with Wanda within this case study. As a teacher educator, with a background firmly planted in early childhood education, Wanda and I approached many instances from very different practice perspectives. Through our discussions about events in the classroom and our watching of one another's practice, we each influenced the actions, beliefs and decision-making of the other. All of these moments therefore are inextricably bound up together in the development of Wanda's identity as a pre-k teacher, and deserve attention and careful theorizing.

An important point is that I cannot really know from the data that I collected what the true perspectives of Wanda and the other actors were about their sense-making processes. I only have my observations of what was happening during this year, and the occasional answer to a question that I posed to Wanda about something about/on which I needed further clarity. While I do have reflective writing about daily practices within the classroom and school setting, and email correspondence and conversations between Wanda and myself as evidence of the processes that she was engaged with, I do not claim that these are a part of who she is right now, today, in practice. In my conception of development, the processes of being and becoming never stop, nor do the meaning making or the identity formation. Wanda will have a new group of children next year, the context of the district has shifted from Year 1 of pre-k to Year 2, it is a

different time both in her life and in the life of her school, actors have changed – within the classroom and within Wanda’s own life.

Chapter 4 – Findings

In this chapter, I examine how Wanda recognized, made sense of and worked thru her transition from teaching K to teaching pre-K. I do this by focusing on four main themes. The first theme I call, “The More We Work Together”. In this section, I lay out the different narratives that were at play in Wanda’s first year of transition from K to pre-K teacher. I consider how these narratives contributed to Wanda’s need to make sense of her new role as a pre-K teacher and pushed her towards a new identity as a teacher. In the second theme, which I call “I Want To Be Ready,” I zoom in on how Wanda knit together these varied narratives into a teaching practice that reflected her emergent identity as a pre-K teacher. My analysis of Wanda’s sense-making process of these varying narratives provides examples of her struggle to embody her emerging sense of what it was/is to be a pre-K teacher. I also examine how Wanda came to rely on our relationship within her classroom as an opportunity to try out these emergent practices and pedagogical approaches. In the third theme, “The Street Begins at My House,” I zoom in on how Wanda’s own complex relationship with culture influenced her ability to take up the Funds of Knowledge approach on which our PD was premised. This serves as an example of how Wanda made choices about which narratives informed her practice identity within the pre-K classroom. In the final section, “Let’s Build A Street,” I analyze how Wanda built pre-K curriculum in spite of her uncertainty and emerging sense of her role as a pre-K teacher. I also consider how Wanda emerged from this period with a strong sense of what worked best for her students, and a strong identity as a pre-K teacher.

Making Sense of Competing Narratives

Each of us negotiates many narratives within our daily lives (Hammack, 2008). How we pick and choose which aspects of which narratives to claim as our own, is part of the identity formation process. Hammack (2008) asserts that each individual's identity is comprised of a negotiated space between personal narratives of identity (those we create within our own lives to define how we see ourselves) and master narratives of identity (those broader, cultural and social messages of who we are or should be). With a focus on content, structure, and process,

Identity is defined as ideology cognized through the individual engagement with discourse, made manifest in a personal narrative constructed and reconstructed across the life course, and scripted in and through social interaction and social practice. (p. 223)

This perspective is encompassing of both socio-cultural and psychological approaches to identity formation. As such, this perspective allows us to consider the process-oriented nature of identity and how it emerges from rich interaction (both personal and public) with the world around us. I assert that it is the sense-making space between these personal and master narratives (and sometimes conflicting master narratives) in which we experience the uncertainties that create a sense of agency in remaking or revising our identity.

During the time that I spent in Wanda's classroom, I came to see her uncertainty as a result of working to make sense of the many competing pre-K narratives that were a part of her daily life, as well as from her personal narrative as a veteran teacher. Wanda's own long tenure teaching kindergarten was juxtaposed with master narratives about early childhood best practices, such as developmentally appropriate practice, the centrality of play, and the construction of curriculum from the interests and needs of the students. These narratives emerged from the district expectations for pre-K, from our University professional development course (4K-PD), and also from my presence in Wanda's classroom as a former preschool teacher and active

researcher. Wanda's identity work over this first year of teaching pre-K was focused on negotiating between her own narrative as a successful kindergarten teacher and the master narratives of pre-K practice that were a part of her new teaching practice. Over the course of the year, Wanda pulled together strands from each of these narratives and wove them into a new, emergent classroom practice and pre-K teacher identity.

Wanda's personal narrative was grounded within her eleven years of Kindergarten teaching (nine of which had been in her current school, Fuji Elementary School). Confronted with new expectations for teaching pre-K, Wanda not only had to reexamine who she was as a teacher, but also how she had practiced within her Kindergarten classroom. This was clear in Wanda's introduction of herself to our larger 4K-PD group:

I'm Wanda. I'm a pre-K teacher at Fuji. I switched over to 4K from eleven years of K because I wanted to change and I didn't realize how much it would change in a day. And so I don't have a- like, a favorite thing right now because I'm still kind of figuring it all out. (Seminar, Whole Group, 09/16/2011)

Not even two weeks into the school year, Wanda knew that she was up for more of a challenge than she had predicted. She had suddenly moved from a position of knowledgeable kindergarten teacher to uncertain early childhood practitioner. She may have been a pre-K teacher in name, but she certainly didn't feel like one in practice:

Unfortunately, the 5K that I had been teaching has turned into a first grade from twenty years ago. And it's really more teacher-led. It's led by the curriculum. So it's a very different world down here in pre-K. (Initial Interview, 09/26/2011).

Wanda had spent so long teaching a directed kindergarten program that the developmental ideas that grounded early childhood curriculum felt new and strange. This struck me as odd, since I knew that Wanda had attended an early childhood licensure program at a University that was well known for its focus on child development as central to curriculum. When I asked Wanda

about her teacher training program, she noted that she didn't remember much of the early childhood theory that she had learned in her teacher-training program. Instead, what she recalled was that when she left university and started teaching kindergarten, she had had to learn how to implement a more rigid curriculum – one that she described as closer to the first grade (rather than the kindergarten) she had known as a child. As a result, being asked to go from a fairly rigid kindergarten curriculum – to ensure that students would meet grade level standards – to a developmentally aware, emergent curriculum structure was like going from one extreme to the other.

That being said, Wanda had chosen the pre-K teaching position because she hoped that it would let her get back to the roots of why she had entered teaching in the first place. However, Wanda had not anticipated that pre-K would be so different or difficult. In a conversation that we had a few months into the school year, Wanda told me:

It caught me totally off guard – how different the kids are. I mean, in their development, and also what we are supposed to be doing in the classroom. At first I was like, 'Where's the structure?' (Observation, 12/08/11)

Designing an emergent curriculum that responded to the nuanced developmental, emotional and social needs of 30 four year olds was not going to be a cakewalk, and Wanda knew it.

While Wanda's understanding of what it meant to be a teacher was grounded in her kindergarten teaching experience and knowledge, the district pre-K narrative purposefully ran contrary to this kindergarten perspective. The district-wide vision for pre-K was strongly focused on three main themes: teacher knowledge of child development, the use of play as the main format for the curriculum, and assessment from a developmental (rather than academic) perspective. This design and the overall expectations for pre-K practices became very clear

during the district wide Summer Institute that the district teachers were required to attend. The training institute was an intensive program that lasted two full days, with each day including a two-hour keynote presentation, three hour-and-a-half break out sessions, and a final half-hour time block which the teachers were to use to develop their action plans. The teachers chose a total of six break-out sessions from a list of twenty-eight options. Of the twenty-eight break-out sessions listed in the invitation, thirty-two referenced “play”, twenty-six referenced “assessment”, and forty-one referenced “child development” or “developmentally appropriate practice. As an attendee at this institute, I was struck by how strongly these three themes dominated the focus of the sessions.

The other piece of this master narrative was that the pre-K curriculum should not simply be watered down versions of kindergarten. The message from the Summer Institute was clear. The presenters, largely early childhood special education staff and administrators from within the school district, were insistent that teachers who had taught kindergarten before NOT use the same materials and activities. This included things like calendar time and rotating children through math and reading centers. Math and literacy skills, the presenters insisted, were to be taught through play and engagement with developmentally appropriate materials. Since all of the district sites were required to use Creative Curriculum, the Summer Institute offered courses on how to implement this curriculum and use it as a curriculum design starting off point. Starting from scratch seemed to be the only option for the district teachers who were moving from other grade levels.

Interestingly, the teachers from the community sites seemed energized and vocal during the Summer Institute. The focus on development, play and assessment was something with

which they were clearly very familiar and confident. In contrast, the teachers from within the district – who had prior to this year been mostly teaching in grades K to 3 - tended to listen and absorb information. And as the mantra of “Pre-K is not K” was repeated over and over, many began to look panicked. While the district teachers were likely very familiar with assessment, the focus on development and play as foundation and means of the curriculum was far from the accountability driven program to which they had become accustomed in elementary schools (Brown, 2007; Goldstein, 2008). According to Wanda, within kindergarten, the teachers were expected to complete extensive assessments for children in regards to reading and mathematics. These assessments were skills based, and focused on gathering information about what children could reproduce in a one on one or small group assessment.

As an observer at the Summer Institute, I was in an interesting position. Watching the community site teachers get excited about the focus on development and play, I began to wonder how this was going to play out in Elementary schools, where the expectations of and for teachers were quite different. At the sessions that I observed, there were a lot of beliefs and assumptions about ‘best practices’ in EC being held up as exemplars that seemed impossible to meet in Elementary schools. For example, in one session, a school district administrator (from the Birth to Three) talked about how children in the pre-K classrooms would need supervision when using the toilet, but should not be expected to all go on scheduled bathroom visits together as teachers might have done in K classrooms. Hands of public school pre-K teachers shot up all over the room, with the general concerns being that many of their classrooms neither had in classroom bathrooms, nor even bathrooms on the same floor as their classrooms. How should they handle these sorts of needs in a classroom of 15 children and one teacher? The district administrator

took down notes and told the teachers not to “focus too much on the specifics. It is more that this is in the spirit of Early Childhood” (Summer Institute, 08/2012). Whatever this spirit was meant to be, it was most definitely frustrating to many soon-to-be public school pre-K teachers.

Though I didn't know her at the time, Wanda was an attendee at this Summer Institute. We may have even been in the same sessions. In my later conversations with Wanda, I know that she left the Summer Institute with concerns about how she was going to implement these EC ‘best practices’ within the context of her teaching. We were both uncertain about how to marry these two seemingly disparate worlds that were about to collide in the midst of a group of fifteen four-year-olds. It was clear that we both left the Summer Institute feeling quite a bit less certain about how this was all going to work than we had been when we went in...

In addition to Summer Institute, the district teachers were required to attend district led PD sessions (on similar themes) once a month on Mondays throughout the school year. The narrative of the district stayed with Wanda, and she would often refer to some idea or some practice that she had learned about in the Summer Institute or at one of the Monday PD sessions. This would happen both in our conversations within her classroom and during the 4K-PD courses when the teachers were engaged in small and whole group discussions. Throughout Wanda's first year of practice, the traditional early childhood narrative of the district PD sessions would push her to question the types of practices she had used in her Kindergarten classrooms.

Within the district pre-K classrooms, this broad, traditional conception of early childhood played out in interesting ways. For example, all of the district pre-K classrooms received the same furniture and materials from the school district. While some of the district sites had classrooms that could accommodate these materials, others, like Wanda's, could not. Wanda's

elementary school, Fuji, was one of the oldest buildings in the district, and the classroom sizes overall were small. In addition, the two pre-K classrooms at Fuji had been placed in the school's basement, where the classrooms were even smaller. The result was that Wanda's classroom was chock-a-block full of bookshelves, toy shelves, a large easel stand, a sensory table, and tons of toys. Since Wanda had no place to store the additional furniture and materials - the school storage area was too full already - she had to find ways to accommodate items that she was not using.

All of the district-nested classrooms were expected to have the same materials, the same assessments and the same curriculum - all driven by developmental knowledge. In part, this was a standardization across the district that aimed to provide the same opportunities and materials for all children - regardless of socio-economic status. While a one-size-fits-all approach may not have been the intent of the school district, both the materials and the PD sessions spoke to a master narrative that supported the idea that early childhood practices and materials were expected to be more alike than they were different. This is interesting since much of district PD focused on Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), and DAP advocates for the consideration of each individual child's needs in the planning of materials, curriculum and experiences. While this traditional approach to early childhood - foregrounding child development - was the narrative at play within the school district, within the University led 4K-PD course, another version of early childhood was about to take the stage. And as a result, this contrasting version of early childhood best practices became yet another set of narratives through which Wanda had to work to make sense of her emerging identity as a pre-K teacher.

Two weeks after the start of the 2011 school year, our 4K-PD cohort pre-K teachers met at a local elementary school. The program consisted of four courses spread over two school years. The Principle Investigators had designed the course to give the teachers (from both community and district pre-K classrooms) a space to learn more about emergent early childhood practices, how to use Funds of Knowledge (FoK) to build curriculum, and how to engage children in early mathematical thinking through play. The courses also served as a collegial space where the teachers could discuss challenges and support one another's growing knowledge with new perspectives on teaching in early childhood classrooms.

Over the first year, the teachers engaged in weekly three hour class sessions, completed one or two readings each week, and wrote assignments that responded to how our work in the 4K-PD course and their teaching practice fit (or failed to fit) together. We slowly introduced them to FoK, early math theories and practices, and ended with historical and present theories of best practices in pre-K classrooms as we progressed through the first semester. Our goal was to support what they knew as they worked to know more. We also hoped that the course would serve as a safe space for the teachers to honestly discuss and share their challenges and triumphs as they became pre-K teachers. In our first night of class, Beth, one of our PIs and the instructor for the introductory course told the teachers the following:

What we found last year when we did this was that there developed a really, really wonderful professional learning community where people really supported each other across community sites and school sites. It was fabulous. And I have high hopes here we're going be able to do this again with this group. (Seminar, Whole Group, 09/14/2011)

Statements like this set the tone for the course – we were a community of learners together, rather than experts and novices. We all brought knowledge into the course, just as the children in

their pre-K classrooms brought knowledge and experience with them to school each day. We hoped that our conception of the course as a community of learners might also help the teachers to view their pre-K classrooms as communities of learners.

From responses to our first night of class, we also knew that most of the district teachers (including Wanda) were concerned about the idea of “creating” curriculum. Most of these teachers had taught in Kindergarten or first grade classrooms prior to becoming pre-K teachers. Their experiences with curriculum had been focused on implementation rather than design. As such, making the step to designing AND implementing responsive curriculum was a big one. Acknowledging this, our goal was to help the teachers work from their children up to curriculum, and we modeled our course in a similar fashion, learning what the teachers knew and building from there. To do this, we asked the teachers what they knew and wanted to know about teaching pre-K. We used this to plan our curriculum and to support their existing and growing knowledge of practice with young children. We worked hard not to say “X is early childhood curriculum”. We wanted the teachers to know that we understood that emergent curriculum was going to be based on each classroom’s context and so would look different in different schools, groups of children, and teachers.

In this excerpt from our second class with the teachers, you can see how this emergent conception of early childhood practice was described by one of our PIs, Beth:

So from an early childhood perspective a lot of people say, "Knowledge of development guides my practice." And then from a cultural perspective, people would say, "You need to understand particularly diverse families by understanding their culture better." So you go as a stranger and study a group of people to make sense of what they do. What's interesting is that I think strong practice includes all of those braided together. And so what funds of knowledge does is to help you think of a child in a way that's different from this where you think of a child that's nested in a classroom that goes back to a

family after class. So it's really kind of a satellite piece of knowledge. Instead what funds of knowledge asks you to think about is that the child is a part of a family which is part of a community, and that community includes the school. So it's all these nested contexts that help you think about how you can connect with a child who has a big life outside of your classroom. (Seminar, Whole Group, 09/28/2011)

Intentionally, the early childhood narrative of the 4K-PD program was more emergent than the district's approach. Within the 4K-PD courses, theories of child development were not the central focus, but rather seen as a piece of the knowledge that early childhood teachers needed to have knowledge of in order to design appropriate and responsive curricular experiences for young children.

While our course was aimed to support teachers as they grew in their professional capacities as pre-K teachers, it did not always provide the roadmap to curriculum that the district PD laid out at their sessions. Indeed, the tools that we were giving the teachers in the 4K-PD course were ones that some were eventually able to use to critically evaluate the district's approaches to both pre-K curriculum and assessment. In the meantime, the conflicting nature of the narratives between the two PD programs was yet another area in which the teachers had to engage in active sense-making to determine their own professional identities as pre-K teachers.

And finally, my own presence in Wanda's classroom brought with it another narrative – one that aligned in many ways with the 4K-PD, but also brought with it my own perspectives as a veteran preschool teacher. While I did not necessarily notice it at the time, evidence of this narrative is abundant within my field notes from my first visit to Wanda's classroom on a late September afternoon:

As much as [our PI] seemed to think that Wanda had a hang of early childhood, I am not so sure. She seems like a kindergarten teacher to me – focused on routine and rules and getting kids on track. I want to go back and count how many times she said the word “rule” today. That being said, she asked me some great questions today – like how to

help them to settle on the rug or whether she should even expect them to be able to take turns at share time. I'm glad she sees me as a resource and not a hindrance. (Observation Reflection, 10/13/2011)

It was during the data analysis phase that I began to realize how much of a role my conceptions of early childhood practices had played in Wanda's sense-making process. An example of how my master narrative affected Wanda occurred early in our work together. As I became a familiar figure in Wanda's classroom, her students would ask me to join their play. Within the first month of my visiting, I was already a regular player with a little boy name Tsheej. On one day in mid-November, Tsheej had been floating around the classroom all afternoon, seemingly unable to settle into play in any one area. In my notes I wrote:

I am wondering if a little supported play might help him to fix on one spot. I sit down on the carpet near him and suddenly Theo is beside me leaning on my leg. Tsheej pulls out the bristle blocks and starts making a "long-neck". I ask him what that is. He tells me it is a dinosaur from "The Land Before Time". Theo is intrigued. I ask him if he likes dinosaurs. "I don't know a lot about dinosaurs". Theo makes a dinosaur and calls it a Spikey. Tsheej clambers onto all fours and tell Theo that dinosaurs like his "long-neck" walk like this. Theo laughs. Tsheej looks surprised, but pleased. I keep asking questions. I ask for help to make a dinosaur – Tsheej shows me how the blocks work and hands me pieces to build my dinosaur. He is very happy to tell me that I am doing it wrong. (Observation, 11/15/2011)

Theo, Tsheej and I sat and played for about twenty minutes, making a variety of bristle block dinosaurs. Tsheej's knowledge of and interest in dinosaurs was broad and engaging. At one point, I turned to grab my water bottle and saw Wanda sitting on the carpet watching the three of us play. She made eye contact with me, smiled and turned back to reading a book with Sienna. Moments later, we were interrupted by a fire drill. When we got back to class, it was time to clean up. A few moments later, when we were upstairs at parent pick up, Wanda stood close to me and told me,

I just don't know how to do that. I mean sit still with them and ask questions like that. I

did know, but it has been too long that my job has been like, do this, do that. It is hard to remember that that is my job now. To like sit, and listen and asked questions.” I reassure her that it will come back, it just takes time. I also remind her that I have no responsibilities in her classroom. My job is to observe and play. Which is a lot easier to do without the other tasks that she has to keep up with every day. Wanda nods in agreement. “I do feel pulled in a lot of directions. It is so hard to just sit and play.” (Observation, 11/15/2011).

Wanda’s comments about not knowing how to ask questions of children in the way that I did changed the way that I understood our relationship. It helped me to understand that I added another level of uncertainty to Wanda’s practice with my version of what pre-K teaching *should* be. Now she would also have to weave this narrative into her teaching practice and to make sense of its place within the context of her own work and her identity as a pre-K teacher.

Throughout the fall semester, I watched as Wanda began to negotiate these narratives, becoming more confident in her ability to choose what practices would work best for her students within her classroom. This isn’t to say that it was an easy process, but rather that Wanda seemed energized by all of the choices and control that were now a part of her daily classroom practice. In the next section I examine how Wanda took up each of these narratives choosing bits and pieces from each narrative as her own pre-K teacher identity began to emerge. I consider how she actively worked to make sense of her dissonance in light of these varied narratives, and weave together a meaningful teaching practice that reflected the needs of her students within their family, school and classroom contexts.

Choosing What to Value in the Pre-K Context

An important step in my understanding of how Wanda made sense of her emerging pre-K teacher identity was by recognizing how Wanda pulled together the varied narratives that were at

play in her practice. As Wanda worked to negotiate these differing conceptions and expectations for pre-K practice, she had to determine what she saw as valuable within the context of her classroom. In addition, understanding my emerging role in Wanda's sense-making process helped me to see how I had become a part of what was both provoking and helping Wanda to cope with her dissonance. Instead of being just a watcher of Wanda's practice, I began to see myself as a supporter and advocate of what she was trying to accomplish – moving from the practice she had used in Kindergarten to the kind of teacher that she wanted to be in pre-K.

This was also a turning point in my research in terms of understanding how I could use the idea of Wanda as actively engaging in a process of sense-making in the face of her uncertainty to recognize when and how Wanda might need my support. However, this also meant that I needed to pay closer attention to *when* Wanda needed me. I needed to notice her sense-making in order to provide the support that she needed. Over the course of the school year, I began to realize that our changing relationship provided a base from which Wanda could work to test the pedagogical practices she was developing as a pre-K teacher.

Once I understood this, I began to watch and listen to Wanda more closely. My goal was to try to respond to her questions and concerns about how to support her students in ways that would help her to find her own ideal practice. What I didn't want to do was foist my early childhood practice on Wanda. Instead, I wanted her to see that there was not a right way, only the way that she found worked best to help her students grow and learn. This meant helping Wanda to bring together the expectations and realities of the Fuji context – which Wanda knew better than anyone – as well as the narratives of early childhood practices presented through the 4K-PD, by the school district and my own presence in her classroom. Creating a practice identity

that balanced all of this was quite a challenge for Wanda, as it would be for any teacher. Much of our work together through the year was testing what worked and discarding what didn't. While I found many examples of Wanda working to make sense of her practice, one example that clearly highlights this was related to the question of calendar time.

For Wanda, the doubts that she felt about her abilities in her new role as pre-K teacher seemed to spur her on to wanting to learn more about how to be the teacher her students needed. That being said, working through a sense of uncertainty each day was an exhausting task, and she often told me how unsettled she felt not knowing what to expect or do to support her students. In a 4K-PD seminar in October, Wanda noted this in terms of dealing with her colleagues' expectations for how her students behaved in the hall and for kindergarten readiness:

So I'm trying to figure out you know what's appropriate. Like how do they need to behave, to walk in a line quietly and what do they have to know for next year. I mean, eventually they're gonna learn how to drive but we don't start getting them really ready for that either, you know? Kindergarten is kindergarten and preschool and 4K is 4K. But I'm still trying to sort all that out in my mind. (Whole Group, Seminar, 10/19/2011)

As a kindergarten teacher, Wanda had been required to follow a rigid curricular structure. Playtime was not free play, instead children circulated through specifically designed centers designed to reinforce math and literacy skills. The academic expectations for each child had been tied to quarterly standards based report cards that rated children as developing, proficient or advanced. Having taught kindergarten for so long, Wanda was very familiar with what she referred to as the "K Screener", or the assessment tool used by the district to evaluate the academic skill sets of incoming kindergarteners. Wanda had administered the assessment tool, and when I asked her, she could list the items that the tool was screening for verbatim. Knowing that her students would be assessed using this tool towards the end of the year, Wanda admitted

that she felt pressure to prepare them to the levels expected by the kindergarten teachers upstairs. The easiest way to do this, Wanda told me, was to find ways to introduce this knowledge in “group time” – what the district led Summer Institute had named the only, brief whole group time that they wanted to see in the pre-K classrooms:

I don't want to drill them, you know. But when I have them sitting there - and they are good at sitting at the little group time we do before play – I have to work really hard not to make them go through the things I know they are going to get on the K-screener. I mean, I know what the upstairs teachers expect them to know by the time they get to K. But I know I shouldn't spend our time working on that. It's so frustrating. (Observation, 10/13/2011)

However, the district had been explicit during the Summer Institute – they did not want to see Calendar Time in the pre-K classrooms or other lengthy whole group instruction. One way that the pre-K consultant at the summer PD had tried to ensure that there was no Calendar Time was by telling the pre-K teachers that they should not even have a calendar board or any of the other paraphernalia commonly associated with this whole group activity.

The general issue of Calendar Time became a recurring conversation early on among the teachers in our 4K-PD course. Most of the teachers within our PD had attended the Summer Institute where the school district had laid out these expectations for the pre-K classrooms. These were: no rotating math and literacy centers, no Calendar Time, and no teacher-led instruction of literacy, mathematics or other topics. At the Summer Institute, I recall hearing teachers applaud these announcements. As the school year got underway, many of the teachers in our PD repeated this mantra throughout the first few weeks. They also would remind each other in class (by labeling things as appropriate or inappropriate for pre-K) that the district leaders had been very specific – pre-K within the district was meant to be play-based, informed by each child's developmental needs. Classic kindergarten materials, like alphabet charts and calendar, time

were verboten.

However, after the first few weeks of class and nearly a month into teaching in pre-K classrooms, talk of Calendar Time began to come up in 4K-PD class conversations with a very different tone. Many of our teachers were admitting to having begun to implement Calendar Time in their classrooms. They found themselves falling back on practices that they had used in their kindergarten classrooms. They brought out the hidden materials – the ones and tens counters, the large calendar, the bear to be dressed according to the weather outside. Indeed, when I completed three other mid-Fall semester observations of teachers from our 4K-PD course, all of them had lengthy Calendar Times that included many of these common kindergarten practices. It occurred to me that this was possibly a response to not being sure how to provide what they knew children needed to learn and know by the end of pre-K without these traditional kindergarten tools. In a conversation in a small group during the 4K-PD course, Wanda too seemed to be waffling over the role of Calendar Time:

Wanda: When we did our summer [institute] we were told don't do calendar, and I haven't and I don't want to cause I know the kids don't need it and may not be ready. But now that we're kind of into school I was thinking about doing calendar so that they can count with me, because it only goes to 31 at the most.

Shelly: I have had a calendar up since almost the beginning because I do have some children that really focus on days and months. But I've used it and some days we don't use it at all, but it just depends on the day. And some days we just use it in different ways, like I have different colors up for the days so we do like patterning, what color comes next. Or we do just counting, or just recognizing the numbers, or what numbers make up nineteen, what numbers are- you know, just things... And it depends on who I'm doing it with or what group I'm doing it with, or who is up there that day helping with the calendar.

Wanda: Yeah, there's a lot of things you can do with it. So like it's definitely something to think about... (Seminar, Small Groups, Oct. 19, 2011)

Wanda's defense of not having calendar time, but also her concern that perhaps she really should,

reflects much of the uncertainty, or dissonance, that she and the other teachers were experiencing about their own practice in the first few months of school. Whereas Shelly was willing to bring back Calendar Time as a solution, Wanda wasn't sure about going that route. She actively resisted the urge to turn the brief morning meeting that she had with the children into a time to drill them in skills they were going to need for kindergarten. The slide into kindergarten practice was an easy one, and it was clear that Wanda wasn't willing to go there.

While there was support at both the district and the 4K-PD level for early childhood practices, it was clear that the master narrative of kindergarten (what most of the district teachers had been doing prior to teaching pre-K) was difficult to shake. While many of the teachers in our PD could let themselves read, consider and digest the early childhood research that we presented, many fell back on accepted and past practices as a means of coping with the stresses of their new pre-K roles. And they were under a great deal of stress – they were the district guinea pigs for this new way of approaching the first year of school.

Wanda's tenacity to try and figure out how to transition to a pre-K teacher reflected her commitment to growing her pedagogical skills. It was a struggle that I witnessed on my visits to her classroom. In the first few weeks when I visited Wanda, morning meetings, while not full of skills based activities, were more structured than the approaches we had been discussing in the 4K-PD course. The children were expected to raise their hands to share, to only share one thing and not follow up with a second or third thought. Wanda's focus was on getting everyone into the rhythm of pre-K, herself included, and it took a few weeks for her to feel confident enough to try a new approach.

In the weeks following the conversation about Calendar Time in the 4K-PD course, I

watched as Wanda's morning meeting became more and more relaxed. The following passage is an excerpt from an observation in Wanda's classroom in early November. At this time, I was actively working to observe how Wanda's practice was reflecting the hard work she was doing to make sense of teaching pre-K. The children had just arrived in the classroom and were washing hands, using the potty, blowing their noses. As they finished, they joined Wanda who had been quietly sitting on the rug waiting for the children:

The children are settled on the carpet, some sitting with legs crossed, some with legs out, a few are fidgeting. Wanda ignores these movements and nods at Fritz who is sitting to her left and he starts to share:

Fritz: I like to play outside. I always say that at this time.

Wanda: Anything in particular that you really like?

Fritz: Going up stairs and down slides. I don't like taking turns.

Wanda: Yes, that is something that we are working on. Taking turns is important.

Tsheej?

Tsheej: My brothers didn't give me a turn with my Mario game.

Wanda: Oh, did you want a turn?

Tsheej: Yes.

Wanda: Chingbo?

Chingbo: I have pockets. Two.

Wanda: Two pockets?

Chingbo: No.

Wanda: How many do you have?

Chingbo: Two, then three.

Wanda: So three?

Chingbo: No, two.

Wanda: Ok, good, thank you for telling me that. (Observation, 11/3/2011)

For Wanda, this type of morning meeting was a complete departure from what she had done in kindergarten, as well as from what I saw the first few weeks that I visited her classroom. In a separate conversation, earlier in the year, I asked Wanda how long her morning meeting/calendar time was in kindergarten. According to Wanda, it usually ran to thirty minutes. It included

activities such as: adding the number and day to the calendar, counting the days of school, grouping the days of school by tens and ones, dressing a bear in weather appropriate clothes, pointing to and saying the letters of the alphabet, assigning helper jobs and so on and so forth. In her pre-K classroom, Wanda had let go of formal structure for her morning time. Instead, she used the time to have the children share what they wanted to with the group and to let them know about anything new that was going to happen or a new material or activity in the classroom.

While Wanda had expressed concern about what she might lose in not having the traditional kindergarten Calendar Time (namely an opportunity to work on number skills with the students), what she gained was a sense of community and respectful sharing, of turn taking and listening, and the ability to ask questions and better understand what each child had brought to school with them in their hearts and minds each day. In my reflection that day, I wrote:

I was really impressed at Wanda's morning meeting time today - I mean she really made it about letting the kids share what was going on with them, and she just went with it. The time was about them and not some set of skills that they needed to practice. Getting here has been hard work, but it has been so neat to watch.

This is not to say that Wanda suddenly underwent some sort of conversion to an emergent early childhood way of doing things, but rather, that she was willing to push against her traditional kindergarten practices and test the waters of a new way of approaching curriculum. Meeting times were not always this relaxed – sometimes the early math skills that we were also focusing on in our PD seemed to take over the meetings. On these days, the children would be asked to rote count how many were at school each day, or how many hands, feet or noses were in the classroom that day. I began to be able to sense when Wanda was really struggling with the dissonance over her identity as K and pre-K teacher by the tone of the morning meeting. It also became a harbinger of when assessments were looming, or report cards were due. Suddenly, a

few kindergarten practices would seep back in – Wanda would read a story and then have the kids put images from the story into an order of events, or she would offer them a “challenge” to count past 20. As I look across the data for the entire school year, however, one element stands out – the amount of sharing and conversing during the morning meeting continued to grow each week (see Table 1). In addition, the amount of the sharing between the children and Wanda also grew, with more open ended questions and exchanges as the year went on. These “feedback loops” were moments where Wanda not only responded to a child’s comment or question, but then built on it, by asking a further question, linking it to some previous knowledge and in this way continuing the conversation beyond a single loop.

While the teacher led activities – such as counting the number of children, Wanda reading a book to the whole group, a gross motor activity (such as dancing or doing large movements) – continued, they followed a pattern at each meeting and the children were always engaged. The activities were appropriate and responsive to the interests of the students – it was a shared agenda of what Wanda knew her students needed to know next year in kindergarten and what the children were interested in learning in a way that was meaningful to their developmental level. In Table 3 (on the next page), I also note how some events changed how meeting times played out. For example, in mid-January, Wanda had been working for a few weeks on getting Progress Reports ready. Her stress level was high and her time was limited. On that week, meeting time was shorter than usual and more teacher-directed. On weeks where no time was made for sharing, there was often a larger issue – such as a late school bus, or the like. On these days, share time was the activity that was eliminated from the morning meeting, but

Wanda would remind the children that they could share with her any time – on the playground, at lunch or during play time. They always seemed satisfied with this compromise.

The revised calendar time that emerged in Wanda’s classroom is a meaningful example of how finding a way to balance the expectations of what she felt the kids needed to know by the time they got to K5, and what she felt she should focus on in pre-K, was very difficult. For all of the district teachers, the narrative of the elementary school practices that they had known for so long was often times in direct conflict with the early childhood narratives about what best practices were in early childhood settings. As such, Wanda found herself in a middle space between the idealized pre-K presented but as yet untested, the realities of her daily practice, and the Kindergarten expectations that had dominated her long tenure in teaching up to that point. It was little wonder that Wanda appeared to me to be in a state of dissonance when I first met her – she was neither the Kindergarten teacher she had been, nor the pre-K teacher that she wanted to be. However, as her knowledge of different early childhood practice choices grew, so too did her confidence in choosing what would work best for her pre-K students.

The Crux of Culture

While the realities of daily life with four year olds were bumping up against the narratives of elementary school, district expectations of pre-K and our PD, Wanda was also experiencing another sort of struggle within the 4K-PD courses – understanding the role of culture and cultural identity in the lives of children. Since part of our 4K-PD coursework was focused on helping the pre-K teachers develop skills to design culturally and developmentally responsive curriculum for their students, we spent much of the first semester introducing the teachers to Funds of Knowledge. At the fundamental center of FoK is the idea that when teachers

know and understand the lived experiences of students, they can better respond with curriculum that builds are responsive and therefore more meaningful to the children (Moll, Amanti & Neff, et al., 1992). For our project, we wanted teachers to become familiar with the tools for both discovering the lives of their students and using this knowledge to inform their curriculum. Within the realm of FoK research, the idea of culture has been defined in many different ways. For example, Gonzalez, Andrade, Civil, and Moll (2001), define FoK as, “the historically accumulated bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household functioning” (p. 117). In contrast, Hedges (2009) argues that popular culture knowledge can serve as FoK for children, granting teachers access to ideas and topics that can help them construct more meaningful curriculum. While the former takes a more anthropological view of FoK, the later takes a less formal view of FoK. This view of what constitutes FoK is less formal in that it does not see knowledge of in home cultural practices as the basis for designing curriculum. Rather, Hedges (2009) approaches FoK from a popular culture standpoint, asserting that the interests of young children – such as Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles – can serve as a basis for curriculum in much the same way as cultural practices. For children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, however, the focus on popular culture can sometimes hide how different their home life experiences are from their peers (Rodriguez, 2013). In addition, delving into the cultural home lives of children can help teachers to unpack stereotypes and assumptions about different ethnic and linguistic communities (Velez-Ibenez & Greenberg, 2011).

Table 3. Meeting Time Trends

| Date | # of Children Sharing | # of Feedback Loops | # of Teacher Led Activities | Minutes (Approx.) | Notable Events |
|----------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|--|
| 10/13/11 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 15 | |
| 11/1/11 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 15 | |
| 11/7/11 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 15 | |
| 11/15/11 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 15 | |
| 11/29/11 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 20 | |
| 11/30/11 | 12 | 14 | 4 | 20 | |
| 12/8/11 | 10 | 22 | 5 | 20 | |
| 1/10/12 | 10 | 24 | 5 | 20 | |
| 1/25/12 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 15 | Working on assessments for Progress Reports. |
| 2/8/12 | 11 | 18 | 5 | 20 | Progress Reports due today. |
| 2/22/12 | 0 | 21 | 4 | 15 | |
| 2/29/12 | 12 | 18 | 4 | 20 | |
| 3/7/12 | 9 | 17 | 4 | 25 | |
| 3/14/12 | 10 | 22 | 5 | 25 | Counting to 20 begins. |
| 3/28/12 | 7 | 21 | 4 | 25 | |
| 4/26/12 | 11 | 20 | 4 | 25 | |
| 5/2/12 | 10 | 19 | 5 | 20 | |
| 5/9/12 | 0 | 23 | 4 | 15 | Bus 10 minutes late. |
| 5/17/12 | 12 | 21 | 4 | 20 | |
| 5/24/12 | 11 | 18 | 4 | 20 | CLASS Observation |
| 5/30/12 | 11 | 22 | 3 | 20 | |
| 6/6/12 | 8 | 17 | 3 | 20 | |
| 6/7/12 | 12 | 21 | 3 | 20 | Last Day of School |

As such, within the 4K-PD course, we asked teachers to consider the multiple ways of approaching FoK, and to consider how they might need to tailor the data that they collected to the needs of their students. To accomplish this, we spent the first three weeks of the fall 4K-PD course reading about FoK and learning to be ethnographers. The goal was to prepare the teachers to conduct a home visit that would allow them to inform their practice. This period of study within the PD also became a time when the teachers were asked to more closely examine their own cultural identities and how this influenced their daily life and work.

In some ways, the term *culture* is difficult to define. In a talk given to our 4K-PD group, Norma Gonzalez, a renowned anthropologist even noted that she doesn't particularly like to use the term "culture". There are many reasons for this. While the term culture has traditionally been used to bound groups and associate peoples with specific languages, practices and beliefs, as Geertz (2001), importantly notes, things are not so simple. According to Geertz, "the analysis of culture, of how it is people see things, respond to them, imagine them, judge them deal with them, [is] a far more awkward enterprise than it was when we knew, or rather thought that we knew, what went with what and what did not" (p. 265). Instead of large, broad definitions, culture must be understood in small spaces, up close, and not used to enclose people in groups or practices. Conceptions and studies of culture should serve to illuminate individuality, diversity, contrasts and singularities. Geertz (2003) argued that the best way to do this – to make understandings of culture reflective of how individuals experience the world, rather than how they can be neatly fit into a box and compared to others placed in that same box – is through getting close to and providing thick description of how individuals experience the world around them. In this way, the idea or term culture, becomes neither an all-encompassing definition of

people and peoples, nor a concept that we have to abandon in its entirety. Instead, culture becomes personal, individualistic, and idiosyncratic rather than bounded, pre-determined and uniform (Eisenhart, 2001). Culture can also be thought of as the stories that we tell about ourselves – to others and to ourselves - that helps us find our place within society and groups (Eisenhart, 1995). Methodologically, approaching culture in these ways moves the focus to shining a light through data collection on smaller, more concise practices and experiences.

In this case, since we used the FoK approach within the 4K-PD course, the teachers themselves were wrestling with the idea of what constituted culture and cultural practices for their students, as well as how to access and make use of this knowledge. As such, capturing how Wanda defined and understood culture, as well as how this was actualized in her choices in utilizing FoK in her teaching practice, is a centrally important part of my writing about culture. According to Eisenhart (1995), “one means by which individuals organize culture is through the “stories of self” that they express or enact in joining new social settings” (p. 6). Certainly this was the case for Wanda and the other teachers in our course.

During a PD seminar when the teachers were working through the idea of Funds of Knowledge and personal ethnography, the teachers were asked to share about their own cultural and class heritage. Wanda described hers as follows:

My culture's very different 'cause I'm adopted, and out of four kids, three of us are interracially adopted, so it's very different from other families. Genealogy has always been a big thing for my father, so he knows that somewhere down the line, descendants came over from the Mayflower, and he actually is- does genealogy, so he's got like- like everybody through for many, many, many generations like he researches that for people. And then my mom's from Boston- or her family lived there for a while, at least. And then with my son, we're- my husband and I are both immigrants, in a sense, where I was adopted and came over from Vietnam, and we met in South Africa, so he came over so that we could be together, and so my son is the first generation American. I call him an Afrasian American.

For Wanda, culture seemed to be defined by family heritage – where we come from and how this shapes what we do within our family units. While one might think that Wanda’s own ethnically diverse familial background would make her more drawn to the influence of cultural practices on things like learning, interests and as a foundation for curriculum. However, it seemed to have the opposite effect. While Wanda’s family had been ethnically diverse, the ethnicity of her adoptive parents – white, Anglo-Saxon – had dominated her cultural experiences. Wanda’s notions of culture became apparent as she began working with children within her classroom to understand and access their FoK.

As a central part of their work with the theory of FoK, the teachers were asked to choose a focal child within their classrooms. This was the child with whom the teachers would practice their budding ethnographic skills. The goal in working with this child was to seek out cultural knowledge and then use this knowledge to inform curriculum. The one caveat was that the teachers were asked to choose a child who was different from them by two dimensions: ethnicity, culturally, socio-economically, or by family constellation. Wanda’s first choice was a white girl in her class, named Emma. Wanda describes how she made this choice in a reflection assignment for class:

Thinking of ways that a child is different than myself in two dimensions, turned out not to be an easy task. Some of my personal dimensions are not as clear for me as for most people. I needed to decide if I was going to use the race that I was born with as one of my dimensions, or the one I grew up with. I am adopted. I am Vietnamese, while my parents are white. Despite my appearance, I am very much white, middle-class in my thinking. At the end I decided to take my socio-economic identity and split it. (Reflection 1, 10/05/2011).

In other words, while Emma’s family was different from Wanda’s in terms of socio-economic status, Wanda did not see herself and Emma as different in terms of racial or ethnicity identity.

Less than a week later, Wanda decided to change focal children, and rewrote her reflection to share why she had made a different choice:

Not long after I handed in my first reflection, I realized that I had chosen the wrong student to be my focal child. Yes, I had chosen a student who had different dimensions than me, but I knew I could have done better. The more I thought of the dimensions that were different between Emma and me, the more I realized that there was a better candidate. I have decided to re-write my first reflection, in order to show the different dimensions of my new student and myself. I will call my new focal child “Sienna.” Sienna has vastly different dimensions than I have currently, and than I had growing up. (Reflection 1.5, 10/10/2011)

Wanda’s reflection goes on to describe the two main ways – socioeconomic status and family constellation – in which Sienna is different from her. Sienna’s family was a low-income family with fluctuating numbers of children in the household as Sienna’s cousin (who was in the other pre-K classroom at Fuji) and his little sister were also occasionally in the care of the grandmother and great-grandmother.

Interestingly, however, in choosing Sienna, Wanda chose a child who was very similar to her in one specific way - just as Wanda had been, Sienna was a non-white child growing up in a white family. So while in some dimensions Sienna was different from Wanda, in a racial identity dimension, they shared a similar experience. Part of me wonders if Wanda’s own racial identity experiences made the FoK approach fundamentally flawed in her eyes. For Wanda, race and culture had never matched. She was born into a family of Scottish/English/German ethnic heritage that she describes as “really white and really middle class” (Observation, 10/13/2011). In other words, her family didn’t really have specifically linked cultural practices, but rather cultural practices that reflected a white, middle class, normative experience. For Wanda, then, culture wasn’t reflective of specific practices, but of more broadly defined ideas like heritage and holidays. It wasn’t that Wanda wasn’t critical of this approach – she could see how this had had

an impact on her own ethnic identity. It was more that Wanda was wary of wading into what culture might mean for others, including the children in her class. Even after the teachers had spent several weeks reading, discussing and practicing recognizing FoK, Wanda expressed doubts to her PD peers that she really understood what funds of knowledge were:

Wanda: I still, I guess I'm still having a hard time grasping what the funds of knowledge, what are funds of knowledge?

Sophie: Right. And how to differentiate them between each child. Or you know, like how to really identify.

Wanda: Could I actually sit down and tell you my funds of knowledge? I'm not sure, like I don't know like what the understanding of funds is. (Seminar, Small Group, 10/26/2011)

After her first home visit to Sienna's family, Wanda wrote a reflection about what she had learned about Sienna's FoK. Wanda's reflection reads like a comprehensive observation, but her own voice and perception of what define and constitute cultural practices are curiously absent considering that this was the central aim of the assignment. Instead, Wanda's reflection considers the family dynamics within the household and how these might be impacting Sienna socially and emotionally at school.

The home visit to Sienna's family acted as a catalyst for Wanda. She went on to visit six additional families over the course of the school year (though as a part of the 4K-PD course we did not ask for this and even though Wanda received no support or credit for these Home Visits from the school district). The home visits themselves she found incredibly interesting and useful – but not because of what she learned about the families practices that tied to their linguistic or ethnic heritage. Instead, she used the home visits to better understand what emotional supports and or interactions children had at home that might give her clues about how they acted at school.

She explained this to me as “understanding the social and emotional ways the kids work at home” (Observation, 03/14/2012). Seeing who the children were at home gave Wanda clues about what they might need from her in terms of social and emotional support and learning within the classroom.

Given the incredible ethnic and linguistic diversity within Wanda’s classroom, it struck me as interesting that she didn’t see these elements as having a role within these home visits and her gathering of FoK. Three of the fifteen afternoon students – Chingbo, Tsheej and Kwame - had emigrated to the United States as young children and were still learning to master English. Kwame was nearly fluent in English, but still struggled occasionally to recall the words that he wanted within some contexts. His family had emigrated from Africa two years earlier and he had two older siblings who were also at Fuji Elementary. I remember asking Wanda what Kwame’s home language was, and her not being sure. I then asked her which country in Africa his family had emigrated from, and she was also unsure of this. “Somewhere in West Africa, I think,” she told me. I remember being somewhat surprised that she didn’t know. This was late December. In addition to these students, four of Wanda’s students were mixed race African American and white, two were African American and the remaining students were white.

While Wanda could not control who responded to her home visit outreach, it is interesting to note that she did not make extra overtures to those families who might feel most disconnected from the school – those who were non-white, immigrants and non-primary English speakers. When I asked Wanda about visiting these families, she assured me that she had learned so much from the families that she had visited. When I asked about learning about cultural practices in terms of home visits, Wanda brushed aside the idea that knowledge of how

ethnic or linguistic heritage influenced family life was centrally important to responding to students:

It's really about getting to know who that kid is at home. You if they are the little brother, like Theo, what does that mean about what he does at school. You know? (Home Visit Interview, 04/19/2012)

Wanda held firmly to her belief that understanding the roles of children within their homes was the most important data that she could gather from her home visits. While this was unique to the heritage of each family, Wanda didn't consider how broader factors – such as language and ethnicity – might also impact the social and emotional experiences of children. Cultural knowledge that was linked to ethnicity or language was not what she felt was one of the most important factors in learning about the children she home visited.

Issues of race and ethnicity were topics that, overall, Wanda seemed hold at arms length. Within her classroom, as questions of race, culture, and differences in language came up among the children, Wanda would change the subject. When asked by Theo, a young white boy in the classroom, if she were black, Wanda stared at him blankly for a moment and asked, “You mean do I like black as my favorite color?” Theo looked puzzled, shrugged and said, “Sure”. Wanda smiled and told him that blue was her favorite color. Out of context, this might just appear to be some sort of miscommunication, but it was part of a larger conversation that Theo (White), Kazadi (biracial African American and White), James (biracial African American and White) and Kwame (Black African) had been having on and off for the better part of the year – in the classroom, the lunchroom, and on the playground. In one exchange at lunch, this was summed up as follows:

At lunch, I am sitting with Theo, James, Kwame, Kazadi and Chingbo. James is talking about Sponge Bob, as are the others. I am asking them questions, telling them

that I have never see that show (which I have not). Suddenly there is silent eating and then James announces that his skin is black and white. Next, he looks at Kwame.

James: Kwame, your skin is all black.

Kwame looks down at his skin, surprised.

Kwame: It's not black. It's dark dark brown.

Theo: I'm white.

Kwame: Your not white.

Kazadi: Mine is black and white too.

James: Is you mom white or your dad?

Kazadi: My mom (almost in a whisper).

James: My mom is black. My dad is white. All my brothers have skin like me. Black and white.

Kwame: Mine isn't black. It's brown.

James: Oh.

Theo: So are you black?

James: Yes.

Kwame: No.

Kate: What about my skin? Is it white?

Theo and James: Yes.

Kwame: No, pink.

And then, the conversation turned back to Sponge Bob.

Throughout the year, these moments of talk about race, ethnicity and language would bubble up to the surface. In my observations of Wanda, she usually ignored these conversations or changed the subject. In this case, I was the one sitting with these children when the topic arose. I wanted to probe these different classifications, but not in an obtrusive way. The conversation was very matter of fact, but also revealing of the fact that the children were constantly considering these classifications. The role of culture, race, ethnicity and language were undeniably bound up in the lived experiences of these young children.

Understanding how ethnic and linguistic heritage was important to informing curriculum was a nut Wanda could not or would not crack that year. Perhaps the space between her own ethnic heritage and her lived "whiteness" as a child and adult made it to difficult to consider the important role of culture in informing our experiences with the greater world. This personal

dissonance was outside the bounds of the 4K-PD research project, and yet it had an incredible impact on the way in which Wanda allowed (or failed to allow herself) to consider the role of culture in the lives of her students at home and at school.

Constructing Curriculum in the Face of Dissonance

In taking a more active role in Wanda's sense-making process, I also began to notice a cycle in our interactions. Wanda would be exploring some new ideas in the 4K-PD, and would push herself to read a bit further and a bit more widely than the readings for the course alone. A week or so later, Wanda would bring up what they had been discussing in the 4K-PD. While I was only occasionally a part of the 4K-PD course (as I was teaching a course for our first cohort of teachers), I began to keep abreast of what they were reading so that I could be ready to talk with her if she brought up the readings. Before the children arrived, we would chat casually about the readings and how she felt the ideas related to her own work. Then, on my next visit, I would start seeing micro changes in the ways she was organizing the classroom, asking questions or responding to students. Week by week, a dance emerged. Sometimes it was a box step – with two steps forward toward the idealized version of practice presented in the PD readings, and then two steps back as Wanda struggled to marry her daily practice with what she thought should be happening in pre-K. Other days, it was a waltz, where Wanda would turn past practices around, re-envisioning them for this younger group of children, weaving together what had worked from her old practice into something that would work in her new practice. There were many dances creating curriculum in the face of her dissonance. It was clear that there wasn't an ultimate goal – best practice, Wanda knew, was when she met the needs of her students in the fullest way

possible. Dancing towards this ever shifting goal was magical and elusive, and required constant hard work, revision and reimagining.

Part of the challenge within the pre-K program was that curriculum was meant to be emergent. As I noted earlier, Wanda had spent twelve years teaching in a kindergarten classroom where the curriculum was largely predetermined. As such, the idea of designing curriculum for her students in an emergent fashion was novel, exciting and, and frankly, terrifying. An important part of this uncertainty emerged as the teachers began to understand, with our help through the 4K-PD, the different ways in which curriculum conceptualized within and between early childhood and elementary settings. Whereas Wanda's kindergarten curriculum had largely focused on specific content knowledge areas – literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies, the early childhood conception of curriculum that we were focused upon in the PD was organized around the child, as well as the family, culture and community in which that child was growing up.

One text in particular often takes a predominant role in understanding developmentally appropriate approaches to early childhood curriculum – *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*. This text is published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and is also known as DAP. DAP is based on a foundational knowledge of child development that is also informed by knowledge of typical, atypical and individual development, as well as the influence of cultural differences. Within my own teacher training and practice, this text has been central. For the pre-K teachers, the district had chosen a curricular guide that was largely based on DAP, known as *The Creative Curriculum*. This is not a rigid curriculum, but rather a guide for helping teachers in their design of emergent curriculum.

The following passage is from the Introduction of the first volume (of five), “Like an architect’s blue print, [this curriculum] exists only on paper until they are interpreted and used to build your program” (Dodge, et al., p. xix). The teachers using the curriculum are encouraged to consider five components (how children learn and develop, the learning environment, what children learn, caring and teaching, and partnering with families), eleven interest areas within the indoor/outdoor classroom context (blocks, dramatic play, toys & games, art, library, discovery, sand & water, music & movement, cooking, computers and the outdoors), as well as the extensive research into developmentally appropriate practices that underlies these components and interest areas. All of these elements together, the introduction suggests, will give the teacher the tools necessary to create an emergent, responsive and developmentally appropriate curriculum. Phew.

In this next section, I analyze how our engagement together created a support system for Wanda as she began constructing curriculum in the face of her own uncertainty and emerging identity as a pre-K teacher. There was no real beginning to this process – a day I can point to. Rather, throughout the year, Wanda had bursts of creating curriculum that responded to the needs of children, and other times she would fall back on past practices from her years in kindergarten. In addition, my own early childhood experiences and expectations became a part of this process. I found myself struggling not to project my own version of early childhood – from a very different context and with a very different training – onto Wanda’s teaching practice. Our diversity of experience and expertise ended up being a great tool, but it did require me to work to not let it become a dominant force of influence as Wanda’s pre-K teacher identity emerged.

Frequently, there were events that would trigger bursts and revisions to Wanda's practice. Most commonly it was one child's needs or the interactions of a small group of children that would provoke Wanda into mounting a curricular response. This response in turn would cause her to struggle – to decide whether she should respond as she always had, or try something new that felt more than a bit uncomfortable. Usually these 'something new' ideas were things that had been discussed or presented either in our PD sessions or the district level trainings for pre-K teachers. Either way, Wanda was willing to try anything that might help her to better serve her students.

In order to better understand how Wanda constructed curriculum in the face of dissonance, I have organized this section as follows: first, I examine what I came to see as the foundation, or motivation, for the curricular choices that Wanda made in her classroom – the social and emotional well-being of her students. To do this, I look at the specific case of one child in Wanda's classroom - Theo. This case serves as an example of how Wanda used her understanding of social and emotional development in designing curricular experiences to support her students. The case also reflects how Wanda used my observations, her readings and support group within the PD, and trial and error to make micro changes in her teaching as she worked to resolve the dissonance that existed between her K and pre-K teaching practices.

The Basis for Curriculum. “Can you use your words to tell me how you are feeling or what you need?” On any given day in Wanda's classroom, I heard her say these words a dozen times. For Wanda, the switch to pre-K presented an opportunity to do something that she had always wanted to do – respond to the social and emotional needs of her students. In particular,

Wanda wanted to help them to develop skills for channeling their feelings into appropriate words, actions and reactions. In a small group conversation in the PD, Wanda explained it this way:

Wanda: When I taught kindergarten, I would do centers. And the purpose of the centers was to make sure that they matched this or that, to focus on some skill they're practicing. Whereas, in 4K that's not really appropriate. If they're gonna sit there and cut the whole sheet apart and glue it, that's fine. They need to lead it. So for me that was like a weird change.

Betty: It was an awkward fit.

Wanda: It was hard.

Sadie: For me it was a lot of stressing, well how is this kid gonna learn this skill if they never go over there. It's really hard to-

Wanda: Yeah, I mean, I have boys that do not go in the writing area, do not go in the math area, so then I have to find a way to bring the math to them where they are. That's very different from kindergarten. And then I have had a hard time feeling like I was still teaching. Because I've always done this specific instruction in kindergarten, that's how it was when I came in. And now it's like...well I am trying to focus on social things and that's so important. But it's been hard. (Small Group, Seminar, 11/16/2011)

Unlike in kindergarten, where she felt she had little time to attend to the social or emotional needs of her students, Wanda felt strongly that this was an important part of the curriculum in pre-K. Wanda also felt that this social emotional component was an expectation of this district for pre-K. In her fall interview, Wanda stated, "So I think we were really warned that the pre-K is not a pre-5-K, and that what we're really trying to get to are those the social emotional things that will help 'em in the future." In particular, she wanted to be sure that the children were developing skills to allow them to use their words to explain frustration or anger to peers. She was quick to catch on to those students who were struggling in these areas, and actively worked to provide support to them to help them develop these skills. For Wanda, using social and

emotional development as the basis for her work with students provided a stabilizing force against her uncertainty in her new role as a pre-K teacher. It became the central mantra that guided her curricular choices. The case of Theo serves as a vivid example of how Wanda used this foundation to support her students in their growth and development across the year and to create curricular experiences that reflected their needs.

Theo. From the beginning of the year, Wanda expressed concern that Theo was less mature than the other children. Wanda would often point out that when the other children would stand waiting for a turn, or listening to her tell them something, Theo would be jumping around the hall or asking questions that were far off topic. In addition, Wanda expressed concern because Theo began the year struggling to join in play with the other children. This was particularly challenging for Wanda because she herself was just beginning to understand the ways in which she could use play to support children in their growth as members of the group.

Theo's family had been members of the Fuji community for many years. His two older brothers were both students in Fuji in the upper elementary grades. In addition, Theo's mom ran a home daycare in the neighborhood that had many children who went on to attend Fuji or who had older siblings at the school. Wanda knew this information about Theo's family when he started in her classroom. I remember her telling me that given this information, she was pretty shocked that Theo couldn't really find a way to join in play with other children (Observation, 11/16/2011). Given the fact that Theo had older siblings and had always had home daycare kids at home, it seemed odd to both of us that he struggled so much to form play relationships with other children.

From the very beginning of the year, Theo's strategy for joining in to play was to sidle up to a game or activity already in practice and try to insert himself – sometimes quietly, and sometimes quite destructively:

Tsheel and James have been working on a structure. When Theo is done he comes over and knocks over Tsheel's structure. Tsheel is really angry.

Tsheel: Theo, no doing that. No! Theo, no!

Theo moves over to another part of the road and starts adding on.

Tsheel: No! No! That's mine!

Theo starts squealing. Wanda asks Theo to not change it and suggest they start a new structure together. He ignores her. Finally, Mrs. B (the Aide) asks Theo to come with her and then has to help him move his body to another part. He is kicking Mrs. B. and asked to find a way to calm down. Tsheel and James start building again. Tsheel tries to build on James's part.

James: This is my part. Work on your part.

Tsheel: Ok, sorry.

Theo calms down enough to return to the block carpet, but sits apart from Tsheel and James, occasionally glancing at their emerging structure. He builds by himself until clean up time. (Observation, 11/30/2011)

When things didn't go the way that Theo wanted, he would let out a sound – somewhere between a groan and a howl – indicating his absolute frustration. These howls were often the warning before the storm:

Theo had a rough day today, right from the beginning. Theo was sitting on the carpet next to Wanda. Meeting time had just started and he really wanted to lean on Wanda. It is hot in the classroom – one of those summer days that shows up in late fall – and we were all sweating just sitting on the carpet. Wanda kept asking him to move over and give her some room, but he kept leaning against her. After several requests for him to not lean against her, Wanda gave him an ultimatum, "This is the last time...you can sit right next to me, but it is too hot to be in my lap or leaning on me." Theo let out a howl, but did scoot a little further from Wanda. Wanda continued the meeting, and then suddenly Theo was pushing Tsheel who was sitting on his other side. He screamed at Tsheel, "You are too close to me! Get away!!!" Theo pushed

at Tsheej's body and Tsheej pushed back. Wanda put herself between the two boys and Theo let out another howl. (Observation Reflection, 11/1/2011).

Over the first months of school, each time I visited, I would witness events such as the one above unfold in unerring regularity. I watched as Wanda would try to comfort and distract Theo, and then get him involved in a one on one game with her – something he was ultimately very happy with. However, when other children tried to join this playtime with him and Wanda, Theo would again writhe in frustration. Often, some of Wanda's most inspired moments of creating curriculum were when she was working one on one with Theo. For example, mid way through the year, the children had been working in a Veterinary Clinic that Wanda had created in the dress up area. Wanda had originally told me that she set this center up as a response to how much the children all seemed to love animals. However, later she told me that she had done a similar center in her kindergarten classroom, and since the children had more time to play in this setting, she had decided to bring it back out. Either way, the children were enthralled with the center.

About a week after the center is introduced, Jayden, a little girl in the class shares during Morning Meeting that her dog hurt his leg and had to go to the Vet for an X-ray. Many children ask what an X-ray is and Wanda explains that "it is a picture that a doctor takes of the bones inside your body" (Observation 11/15/2011). A few minutes later, the children are dispersed to play in the classroom, and the Veterinary Clinic is teeming with children:

Above the clamor, you can hear a number of children talking about taking X-rays of their animals. I watch Wanda watching the children, and see her suddenly go into her office. She starts pulling out an old dusty overhead projector. She pulls it to the middle of the meeting carpet, and then goes back into her office only to emerge with black construction paper, wax paper and white crayons. Like on so many other occasions, Theo is the first by Wanda's side. He asks what she is doing and she tells him that she is going to try and make an X-ray. Theo starts wiggling in excitement and they sit together while Wanda thinks for a few minutes. Finally, she asks Theo to trace his hand onto the paper with the white crayon. When he is done, she starts

cutting along the white line. She gets it started and hands the paper over to Theo who finishes cutting along the line he had made. Wanda takes a piece of wax paper and tapes it to the back of the black sheet with Theo's help. Theo is ready to put his X-ray on the overhead. They put it on and admire it. Then Theo puts his hand over it.

Wanda: Here, let's move the X-ray so you can see your hand.

Theo puts his hand on the overhead. He moves it from on the glass up towards the lens.

Wanda: Oh wow. What happens if you keep it near the lens?

Theo: It's big!

Wanda: What would happen if you put it on the glass?

Theo does this and his hand gets smaller. He moves it in between several times.

Theo: Wow!

They spend several minutes looking at the changing shadow and discussing why this might be happening. Theo is the happiest I have ever seen him. He has Wanda's full attention. A few minutes later when other children notice what they are doing and want a turn, Theo migrates away with his X-ray and settles alone at the art table. (Observation, 11/15/2011)

Whenever these events with Theo would arise, Wanda would look at me and shrug her shoulders.

This type of activity got Theo richly engaged in learning and thinking.

At the end of these days, we would end up brainstorming about what to do about Theo. With my shift in position from observing to noticing, I began to tell Wanda things that I saw happening among the children in her classroom. It seemed particularly helpful when I would send her my notes from each observation, as this allowed her to see the things that she wasn't able to focus on in the day-to-day busyness of the classroom. One example of this was how Theo would act out when Wanda was actively supporting another student, Fritz. In my observation reflection on November 30, I wrote, "Clearly Theo loves attention from Wanda, but often Wanda's attention has been and is focused on meeting Fritz's needs. I have seen Theo watching

the exchanges between Wanda and Fritz - especially in the lunchroom. I asked Wanda about him and she told me that he is the youngest of three brothers and that his mom has a home daycare - so there are always lots of kids around. She is really wondering what this means for Theo." Fritz was a student who was on the autism spectrum, had an extensive IEP and an assigned Aide within the classroom setting. His transition to school and daily life in the classroom required a lot of Wanda's attention. When I sent Wanda's these notes and she was able to see how these interactions often triggered Theo's attention seeking, things became clearer. In an email she sent me later that same week, Wanda wrote, "I guess I never thought of it til I read this. I mean all the kids know that Fritz needs more sometimes, but I guess that would be hard on a kid like Theo who really only plays with me and doesn't seem to be able to reach out to play with the others" (Email Correspondence, 12/2/2011).

Wanda and I discussed the situation further and together we decided that Theo perhaps needed one of us to play with him and another child to get things started, and then we could back ourselves out of the play slowly. Over the course of the next few months, I watched as Wanda pulled Theo into some sort of play, and then quietly included another child who was wandering. She carefully used Theo's interests to start the relationship and then would sit back:

Theo has some small magnet balls in one of the cardboard puzzle boxes. He is picking them up with the magnet wand. Wanda sits down next to him and asks, "What are you working on here?" Theo tells her that he is picking up the magnet marbles with the wand. Next they put the wand in the box and try attaching the marbles to the underside of the box. They stick!

Wanda: Huh, I wonder why?

Theo: Because the magnet is so strong, it holds them even through this box.

Wanda: That is right! Amazing, huh? Chingbo, what do you think? Come and see what we are working on.

Chingbo wanders over and looks in the box. Wanda hands him a magnet wand, the top of the puzzle box and a few magnets. The boys move the objects from underneath. A few minutes later, they trade some objects and continue testing the materials. A while later still, I see them scouting around the room for other magnetic objects, testing their found items with their wands.
(Observation, 3/14/2012)

As much as our conversations helped Wanda to consider how she might better support Theo's developing skills in play, it was a home visit that gave Wanda the information that she felt she needed to work with Theo. As I mentioned earlier in this analysis, for Wanda, these visits became not so much a focus on cultural practices, but rather on family dynamics and how each child in her classroom "fit" within their families. In Wanda's mind, this dynamic explained a great deal about whom the children were in her classroom, including how they responded to activities, transitions, rules and engaging in play. It was the key to supporting their social and emotional development.

On Theo's home visit, Wanda told him he was in charge, and he was ecstatic. He chose all sorts of board games for them to play, and they spent the entire time in his room basically alone. At my next observation, Wanda tells me that she can see Theo struggling now – to both be the baby, which is his position within the dynamic at home, and also to be a big kid. Wanda's home visit confirmed and fleshed out much of what she already knew about Theo's family. Since Theo had two older brothers at Fuji, and a mother who provided in home daycare to many siblings of Fuji students, Wanda felt she knew the family pretty well before ever having one of the children in her classroom. While Wanda's ministrations to Theo's dissonance about his place between the master narratives of his home life and those of school weren't always wholly successful, she continued to try and help him understand how best to join play and play with others. Helping children learn to play together, to get along and use their words was central to

Wanda's emerging practice in pre-K. In a small group session that happened just as we were struggling to figure out how to best support Theo, Wanda noted:

Wanda: You know with the playing with each other? I have a hard time forcing kids to play, you know, play with each other, because it's like, that's not how the world is. But they're 4. You know, and the whole, the sharing thing, I don't--I actually have been teaching the kids that it's OK to say no, but I'll give it to you when I'm done, kinda thing, you know. So it's, it's hard when, you know, someone, someone needs a break from another person. I'm giving them the words to say, you know what, I just need a break right now. I wanna be by myself. You know, I try to encourage playing together -because there is always that 1-the 1 or 2 children who typically are left out for one reason or another. (Small Group, Seminar, 03/07/2012)

While this speaks to play more generally, Wanda was constantly working to help the children in her classroom become better players with one another. She wanted to make sure that they had to tools to both join in play and decline when they needed time alone or to do something else. For Wanda, this was a skill that would serve her students well in pre-K and beyond.

Through working with Theo's dissonance, Wanda found consonance in her practice. As she saw Theo succeeding through her ministrations, I saw Wanda trying similar techniques with other students. She became willing to try new approaches, to consider what needs Theo might be expressing with his howl of frustration and how to seek out information from his home as well as school life. And having success with one student lit a fire under Wanda. Over the course of the second semester, Wanda completed seven other home visits with children in her morning and afternoon sessions. Instead of having to implement these approaches with the whole classroom, Wanda's micro change approach supported the resolution of her dissonance by lending confidence to her ability to successfully use these emerging practices.

Controlling curriculum. While a focus on uncovering and then utilizing the social and emotional needs of her students formed the basis for the curriculum design in her classroom, Wanda also employed two main strategies to control the curriculum when things began to feel too dissonant, or the children too far out of control. These two strategies were: 1) the use of rules to limit the number of children in different centers and risky play, and 2) the arrangement of the environment to prevent children from using certain centers. In this way, Wanda's control of the environment and materials thru rules and arrangement became a part of the curricular strategy that she employed with her students to direct them into certain types of play, and away from others.

I began to notice these strategies midway through the fall semester. During playtime, I would hear Wanda tell the children, "only three children in the Art Center today", whereas last week there had been no limits. The children would stare at Wanda clearly confused and then wander around looking for something else to do. At other times, the morning meeting would become quite strict – whereas the children had been allowed to share without raising their hands other times, they would be asked to raise their hands. These changes were not linear – starting out more strict and opening up as the semester went on, or vice versa. Rather, they tended to be reactionary – though what they were reacting to wasn't at first very clear.

As I was following along with the PD syllabus, I knew that the group was about to start talking about ways to rethink rules in classrooms with young children. I had a feeling that one reading in particular, *From policing to participation: Overturning the rules and creating amiable classrooms* by C.A. Wein, was going to be challenging for Wanda. I happened to be visiting Wanda's classroom on the Wednesday when this article was going to be discussed in class.

Having done the reading myself the night before, I prepared to ask Wanda about the role of rules within in her classroom. I knew what I thought they were, having observed in her classroom now for two months, but I wanted to see what she thought in light of this reading.

However, Wanda beat me to the punch:

Wanda asks me what I thought about the “less rules” article that we read for the PD that is later tonight. “Did you have a lot of rules?”, she asks me. “Not that many,” I admit. I tell her that I think fewer rules are better for 4s. I tell her that I had more global rules and usually just three – Be Kind, Share, Use Your Words – rather than how many kids can be in a center, or you can’t talk during such and such time. Wanda tells me that “We are trying to have less rules in our classroom”. I ask her, jokingly, “You are going lawless?” (this was the article).

Wanda: Well, we couldn’t go lawless. Just less.

Kate: What do you think would happen if you went lawless?

Wanda: I don’t know. I’m not sure I would want to find out. But maybe I need to.

(Observation, 11/30/2011)

This was the first time that Wanda directly asked me how I had practiced as a preschool teacher. Somehow, sharing what I had done became the basis for our continued talk about rules throughout the school year. The topic of rules also became a way for Wanda and me to talk about the social and emotional skills that kids could learn to develop in early childhood settings. It married what motivated Wanda’s curriculum in pre-K with an opportunity to activate the dissonance she was experiencing in her pre-K practice. When these discussions of rules would pop up I would mention that sometimes, too many rules prevented children from stumbling upon those teachable moments that would help them understand how to share with friends, or express themselves to a peer. Since this was a central motivation for Wanda in the curriculum, it allowed me to activate her consideration of another way of approaching the problem.

Indeed in the class that night, Wanda brought up her own struggles with rules in the classroom and, in particular, with risky play on the playground:

Wanda: And like, with this article, the one, the from policing to participation, I would love to go to something like that but man, I think I'd be a nervous wreck, 'cause are they gonna get hurt? Oh, that's where they're not safe, that kind of play's not safe, and so on...

Beth: Well I guess the point is figuring out what the tipping point is. When you're no longer responsible in terms of providing an environment. Versus having an environment that's open enough for kids to start making decisions. And I'd say it's a hard decision to make.

Wanda: I want to get there, I do, and I've come a long way from my 5k mind to where I am now. It's just I'm pushing myself to get there. (Whole Group, November 30, 2011)

Beth and other teachers in the group, pushed on Wanda's concerns about loosening up the rules and moving from a position of correcting behavior to actively engaging with children in play to both respond to behavior that was concerning and model other choices. Just as with other issues and ideas that we discussed, following our conversations and the PD sessions, I would see Wanda testing out these new ideas, making micro changes in her teaching.

The following three examples show the back and forth process that testing these new ideas took on:

On November 1st,

Wanda: Alright, we have a lot of areas today that are open. And a lot of things that we haven't seen in a while that are out. You can do a leaf rubbing or color at the art table. One two three look at me. In blocks are building things and legos. The dollhouse is also in that area. In dramatic play, the kitchen is open, it's been a long time – but only four people. In discovery, magnets are out, and there are writing things in the writing area. Remember, four people in the kitchen.

The kids leave the carpet area in a rush.

Wanda: Oh, you know what there are too many people in the kitchen area? Can

anyone volunteer to leave this area or do I need to pull sticks?

Chingbo and Kazadi walk away, and then so does Simon.

Wanda: In a little bit, I will let people know when there is room again at this center.

On December 8th,

There are more than 4 kids in the Vet Clinic. Mrs. B says something to Wanda and Wanda looks over, but she doesn't say anything. I did say something about this last week – just how she might be able to take away the people limits with this group. Then having just read the fewer rules article, I wonder if this is something she is now willing to try. The kids in this group have such good relationships. Maybe this is what Wanda meant by having fewer rules. I will have to ask her. There are 6 in there and many bipping and bopping in and out. It is seamless.

On January 25th,

At morning meeting, Wanda goes over how many kids in each center – this is a reversal from weeks past where Wanda seemed to be toying with not worrying about the number of kids. The kids are familiar with this rule from the fall, however, and when she asks how many kids in each center they shout out the answer.

Kids: Four!

Fritz: Except blocks. There can be more than four in blocks.

Wanda: Yes, as long as everyone is getting along.

This is a change again – it seemed for about a month that Wanda wasn't doing number limits at centers. She also tells the kids that she is going to be calling kids over to work on writing their names with her. She tells the kids that they can go and do explore time. The kids are off.

This struggle to control children in centers continued on and off through the school year. In early March, things swung the other direction again with Wanda removing all restrictions for number of children in the different classroom area. In my observation reflection on March 7, I wrote:

Each week, I can see her struggling to make sense of the readings in the PD that suggest instead of having rules such as a limited number of children at a center, that EC teachers might use the negotiations of children at centers as a context for learning to get along, share and use problem solving skills. This sort of learning takes a lot of

time and patience - both with yourself as a teacher and with children as they make sense of how to share space and materials. It maybe easier to set a rule about the number of children, but in doing so, much of the learning opportunity disappears. I know that Wanda feels that part of the importance of 4K is helping children to develop these skills. That being said, it doesn't make it any easier to learn how to manage that sort of thing when the context of your teaching practice has been so dominated by staying on specific curricular tasks and moving children towards set in stone readiness goals focused around reading and math. (Observation Reflection, 03/07/2012)

From my very first visit to Wanda's classroom, I also noticed how certain centers and materials were restricted from the children either by turning shelves or materials (like the play kitchen) against the wall. I would come to Wanda's classroom before the afternoon session would start, and would enter a classroom completely transformed from the week before. Entire centers would disappear, or be turned against the wall. The art area would be replaced by a Writing Center or all of the small manipulatives would disappear and be replaced by puzzles. Other materials would be closed off with large sheets of butcher paper, posters or hanging charts.

Seeing these closed centers was a big issue for me. It triggered something in me that I had been trying to ignore – the sense that Wanda and I might never really share a common understanding EC curriculum. Our training and backgrounds were so different, and the idea that we could come to a common understanding of 'best practices' seemed to unlikely. Whereas I saw centers and materials as tools, from my perspective, by closing centers Wanda seemed to treat materials as culprits. In my own teaching practice, whenever I had had trouble with how children were using materials, I tried to turn it into a discussion about what materials were for. Wanda, on the other hand, would often tell me that she thought that the children weren't ready for using certain materials, and so would close centers in response to poor choices or behaviors. While I wanted to share with Wanda how I might approach this situation, I found myself actively

resisting this urge. I had to remind myself that she knew her students better than I did. If I stepped in as an ‘expert’ with my approaches to teaching, I would be undoing the learning that she was doing within the context of her practice. I began to try and bite my tongue and wait for her to ask me what I thought. Or I would ask her questions about the closed centers, trying to start a conversation, but not dominate it with my own ideas of what she should be doing.

In response to these questions, Wanda would tell me it was an issue of space – her classroom truly was tiny and there were so many materials. The best way to deal with this, Wanda would tell me, was to close down certain centers by turning them against the wall. However, I also knew that Wanda would close centers and materials where children had been struggling to share or use the materials in a way that Wanda felt was appropriate. I was trying hard to accept my own uncertainty about ‘best practices’ and wait for Wanda to be ready to talk about the space between her curricular choices and she was learning about through the PD course. Just as with the article about rules, I didn’t have to wait long, which was good because I am rarely patient. It all started with the Block Center.

One day, one of the other researchers in our group told me that Wanda had shared a funny story in the PD the week before. Apparently, a group of boys in Wanda’s classroom had pulled all of the blocks off the shelves, piled them up in a great messy stack and pretended that it was a bonfire, lobbing toys onto it to burn. When I asked Wanda about this, I had a hard time not laughing. Wanda didn’t seem at all inclined to think that it was funny. “They were just making a mess. It didn’t even seem like play – just a way to take every single block off the shelf. Then it took forever to clean up. So the next day, I closed blocks. I thought we needed a break for a while” (Observation, 12/08/11). This cycle would reoccur every few weeks in Wanda’s

classroom – usually involving the block center, but also in dramatic play. These two centers always drew large groups of children and rather rambunctious play.

In late February, I noticed once again that the blocks were closed. The kids had been playing in the blocks a lot the prior weeks, so this sort of surprised me. I had arrived a few minutes before the kids as per usual, and Wanda was in the classroom getting on her orange vest and looking for her clipboard. We were running late, however, to get upstairs, so I did not have a chance to ask about it. In my observations from that day I wrote:

Today, when I arrive at Fuji, I was surprised to see the blocks closed. It seemed like over the past few weeks, Wanda was feeling good about having many centers open. I find myself wondering why she closed blocks - it is a center that the kids always play at during explore time these days. I also find myself feeling sort of frustrated at the idea that that center is just closed. I need to talk to Wanda.

At lunch we get a chance to talk. I ask Wanda about the block center and she tells me that she closed it because the kids were really difficult when it was time to clean up. They would just throw the blocks onto the shelf, apparently and then consider that cleaned up. Wanda said that she got tired of going over there and having to redo it all.

Back down in the classroom after lunch and recess, the kids quickly dispersed to play. I remember I was working with Kwame to put all of the kids pictures with their names on the large magnet board. Wanda walked over to the closed block shelf and began pulling the two shelves apart:

Wanda calls out to the group, “Blocks are open!”

Theo, Virginia and Fritz all call out excitedly and head straight for the block area, calling to other kids. Wanda looks at me and smiles and I go over and settle down in the block area too. (Observation, 02/29/2012)

I would love to say that from this moment forward, blocks were never closed again. But that didn't happen. Teaching is a difficult process, and teaching in a new way in the face of new expectations, information and beliefs is a great challenge. Instead, what I found is that Wanda

continued to use her first year of teaching in pre-K as an opportunity to experiment and to test the boundaries of her own emerging identity as a pre-K teacher. Wanda used this year, and the support of her PD instructors and peers, as well as my time in her classroom, as a means for figuring out what being a pre-K teacher truly meant for her within the context of her classroom at Fuji elementary school.

While I do not subscribe to the idea that there is a singular codicil that can define what constitutes ‘best practices’ in EC (such as DAP), I certainly came into Wanda’s classroom with my own set of beliefs and assumptions about what EC should look like. Waiting, rather than jumping in, was a struggle for me. Trying to wait was also reflective of my own emerging identity as a teacher educator. I didn’t want to just tell Wanda what I felt she *should* be doing in her classroom. She was the expert in her practice – she had been at Fuji School for nearly a decade, and I had been there for only a few months. While I might have known more about theoretical motivations for EC practice and curriculum, Wanda knew more about what would work for her students within the context of her practice. Creating a space where we could bring our knowledge and expertise together in search of a solution was difficult, but also reflective of the role that I wanted to play in her sense-making and what I believed my role should be in my work with teachers as a teacher-educator and researcher.

As with my own emerging identity, Wanda’s emergence as a pre-K teacher was not smooth or linear. It was filled with steps forward and back, around and around, micro changes and macro realizations. The same was true for my identity too as a teacher researcher and former preschool teacher. I had gone into pre-K in a district setting with a lot of assumptions about how the context would influence the curriculum. Some of these assumptions were correct – it was

difficult to create emergent and responsive curriculum in the face of the larger expectations of the school community. It was also difficult for Wanda to shake the twelve years of more rigid K practice that had preceded this first year in pre-K. However, I had the same difficulty, projecting my own early childhood practice experiences and expectations onto Wanda and her classroom – a context very different from those in which I had taught, and with a teacher with a very different set of skills and expertise.

Over the course of our year together, I think that Wanda and I both formed new identities as teachers. We both worked to make micro changes that responded to the needs of our students, falling back on past practices when faced with challenges and obstacles. That being said, for both of us, our shared dissonance provided an opportunity to make change, see change and look forward to what could be achieved in pre-K for such a diverse group of children.

Chapter 5 – Interpretations

Towards A Theory of Dissonance

In this section, I undertake to describe a new theory that emerged as I collected and analyzed my data, and wrote this dissertation – the theory of dissonance. I began to think about dissonance as a construct for understanding identity development as I listened to Wanda talk about the change that she was experiencing in her transition to becoming a pre-K teacher. On the first day of the 4K-PD course, Wanda told the whole group, “I switched over to pre-K from eleven years of K because I wanted to change and I didn’t realize how much it would change in a day” (Seminar, Whole Group, 09/16/2011). This statement by Wanda attracted my attention. It voiced two things – a want for change and an uncertainty about what this change meant or would be. My ears and interests were peaked, and I began to think about what this change and uncertainty – this dissonance – meant for Wanda, as she became a pre-K teacher. Later, as I worked through the data analysis for this dissertation, I also began to be mindful of how my own dissonance in my emerging identity as a teacher-educator and researcher was reflected in both my work with Wanda and my writing in this dissertation.

There were so many examples of change and uncertainty during our time together that year. The school district was implementing pre-K for the first time, launching new to pre-K teachers, classrooms, schools, children and families into a process that was new to nearly everyone. The four-year-olds in Wanda’s class were experiencing their first year in elementary school, and a few of them were even experiencing care outside of their families for the first time. I was experiencing my first year working one on one with a teacher as she made sense of her

new teaching context and EC curricular constructs. I was suddenly an expert (EC teacher educator), when before I had been the novice (graduate student). Wanda was a novice (pre-K teacher), whereas before she had been an expert (K teacher). We were, altogether, experiencing a great deal of dissonance.

As I began writing the dissertation, I found myself using different words to represent this theory of dissonance. These included (and you have read them all): doubt, unsettling/unsettled, uncertain/uncertainty, unsure, dissatisfaction, struggle. All of these terms represented emotions that Wanda was giving voice to and demonstrating in her practice, and that I was experiencing in my work with her. Two other terms that I relied a great deal in the writing of this dissertation are: sense-making and process/processes. Both Wanda and I were actively engaged in sense-making processes during our time together – trying to find what EC practices best met the needs of her students, and how I could give Wanda the support that she needed in order to make these decisions with confidence.

Within this theory of dissonance, which I break apart and examine and define at length in this chapter, I view dissonant periods as opportunities – for learning, sense-making and development. If we think of dissonance as a temporary space, inhabited for various lengths of time and identified as dissonant by observers, then educators – of children and adults – need to spend time learning to notice these moments of dissonance and how best to respond. Part of the trouble with noticing is that often the noticing that we do of others may say more about our own dissonance than theirs. Certainly, my noticing of Wanda's dissonance was triggered by my own feelings of uncertainty and struggle. As such, much of my work in the data analysis was working to triangulate my understandings of Wanda's expressed dissonance and my observations

of this dissonance as actualized in her practice. For example, when I found what I thought was an example of dissonance in her work in the classroom, I would look to other sources from the same general time period in order to see how she was making sense of her work in other settings – such as the PD, or over our email correspondence. There were certainly moments when Wanda’s pedagogical choices pushed against my identity as an EC educator. Being mindful of these dissonant moments at the time, and then later in my data analysis, helped me to better understand the role of dissonance and my own position within the data analysis and my work with Wanda.

Dissonance is a construct that has been theorized in numerous fields of study: psychology, sociology, aesthetics, and anthropology. In the field of education, however, dissonance has not been broadly explored as a theoretical construct. In this section of my literature review, I begin to knit together theories of dissonance from other fields in the hopes of illustrating how these ways of thinking about identity and development could served to inform practice with teachers.

To do this, I first consider existing theories of dissonance from the psychological, aesthetic and sociocultural perspectives. I explore the idea of how noticing and activating dissonance may support the identity development, as well as learning and sense-making processes of children and educators. Finally, I lay out my own theory of dissonance as it relates to my dissertation research and work within the field of education.

Psychological Dissonance

Piaget’s theory of child development, Erikson’s psychosocial moratorium, and the theory of cognitive dissonance represent three main constructs that have informed my theory of

dissonance. However, while each has contributed to the ways in which I theorize ‘dissonance’, each also presents problems for pushing beyond psychological conceptions of identity. In this section, I examine each more closely, and point out the ways in which they both add to and differ from my theory of dissonance.

Piaget and Equilibration. I was first introduced to Piaget when I was in my own teacher education program. I remember learning about his constructivist vision of development and picturing in my mind a small child pushing against a larger-than-life block. The child would slide the block along, struggling and straining to make progress until suddenly, the block slipped into a cube shaped hole just the right size to leave a smooth, clear path in front of the child. Until they got to the next block, of course. The Piagetian model of development considers forward movement to be the goal, and yet makes room for children to move back into previously trod developmental space when needed. For example, before a child may be prepared to surmount a new conceptual milestone, she or he may return to a prior set of beliefs or understandings of the world as a means of preparation for the coming new level of cognition. The best way to understand this model of development is as linear, but not limited to forward movement. However, forward movement towards the highest levels of cognitive development is the goal.

According to Piaget, as a child moves through levels of development and cognitive understanding, a sense of equilibrium is achieved (Inhelder & Piaget, 1964). Before this equilibrium, however, comes disequilibrium, which is just as important in activating the child’s development. The disequilibrium comes as they tackle the next phase of their understanding of the world around them:

[T]he movement towards an eventual equilibrium is not fully determined by the mechanics of, say, the human brain, but is guaranteed by the nature of the sequential

process itself, the reason being that the behavior particular to each phase in the series gain in probability of occurrence throughout the completion of the preceding phase, as a function of such antecedent behavior and its results (p. 293). Each experience of disequilibrium forces the child to learn to accommodate and assimilate new information from the previous experience that informs the later. At each level, they must find new footing and stable ground. This is the act of equilibration, according to Piaget. My own theory of dissonance pulls on this conception in the sense that it is my belief that our identity seeks consonance, just as Piaget theorizes we all seek cognitive equilibrium. However, what consonance is is always changing.

From Piaget's perspective, however, disequilibrium is an individual act. It is provoked by the environment and an individual's need to actively resolve an understanding of a phenomena in the face of newly presented evidence (Inhelder & Piaget, 1964; Block, 1982). As children engage with new knowledge, they attempt to assimilate this knowledge into their existing understanding of the world (or schema, as Piaget termed it). When children are successfully able to understand this new knowledge, they have in fact forced themselves to accommodate new understandings, which in turn propel them into a higher developmental state (Joyce, 1984). The struggle for understanding, and the disequilibrium that occurs until understanding is achieved, is central to Piaget's understanding of cognitive development (Flavell, 1996).

In terms of my own theory of dissonance, Piaget's focus on the need for struggle and discomfort in order to resolve understanding is important. The idea of seeking equilibrium, for example, paints a vivid picture of the work we all must do to make sense of ourselves in the struggle for identity. The sense-making processes that leads to broader understandings of our place within social and cultural practices and contexts is bound to be fraught as we work to

become more aware of our self, identity and place in the world. Piaget's work successfully highlights how disequilibrium plays into the need to struggle for resolution.

Erikson and Psycho-social Moratorium. In some ways, it might have been easier to simply adopt Erikson's theory of psycho-social moratorium in framing the work that I am doing in this dissertation. Erikson originally developed the concept of the psychosocial moratorium in his early writings on identity development across the lifespan (1954). Expanding on this idea in his text *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968), Erikson notes that psychosocial moratorium is a "period of delay granted to somebody who is to ready to meet an obligation or forced on somebody who should give himself time...[it is] a delay of adult commitments" (p.157). It is, at its heart, a time to experience and experiment with new roles without accepting the responsibility or commitments of those roles for a given period of time. Erikson also refers to this period as a time that, "often leads to a deep commitment" in the individual who has taken the time to explore dissonance and conflict within their identity during the moratorium (p.157).

However, Erikson's model of moratorium is different from my theory of dissonance on a number of counts. First, Erikson's model considered psychosocial moratorium to be a singular period in the developmental trajectory of a human life. This experience primarily came during adolescence as a means of developing aspects of identity that would support (or fail to) the onset of adult responsibility (1959). In contrast, I envision dissonance as an experience that is not limited by age or development, nor by a single period.

A second difference is in how Erikson envisioned the struggle of the identity formation process. In Erikson's model, each individual had to make sense of differences between their internal identity and outside social and cultural forces during the period of moratorium. One way

to envision this period is like going through a tunnel – entering as an adolescent at one end, and only successfully emerging on the other end as an adult when they have put their dissonance to rest. In the case of my dissonance theory, there is not one instance or period that is likely to provoke struggle. For Erikson, it is the attempt to put off the onset of adult responsibilities that triggers moratorium. In my conception of the role of dissonance in identity formation, a single period or series of events cannot be identified. For each individual, what triggers the struggle for sense-making is different. In terms of utilizing this dissonance to activate identity development, often times an outside actor must notice and support this sense-making. For Erikson, moratorium is a struggle between the self and the world. The active party must be the individual actor (Holland & Lachicotte, 1998).

The third difference is the idea of being able to measure the fullness of identity development along a trajectory. While Erikson did not focus his attention on the measurement or quantifying of identity, for many within the field of psychology, the goal of measurement was a next step in making his theories useful to the field at large. Indeed, the measurement of identity makes it possible to evaluate each person's level of identity development (Marcia, 1966). And Erikson's model did concern itself with how fully individuals were able to develop their identity. For Erikson, the failure of an individual to emerge from the period of psychosocial moratorium ready for adult responsibilities resulted in an identity that was permanently stunted. So while Erikson himself did not measure identity per se, he did imagine that the experience of moratorium would produce either forward movement in identity development, or the status quo.

Cote (2006) has also pushed Erikson's model forward as a way of understanding how institutional forces act on the development of individuals. But again, this developmental

perspective envisions the individual's encounters with new information, experiences and contexts as moving them forwards or backwards along a developmental continuum. My theory of dissonance is quite a bit messier than this, instead taking a socio-cultural approach that envisions identity development as a result of the resolution of dissonance that can shift identity in a variety of directions. Teachers, for example, may engage with professional learning and practical experiences within their classrooms that force a sense-making process that shifts them not from an immature to mature state, but from one narrative to another.

The work of Erikson and Cote provide a foundation for understanding how struggle to make sense of the world around us can contribute our identity. However, unlike my dissonance theory, these are not frequent experiences. The role of time/timing is also underrated in the models presented by Erikson and Cote. Rather the period of moratorium is just that, a period through which individuals either pass into successful identity in adulthood, or fail to emerge from. There is little space for an understanding of how dissonance may influence identity in smaller, more frequent ways.

Before jumping into bed with socio-cultural conceptions of identity, however, I explore the theory of cognitive dissonance that emerged from the field of cultural psychology in the late 1950s.

Cognitive Dissonance. Originally presented by Festinger (1957), the theory of cognitive dissonance is premised upon the idea that when there is an inconsistency between two cognitions (or understandings), a psychological state of dissonance will develop. Presented with this state of clashing cognition, an individual will seek to resolve his or her dissonance through choice or action. Important to Festinger's theory, however, is the idea that there are outside forces that

often prevent individuals from resolving cognitive dissonance. As a result, it can be difficult to move to a consonant state. According to this theory, however, consonance is the state in which all people seek to reside, and so they will do everything in their power to make this happen, including changing previously held strong beliefs and/or statements.

The field of cognitive dissonance has undergone quite a bit of change over the years, with researchers such as Cooper (2007), Stone (2001), and Elliot & Devine (2001), reviving and revising the original work presented by Festinger. This “New Look” model of dissonance pushed past Festinger’s original assumption that cognitive dissonance was caused by a “discrepancy among cognitions” (Cooper, 2007, p. 73). Instead, the New Look model adds four assumptions about inconsistent behavior and cognitive dissonance. These are that inconsistent behavior produces dissonance when: 1) decision freedom is high, 2) when people are committed to their behavior, 3) when the chosen behavior leads to adverse consequences, and 4) when those consequences are foreseeable. In other words, behavior is at the heart of cognitive dissonance rather than cognition (Cooper, 2007).

Central to this model is the idea of responsibility – one only feels cognitive dissonance if one feels that they are responsible for the outcome. For example, imagine that you are a teacher of a child with a sensory integration disorder. You know that asking him to sit on the carpet with the other children will cause him to react adversely. However, you feel compelled to ask him anyway because the other students are being asked to do the same. When the child reacts badly, as you had anticipated that he would, you then feel dissonance. However, what the cognitive dissonance model fails to consider is how cultural and social narratives might play into these events. So, while a teacher might appear to have high decision freedom – she is the one asking

the child to sit down and could have chosen not to – other narratives within the cultural context of an elementary school may in fact lower her decision freedom. In addition, the teacher likely knew what the consequence of her request would be, and yet felt compelled to make it anyway. Even given these circumstances, however, it is likely that the dissonance felt by that teacher might still be quite high. It is hard to know – experimental settings can measure these things, but against what, and who is doing the measuring?

However, the literature of cognitive dissonance has helped me to consider what things might trigger feelings of dissonance, and to understand that we are each driven by individual needs to resolve this dissonance. Some may have quite a high tolerance for dissonance, others can bear quite little (Stone & Cooper, 2001). While within the field of cultural psychology, scientists claim to measure the magnitude of cognitive dissonance, I would argue that only through being a situated member of the context in which dissonance is being experienced, can a researcher begin to understand the circumstances that provoke and provide resolution to these feelings.

Aesthetic Dissonance

While cognitive dissonance is focused disequilibrium in the rational realm; aesthetic dissonance refers to disequilibrium in the realm of emotions. Aesthetic dissonance presents a space where what we think we know (ontological) and what we feel we know (epistemological) reside in conflict (Wetzl-Fairchild, Dufresne-Tasse, & Dube, 1997). Research into dissonance within the aesthetic realm how art and music, or even museum spaces, trigger feelings of emotional dissonance. For example, the assumption may be that when we enter the quiet, calm of a museum, we will feel a “heightened sense of pleasure, well-being and exaltation” (Wetzl-

Fairchild, Dufresne-Tasse, & Dube, 1997, p. 158). However, as these researchers and others have found, many aesthetic experiences in fact create dissonance - a feeling of disconnectedness or uncertainty in response to visual or audible stimuli (Cazden, 1945; Feldman, 1987; Wetzl-Fairchild, Dufresne-Tasse, & Dube, 1997).

Musical Dissonance. Another way to understand what I mean when I write about dissonance is to consider the ways in which other fields have theorized dissonance. Music provides the most accessible way to think about dissonance and consonance from an aesthetic perspective. We have all listened to a piece of live music and heard the musicians hit moments of dissonance – one player might be slightly off time, or off key. I have sat through these moments, wincing a little bit, watching other people’s eyes twitch and narrow when this happens in the course of a concert. Dissonance can be accidental or purposeful. Sometimes, dissonant chords can cue a change in mood or introduce a new movement.

Musical dissonance – like identity dissonance – is largely a matter of context. According to Cazden (1945):

[T]he critical determinant of consonance or dissonance is expectation of movement. This is defined as the relation of resolution. A consonant interval is one which sounds stable and complete in itself, which does not produce a feeling of necessary movement to other tones. A dissonant interval causes a restless expectation of resolution, or movement to a consonant interval. Pleasantness or disagreeableness of the interval is not directly involved. The context is the determining factor. (p. 5)

Think of European opera. Now, I am not very knowledgeable about opera, but I have listened to movements from Mozart’s *Magic Flute*. Think of the lilting tunes, the melodic singing. To western ears, the music is wholly consonant. Now, google Chinese opera. Listen to a segment. To western trained ears, the music is wholly dissonant. I would imagine, however, that someone reared in an eastern musical tradition would not agree. As Cazden notes, pleasantness and

disagreeableness of the interval is not what makes something dissonant – it is our expectations of what something should be that does this.

Kolinski (1962) picks up this line of reasoning about musical consonance and dissonance with a specific examination of western and eastern musical forms and contextually driven assumptions about the ability to apply these terms across traditions. As Kolinski writes, “what really matters is the question whether it is possible to approach the phenomena of consonance and dissonance in an objective way, giving these terms a universally valid meaning” (p. 66). These ideas of dissonance and consonance – as contextually grounded and without universal definition – run contrary to the psychological conceptions that I explored earlier in this section. I would argue that dissonance related to identity formation is similarly difficult to universally define or measure. What constitutes dissonance from one view, might not in fact be a dissonant experience for the individual being observed or measured – at least not always in the way defined by psychological tools. This is not a criticism of psychological approaches to understanding dissonance, but rather a limitation of its measurement.

It is my belief, that these musical conceptions of dissonance, along with a consideration of how sociocultural scholars theorize identity formation, can be brought together to consider the subjective nature of understanding, naming and utilizing moments of dissonance in education research. This of course presents a specific methodological challenge – how to identify and understand dissonance as an observer within a classroom. I tackle this in Chapter Three. In the final section of this chapter, I begin by defining my theory of dissonance. I then link this to ideas about teacher noticing to lay a bit of groundwork for the methodological issues I tackled while doing this work.

Sociocultural Conceptions of Dissonance

A sociocultural approach to understanding identity formation more closely aligns with my own theory of dissonance. The sociocultural approach to understanding identity helps the researcher to focus on the dialogic nature of the interactions between individuals, others, groups and contexts that are constantly involved in the making and remaking of multiple identities at the same time (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007). Within this dialogic frame, the multiplicative nature of identities and identities development cannot be simplified. It is in this constant dialogue – one that provokes conflict and requires resolution towards new understanding - that the self is made over into a self-other. Socio-cultural theorists view identity formation as each individual engaged in ongoing dialogues with others, cultural and social narratives, and multiple contexts. These dialogues include changing understanding of the role of power, agency, position, culture and social structure in the construction of our identities.

Figured Worlds. Figured Worlds is a theory of identity that represents the ways in which we construct and make sense of who we are in the world in relation to others (Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, Jr., & Cain, 1998). According to this theory, “people tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are” (p. 3). A Figured World, then, is a socially and culturally constructed realm from which and to which people orient themselves as a means of reflecting their own identities. Dissonance fits well with this theory of identity. In particular, I envision that dissonance is the space before this act of being able to tell yourself who you say you are. Before this self-authoring of identity, dissonance is the process of sense-making who we are in relation to worlds we are figuring.

Narrative Dissonance. Building on this socio-cultural and narrative understanding of identity, Hammack (2008) and Sfard and Prusaks (2005) posit that examinations of individual narratives often reveal the transactional nature of identity and the search for a sense of self in the face of conflicting narratives. It is the space between master narratives, Hammack asserts, that the individual must forge an identity that lays to rest, or at least temporarily diminishes, the discordance between the multiple narratives that we a part of our everyday lives. While Hammack does not identify this spaces as *dissonance* per say, he notes, “Identity is defined as ideology cognized through the individual engagement with discourse, made manifest in a personal narrative constructed and reconstructed across the life course and scripted in and through social interaction and social practice” (p. 223). The idea of constructing and reconstructing indicates that there is a conflict that needs resolution; a dissonance in pursuit of consonance.

Whereas psychological conceptions of dissonance always point out a need to resolution, socio-cultural conceptions do not seem to indicate that it is possible to reach this state. Rather, identity is in a constant state of dissonance, though the relative volume of this dissonance may vary given context, cultural and social mores and individual interactions. This is an important distinction for my own theory of dissonance.

Vygotsky. In many ways, Vygotsky’s theories of learning and development provide a compliment to the ways in which I am theorizing dissonance. In particular, Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD provides me with a way of linking theories of dissonance with ideas of learning and development. Vygotsky’s ZPD theory was one that continued to evolve throughout his career. Vygotsky loosely defined the ZPD as a widely

defined sensitive periods when certain educational experiences could initiate learning and therefore provoke development (Del Rio & Alvarez, 2007). However, Vygotsky's conceptions of development were not linear. Rather, he posited that each particular developmental course was divergent, reflective of social and cultural mores – each course of development was dynamic and open.

According to Vygotsky, the ZPD is the space for development that is created by learning:

We propose that an essential feature of learning is that it *creates* the Zone of Proximal Development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal development processes that *are able to operate only* when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. (Vygotsky, 1978 as cited in Del Rio & Alvarez, 2007).

In addition, the ZPD and ensuing development is mediated by both internal forces (motivation, interest) and by external forces (cultural beliefs and expectations, interaction with others). It is a learning process that includes dissonance, disorientation and ultimately, sense-making. My theory of dissonance fits in the space between the learning opportunity and the sense-making that in turn provoke development.

Dissonance in Education

In bringing the idea of dissonance into the field of education, I try to marry aspects of dissonance from across these varied fields. In doing so, however, my goal is to create a tool for teachers and teacher educators – an understanding of dissonance that allows us to notice, respond to, and activate sense-making in the face of dissonance. As I noted before, this is in many ways the role of the teacher when provoking the learning that drives development within the Zone of Proximal Development. The teacher must carefully notice and track an individual's progress in learning, offer support and/or guidance, and sometimes even play the part of the antagonist,

pushing the child's lack of understanding into a space of sense-making (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995).

My theory of dissonance is defined as follows: Dissonance results from our engagement with others within social and cultural contexts. The time and timing of these personal, social and cultural interactions are also important (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). For example, an experience that may provoke dissonance in one setting, may not in another (Cazden, 1945). Or a series of events on a certain day may leave us feeling dissonant about our place in and understanding of the world (Stone, 2001; Cooper, 2007). However, those same events, in a different order and a different context may not provoke dissonance. Dissonance may result in our better understanding of ourselves, or it may take us back to a prior understandings (Erikson, 1958). Dissonance does not limit us to moving forward or backward in our conceptions of self, others and our environments. Rather, dissonance can help us consider our prior conceptions and knowledge in light of new narratives and understandings (Hammack, 2008). Dissonance is an opportunity to make sense of those parts of ourselves that live in contradiction to choices we might make or beliefs that we hold in other contexts, or when engaging with different actors (Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, Jr., & Cain, 1998).

When this theory is brought into the field of education, I see dissonance as an opportunity. An understanding of dissonance creates a space where an individual can turn these feelings of uncertainty and discordance into greater knowledge of self and therefore fuller identity. To do this, however, the individual experiencing dissonance must be able to engage in agentic acts that transform dissonance into consonance. Sometimes, however, we need other people who are knowledgeable of our daily practices to provide the supports that allow us to activate dissonance

into agency. These persons can see our ZPD, and react with learning opportunities that inform our development. Within education, this role is often filled by teachers. Skilled teachers can often tell when their students are on the edge between frustrating dissonance and ecstatic understanding. These teachers know where to apply slight pressures to activate their students' dissonance into fuel for sense-making.

This theory is still evolving. However, as I hope I have shown in this dissertation, this is the work that Wanda, her students and I engaged in over the course of our year working together. We were all going through tremendous changes – feeling out of our depths and struggling to make sense of our new roles and responsibilities. Within the classroom, we all became activators – knowingly and unknowingly – of each others' dissonance.

Chapter 6 – Discussion and Implications

In this dissertation, I strove to do three things: 1) understand how a teacher navigated and made sense of the pre-K borderland that exists somewhere between Early Childhood and Kindergarten/Elementary practice, 2) examine how a veteran teacher's identity was revised and reshaped through this sense-making work that we engaged in together, and 3) to understand the role of dissonance in bringing about changes in our identities. To do this, I asked two questions and spent ten months in the company of a skilled and committed teacher, Wanda. The two questions that I asked are:

What sense-making processes does a veteran kindergarten teacher, Wanda, engage with as she transitions to teaching pre-k?

What is my role in the story and story telling Wanda's emerging identity as a pre-K teacher?

The first question is the one that I started with, and the second is what came from my work with Wanda and the analysis of the data collected from our time together. A third question emerged as I wrote this dissertation:

How could a theory of dissonance be used to support teacher agency and identity?

Through telling the story of our year together – our year of dissonance – I aimed to answer these questions and draw attention to how identity change and formation are process-oriented experiences built around joint interaction and sense-making.

In this chapter, I summarize the major findings in relation to my research questions, discuss implications for theory and practice, and make suggestions for further study in the future.

To begin, I summarize my key findings in relation to my two research questions and my emerging theory of dissonance, Bronfenbrenner's PPCT theory and sociocultural notions of identity formation (Holland & Lachiotte, 2007). I then consider the implications of these findings for researchers, policy makers and practitioners in both pre-K classrooms and in teacher education programs. Finally, I conclude with suggestions for future research that I hope will continue to test and inform my theory of dissonance and support the work of pre-K teachers and teacher educators.

My main interest in this dissertation was to learn how a veteran teacher, with a well-established professional identity, reshaped this identity in the face of a new professional challenge. To do this, I had to consider Wanda's experiences in light of her prior professional knowledge and practice, the context of pre-K practice thru which she was experiencing new opportunities and challenges, and how exactly dissonance influenced her emerging identity.

Teacher Identity. Using identity as a theoretical lens (especially from a sociocultural perspective) for this dissertation also allowed me the opportunity to consider the role of multiple contexts, narratives, persons and interactions in the lives and work of teachers. This view of identity – as socially constructed, consisting of negotiations between narratives and figured worlds (Hammack, 2008; Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, Jr., & Cain, 1998; Holland & Lachicotte, Jr., 2007) – provides a rich lens through which I was able to better view Wanda's emerging identity as a pre-K teacher.

Similarly, using Bronfenbrenner's (1995) PPCT theory as a basis for my data analysis, I was conscious of the varied influences that played a role in both Wanda and my own identity development. The PPCT theory provides a framework for considering the processes in which we

engage when we are becoming who we are. The model foregrounds the processes through which people, processes, contexts and time engage together in the developmental process. For my analysis of the data that I collected with Wanda, this framework provided a more concrete way to consider the many influences at play in sociocultural concepts of identity. As Tudge, et al. (2009) noted, a rich understanding of the proximal processes with which individuals engage is central to gaining knowledge of their development. Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model provides a way to do this the both lends structure to and is cognizant of the messy nature of the process of identity formation. For my data analysis, having this construct for approaching the data was a useful tool that fit with my sociocultural view of identity formation.

If I had chosen an approach that focused on one aspect of identity formation – such as Wanda's interactions with peers within the 4K-PD or her practice with her pre-K students – I would not have been able to consider the multiple processes at work in Wanda's year of dissonance. Even given the varied data that I collected and analyzed, there were elements of Wanda's identity experience that I was not privy to – such as the influences of her private life beyond what she shared with me in conversation and via email. That being said, being a part of Wanda's first pre-K year gave me an opportunity to observe and participate in her emergent teacher identity and gave me an understanding of these processes that I would not otherwise have been able to access. Taking an emergent and process-oriented approach to understanding identity formation is key to reconsidering what we mean when we talk about teacher identity.

Studies of teacher professional identity point to the need for a discourse oriented space in which teachers can engage in dialogic practices to identify, discuss and deconstruct the many competing conceptions and realities (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Flores & Day, 2006). Too often,

however, this approach is focused on pre-service and early years teachers. Teacher identity formation through the span of a career, and varied professional experiences, is an area that has had less of a focus.

In part, this may be due to the fact that much identity work within the field of education is focused on the achievement of some set notion of who and what a teacher embodies (Beijaard, et al., 2000; Doyle, 1990). Less concerning is how living and working as a teacher, in a variety of roles and contexts, and with a variety of actors, come together to form a messy, fluid identity for the professional teacher (Danielewicz, 2001; Alsup, 2006).

For a veteran teacher like Wanda, locating her professional knowledge and identity within the new context of her work in pre-K, was a difficult journey. Wanda came to her emergent identity as a pre-K teacher through practice that was supported both by professional development and through our relationship with one another. As the literature indicates, veteran teachers need experiences that locate both their personal and professional biographies within a space of practice that does not deny the socially constructed nature of all of their roles (Søreide, 2006). In Wanda's case, recognizing her own rich knowledge and agency in choosing how to practice in pre-K, was a turning point in the emergence of her identity as a pre-K teacher. The 4K-PD program gave her a strong basis of knowledge from which to make pedagogical decisions, and my position within her classroom gave her someone with whom she could test these decisions. Supporting teacher identity in this way supports the agency of teachers to make choices within their practice and take up different aspects of the identities at different times and for different purposes (Manning-Morton, 2006; Sisson, 2009).

As my own choices in terms of using PPCT as an initial frame for analysis bear out, reconceptualizing teacher identity formation as a process-oriented experience has both methodological and design implications. Researchers must consider how they will gather data and position themselves within the research in order to reflect these processes. However, the rewards are also rich. Through my time with Wanda, I came to understand her practice in a way that I would not have otherwise been able to. In addition, over time, Wanda began to both trust my input and to use her own expertise to pick and choose when to seek support and when to try new approaches on her own. In this way, our relationship reflected the level of support that she needed, rather than the level of support that I assumed I should give her. Teacher educators and researchers would do well to trust the professional knowledge of teachers– to let them guide what support is given and how. In this way, teachers are both the decision-makers and the agents of their own identity formation.

Reconceptualizing Pre-K Practice. Pre-K represents a borderland between Early Childhood and Elementary approaches to education (Katz, 1995). Depending on the motivations of the district or community implementing public pre-K, the expectations for pre-K teachers can range from a curriculum focused on K readiness to one based entirely in play (Brown, McCabe & Sipple, 2011). In addition, teachers within pre-K come from diverse teaching backgrounds (Early, et al., 2006). For those teachers coming from an ECE background, a focus on developmental knowledge often underpins their approaches to curriculum (Early & Winton, 2001; File & Gullo, 2002). In contrast, those coming from Elementary teaching experiences will be more likely to be driven by content oriented goals and to experience the pressures of standardized assessments and data-driven decision-making that have come to the fore following

NCLB (Cawelti, 2006; Marx & Harris, 2006). Regardless, as the number of pre-K classrooms continues to rise, understanding how to support pre-K teachers as they negotiate this contested space is going to be increasingly important for teacher educators (Brown, 2007; 2009).

In large part, working to support pre-K teachers is going to require a reconceptualization of pre-K. Instead of thinking of the pre-K context as reflective of either ECE or Elementary approaches to curriculum, we need to consider how to best provide pre-K teachers with knowledge of best-practices, give them support to uncover the needs of their students, and watch them marry this array of knowledge into a curriculum that is unique and responsive. In Wanda's case, the transition from many years of teaching K, into a new role as a pre-K teacher, was not a smooth one. However, with sustained support through professional development and our work together in her classroom, as well as Wanda's focus and resolve to take on a new professional challenge, Wanda was able to reconsider motivations for curriculum and how to best meet the needs of her students within the pre-K context. Instead of assuming that the new to pre-K teachers would be easily able to slide into pre-K positions, the district and the 4K-PD program made a space for continued learning and support for the teachers as they took on new professional practices.

Key to supporting new to pre-K teachers as they negotiate the many narratives, expectations and motivations for curriculum, is the belief that teachers are professionals who have worked to develop pedagogical knowledge and approaches to learning. Building on their pre-existing expertise, professional development opportunities that value what veteran teachers already know, while encouraging them to consider new approaches, are key to building a core of high quality pre-K teachers. Certainly for Wanda, the moment when she began to create rich

curriculum for her students was the moment when she was able to let go of what everyone else (especially me) was telling her pre-K should be like, and was able to trust that she knew and could respond to the needs of her students better than anyone else.

Dissonance Theory in Teacher Education. As I worked to understand Wanda's transition from teaching Kindergarten to pre-K, I began to understand the dissonance that can be provoked by making sense of new roles, responsibilities, knowledge and narratives. While dissonance has been theorized in the fields of psychology (Festinger, 1957; Inhelder & Piaget, 1964; Erikson, 1968; Block, 1982; Cooper, 2011) and aesthetics (Cazden, 1945; Feldman, 1987; Weltzl-Fairchild, Dufresne-Tasse, & Dube, 1997), bringing my own conception of this theory into the field of education has presented unique challenges and opportunities.

In theorizing dissonance within education, my goal has been to create a tool for teachers and teacher educators that draws attention to the many processes at work when we are making sense of emergent identities. Using Vygotsky's idea of the Zone of Proximal Development as a key construct within this theory, I posit that, firstly, dissonance results from our engagement with others within social and cultural contexts (Del Rio & Alvarez, 2007). The role of time and the timing of personal, social and cultural interactions are also important. A series of events on a certain day may leave us feeling dissonant about our place in and understanding of the world (Erikson, 1968). However, those same events, in a different order and a different context may not provoke dissonance (Stone, 2001).

Secondly, dissonance, when identified and recognized, can result in better understandings of ourselves – including a recognition of what knowledge or understandings we are seeking and why. Recognition of dissonance can result in agency. Dissonance does not limit us to moving

forward or backward in our conceptions of self, others and our environments. Rather, dissonance can push us to consider our prior conceptions and knowledge in light of new narratives and information (Hammack, 2008). Dissonance is an opportunity to make sense of those parts of ourselves that live in contradiction to choices we might make or beliefs that we hold in other contexts, or when engaging with different actors (Cooper, 2012).

Finally, noticing can activate dissonance into agency. When we see a teacher enter a state of dissonance over their practice or assumptions about curriculum, this noticing can be followed by responsive supports. With meaningful professional support, teacher educators and researchers can activate dissonance into spaces for agency in professional identity development.

Implications for Dissonance Theory

In terms of best practices in pre-K, dissonance is particularly useful. Since pre-K is a borderland between Early Childhood and Elementary conceptions of curriculum, teachers are asked to negotiate between these very different approaches to teaching. Working between these two approaches, teachers in pre-K classrooms, as I have shown in this dissertation, are constantly negotiating. Understanding and noticing their dissonance is an important step in activating their professional agency – to make sense of contradictory narratives, expectations and ideas about best practices, approaches to curriculum and child development – with the context of their practice. However, this theory of dissonance is not limited to pre-K teachers.

For all teachers, making choices that are in contradiction to beliefs is a part of daily life. When you have a classroom full of students, as much as you might like to meet every need, you live with the certainty that you simply cannot meet every need at every moment. Somehow, as teachers, we manage to make peace with this. We work to meet as many needs as we can at any

given moment and in the best ways possible. As teacher educators, considering the needs of teachers includes knowing this about ourselves as well. When we provide professional development, support or coaching to practicing teachers, we are asking them to consider an idealized version of practice – a version that exists outside of their teaching contexts and lived experiences. We are asking them to take this knowledge and apply it within practice experiences – an act that will certainly result in some degree of dissonance. I see this resulting dissonance as an opportunity, and as the beginning of the relationship. We cannot ask teachers to consider and integrate new approaches to curriculum and instruction, and then walk away. Instead, this is the moment when we need to step forward, to watch, listen and support new and emergent understandings.

This theory is still evolving. However, I think that it has important implications for how we understand teacher education and professional development. It certainly implies that professional development should be followed with additional observation and support within practice settings. It also suggests that those offering PD experiences should know their teachers well enough to recognize and respond to the dissonance that may result from engaging with new approaches and narratives. The result will be teachers with skills that are developed from professional insight that marries new ideas about best practices with knowledge of their teaching contexts.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on my findings in this dissertation, I am particularly interested in pursuing three main strands of research. First, I would like to try to replicate my experience with Wanda in another setting. In part, my year with Wanda was an amazing alignment of many things – her

transition to teaching pre-K, my transition out of graduate school, the implementation of pre-K and the opportunities afforded to both Wanda and myself as a part of the 4K-PD program. Therefore, I would be interested to see how my theory of dissonance might apply in other contexts and in work with other teachers. This would allow me to continue developing this theory as well as consider how teacher educators and researchers can better support the professional identity development of teachers.

I also continue to be interested in the development of veteran teacher identity, particularly in Early Childhood contexts. Veteran teachers must find renewal and rejuvenation in order to be able to maintain a teaching practice that forms vibrant connections with young children. One way to do this would be to provide both continuing educational experiences that support their professional knowledge and their professional agency. Too often these days, that teachers are asked to simply implement a new curriculum, rather than make choices about how and what to teach, or to use their professional knowledge to respond to students with learning experiences as they need it. From firsthand experience, I know that this is deadening to a teacher's sense of professionalism. As a result, teacher identity can become something that is subsumed to implementation, rather than what informs choices that teachers make. As such, I would be interested to study how veteran teachers respond to the current climate in terms of their professional identities. This might also be particularly interesting in Early Childhood contexts such as pre-K and K classrooms, where the curriculum continues to shift towards a more academic focus. How are teachers grappling with these changes over the course of a long career?

The third area of study that I would be interested in pursuing is in relation to my dissonance theory and identity development of children within school settings. In particular, I am

interested in how this theory might apply or be useful in understanding the transition to school process for young children from diverse backgrounds. The theory of action of this research would be that young children who come from non-white, non-English speaking and/or low-income backgrounds do not always fit in with the middle-class nature of school, and therefore experience dissonance as they transition into the school setting. A better understanding of this dissonance, and how teachers might be sensitive to cultural differences as young children transition to school, would be very interesting to consider.

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Appendix A

1st Cycle Coding

| <i>Level</i> | <i>Code</i> | <i>Description</i> |
|--------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Top | People | Various actors that engage with Wanda in a way that appears to influence her identity |
| | Processes | Processes are those moments that can explain a connection between some aspect of the context (Fuji's Principal's support of pre-K) or some aspect of the individual (Wanda's long tenure at Fuji Elementary School) and an outcome of interest. |
| | Context | The role of context in decision-making, sense-making, practice, etc. |
| | Time/Timing | The role of Time/Timing (such as a sequence of events, when certain events happen, within early childhood "transitions" are a good example of how Time/Timing might influence processes and people). |
| | Identity | Instances when identity are asserted or foisted. |
| | Dissonance | As expressed by Wanda in regards to this past year. |
| | K to Pre-K Practice (EC vs. El) | Asserted differences between these areas of practice. |

Emergent Subcodes from 1st Cycle of Coding

| <i>Initial Code</i> | <i>Emergent Subcodes</i> | <i>Initial Code</i> | <i>Emergent Subcodes</i> |
|---------------------|---|---------------------|---|
| People | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • PIs • Kate • Children (each have own Node) • District Staff • Families • Other Teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Within PD ○ Within Fuji • Wanda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wanda About Herself | Process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creating Curriculum • Wanda/Kate Teaching IXN • Wanda/Kate Shared Concerns • Identity • Child Development • Typicality • Social Emotional Needs • Talk about Culture/Race/Ethnicity • Rules • Assessment |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play |
| <i>Initial Code</i> | <i>Emergent Subcodes</i> | <i>Initial Code</i> | <i>Emergent Subcodes</i> |
| Context | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Basis for Curriculum • School (Fuji) • Classroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explore Time ○ Small Group ○ Whole Group ○ Transitions • Playground • Home Visits • PD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Readings ○ Discussions ○ FoK ○ Basis for Curriculum | Time/ Timing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions • Change Over Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whole Group ○ Centers • Length of Time • Not Enough Time • Plan Time • Routine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Events happen out of time |
| K to Pre-K Practice (EC vs. EI) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanda Dissonance • Kate Dissonance • Doesn't Belong in pre-K • Labeling as pre-K or K/Elementary • Assessment • Weird things about 4-year-olds | Identity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cultural Identity ○ Whiteness ○ Role of Culture • Professional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Taken from K practice. ○ Novice/Expert |

Figure 1

Figure 1. From coding to Finding 1.

Figure 2

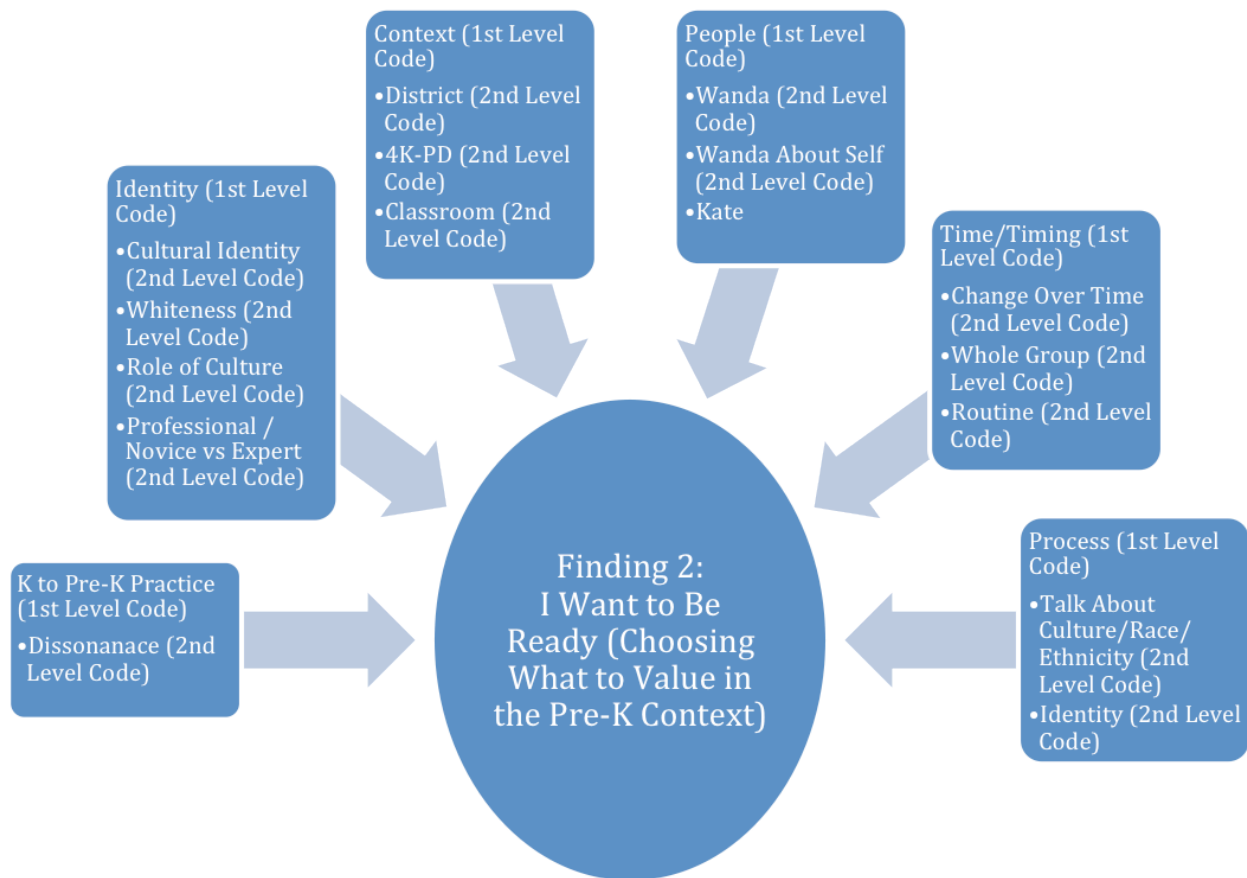


Figure 2. From coding to Finding 2.

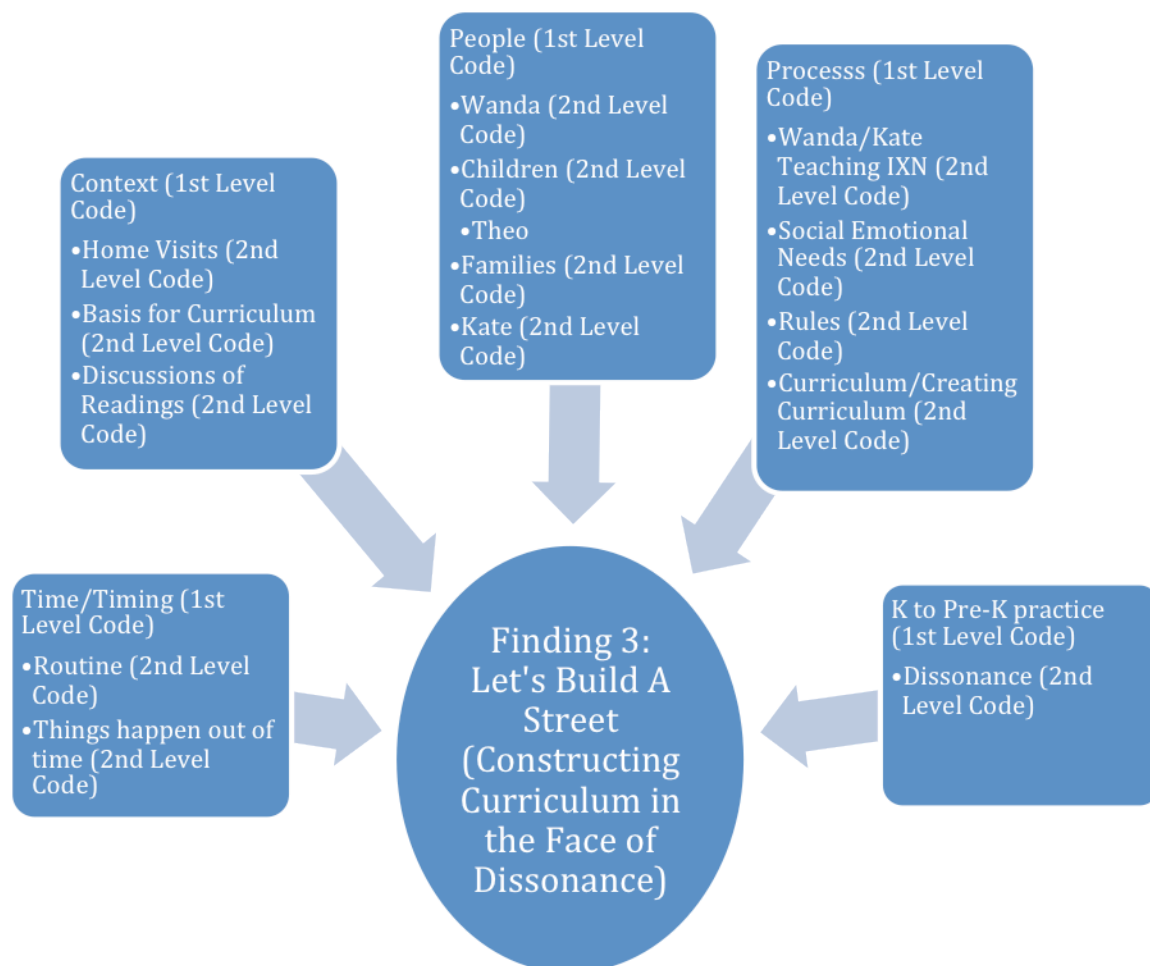
Figure 3*Figure 3. From coding to Finding 3.*

Figure 4

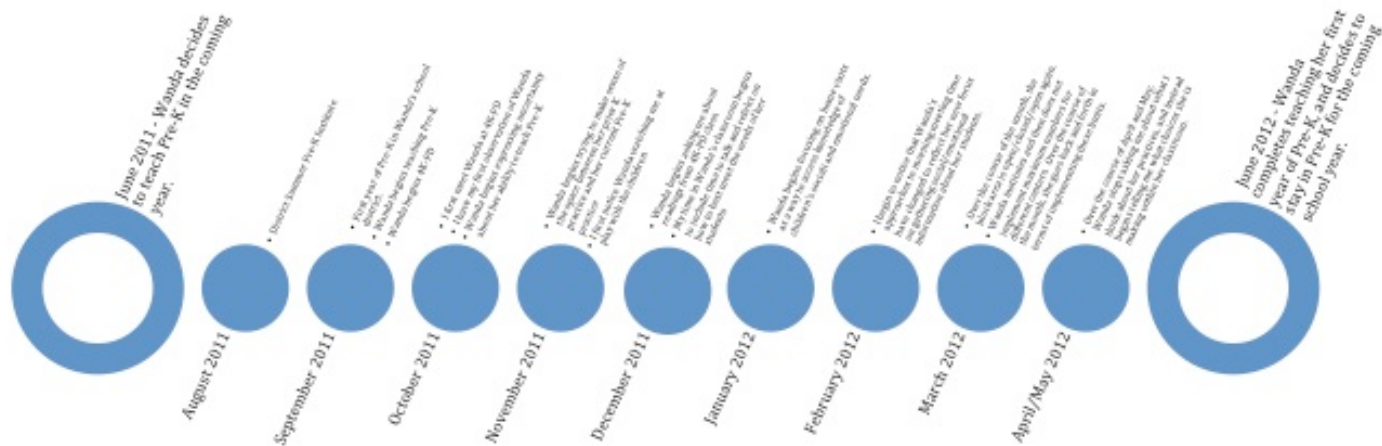


Figure 4. Timeline of pertinent events.