Identity development among pre-service teacher candidates

by

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DEDICATION

For my girls, Mia and Maci

You both make each and every day better!

I love you all the way to the moon and
back to the ground, always!
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ABSTRACT

This case study examined teacher identity development among four pre-service teacher candidates during their student teaching experience. Guided by three complementary theoretical frameworks for investigating teacher professional identities (e.g., Gee, 2000-2001; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop; 2004; Moje & Luke, 2009), the study focused on two closely related research questions: (a) What factors contribute to or hinder the identity formation of these four pre-service teacher candidates?; (b) How do their professional identities develop or evolve as revealed through the student teaching experience?

Four pre-service teacher candidates participated in this study. Participants were recruited from a large group of pre-service teacher candidates completing an undergraduate teacher education program at a small Midwestern liberal arts college. The data sources included interviews with the four teacher candidates, complementary interviews with their teacher mentors or supervisors, and case record artifacts and work samples. Grounded analysis of multiple data types was conducted to identify themes related to the two research questions.

Results demonstrated that multiple factors affected pre-service teachers’ self-identity as a teacher, and also complexities were involved in the course of identity formation during the practicum. An examination of the data obtained revealed a total of eight themes, which can be tied directly to students’ past world experiences, experiences and connections with teachers and mentors, student recognition of their own identities, student knowledge of subject matter, teaching pedagogy, teacher dispositions, classroom management, and differing tensions. Analyses of these themes highlight the various factors which contributed to these students’ identity development and the sources of influence for their developing
identities as aspiring teachers. The implications of these findings are discussed in light of theoretical frameworks as well as research examining identity development among all teachers, with particular emphasis on new and developing teachers.
CHAPTER 1 – TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

There is a general agreement that professional identity is an ongoing, dynamic process in which individuals negotiate external and internal expectations as they work to make sense of themselves and their work as educators (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop; 2004). Moje and Luke (2009) built on this definition of identity by stating that identities must also be built through social channels, constructed as multiple entities from childhood to adulthood, and be recognizable to others. Examining pre-service teacher candidates’ professional identity formation can help teacher educators determine what factors contribute to different outcomes for individual students. Research indicates that the ways teachers view themselves as professionals determine to a great extent how well they do as teachers, how long they stay in the profession, and how they feel about themselves as teachers in the classroom (Hong, 2010; Ingersoll, 2003; Mahan, 2010).

The student teaching experience has traditionally been viewed as a time when a college student enters a preK-12 classroom and turns theory he or she learned through coursework into practice. Britzman (1986) argued that pre-service teaching institutions “provide the theories, methods, and skills; schools provide the classroom, curriculum, and students; and student teacher provides the individual effort; all of which combine to produce the finished product of professional teacher” (p 442). Although pre-service teacher candidates report they are prepared to educate, research suggests that teachers lack management effectiveness in the classroom (Russell, McPherson & Martin, 2001). Russell, McPherson, & Martin (2001) discussed this phenomenon and indicated the presence of a disconnect issue between theory and practice. When pre-service teacher candidates enter an
elementary classroom, their initial experiences as a classroom leader can sometimes conflict with their previous educational experiences in both college and personal K-12 school settings. Obtaining a deeper understanding of a pre-service teacher candidate’s identity formation through this transition from college student to practicing teacher will help provide a roadmap for successful educator development. It is important to consider the complexities that arise in the teacher’s identity development. Even though a small group of teachers may have similar experiences and educational training, each member of the group forms his or her identity in different and complex ways. This complex development of identity during the student teaching semester may influence one teacher’s success and another’s failure.

The question we must ask then is, “What factors contribute to or hinder a pre-service teacher’s professional identity formation?” This study is specifically aimed at gaining an understanding of pre-service teachers’ identity formation during one student teaching placement.

**Purpose of the Study**

This case study offers a rich description of the factors and processes related to teacher identity formation situated in one placement of the student teaching semester. Data are collected through pre-service teacher candidate interviews, mentoring teacher interviews, and collection of artifacts including journals, student teaching files, and mentor/supervisor mid and final evaluations. These multiple types of data are analyzed using a general inductive approach to qualitative data analysis (Thomas, 2006). The approach is designed to help condense a multitude of raw data, establish clear links between research questions and summary of findings, and determine implications for future research. This analysis is
intended to identify thematic linkages between data and research questions, as well as gain insights into pre-service teachers’ identity formation worthy of further research.

The study’s ultimate goal is to contribute to the understanding of pre-service teacher candidate identity formation during the often intense semester when a transformation from college student to practicing teacher occurs. Pre-service teacher candidates apply what they have only theorized previously in a PK-12 classroom setting during this transition. The knowledge gained from the study will provide a foundation for future research and make relevant changes in procedures and educational opportunities for pre-service teacher candidates.

Rationale and Background for the Study

According to the National Education Association, 3.9 million teachers will be needed nationwide by the year 2014. This demand for teachers, coupled with the fact that 30-50% of new teachers leave the field of education within their first five years (Ingersoll, 2003; Quality Counts, 2000) is a daunting statistic. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2004) reports that 14% of new teachers leave by the end of their first year, 33% leave within three years, and 50% leave within five years. According to the reports, schools spend over 2.6 billion dollars annually on recruiting and managing teachers due to these high rates of teacher turnover. Subsequently, hiring and continuing staff development are huge burdens on public schools (Hong, 2010).

The influx of dissatisfied teachers has prompted education researchers to examine the teacher attrition phenomenon extensively (e.g. Mahan, 2010; McCann & Johannessen,
Hong (2010) surmised that “current studies have focused on demographic characteristics of the individual teachers such as gender, age, ethnicity, or marital status, or school characteristics such as average class size, expenditure, poverty enrollment, students demographics and minority enrollment” (pp. 1530). Research examining factors, such as gender, age, and ethnicity, contributes to the understanding of high attrition rates among teachers, but is limited in detailing the phenomenon because decision-making and career practices are “deeply intertwined” with an individual’s meaning-making process (Hong, 2010).

Bullough (1997) supports this notion by arguing that teacher education must begin by examining the teaching-self. Much of what beginning teachers believe about teaching and learning affects their meaning-making and decision making within the classroom setting. This belief strengthens the importance of studying identity as it directly relates to the relationship between teachers’ identity and their classroom decisions.

In the last few decades the importance of teachers’ professional identity has been investigated. Beijjard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) argue that identity has not been defined adequately in teacher education research and call for a more specific idea of what is meant by “identity”, “professional identity”, and “teacher identity”. Adopting Gee’s (2000-2001) conceptions of multiple identities, Beijjard et al. argue that everyone has multiple identities connected to not only their core identity but their performance in society. This definition is not limited to any individual, core identity, or social construction of identity but merges them together in multiple and complex ways.
Teachers’ identity is central to their practice and commitment to the profession (Cohen, 2010; Burn, 2007; Day, Elliot, & Kington, 2005). Research has focused specifically on teachers’ reflective practices and how their professional identity is constructed (Alsup, 2006; Burn, 2007; Marcos, Sanchez, & Tillema, 2008). Identity has a critical impact on the profession in relation to teacher commitment and educational change (Cohen, 2010; Day et al., 2005; Thomas, 2003). Moreover, research implicitly suggests that professional identity and intentions to leave the teaching profession are interrelated (Hofman, 1988; Gaziel, 1995; Schepens, Aelterman, & Vlerick, 2009).

Teachers’ views of teacher preparation programs have been examined because of the relationship between teacher commitment and identity (Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow, 2002). Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2002) study of 3,000 beginning teachers in New York City describes their perceptions of teacher preparation, sense of self-efficacy, and plans to continue teaching. The results indicate that teachers enrolled in an individual “formal” teacher preparation program felt more prepared to start teaching in their own classrooms than teachers who took a series of courses from different institutions. Even further, it was noted that teachers who entered the field after participating in alternative programs minimizing pre-service training felt more prepared than the teachers without any prior experience or training. Identity formation is a personal and individual process, but this study showed that identity formation is a social and institutional process, and thus teacher education programs can highly impact teacher identity development.

Teachers’ own perception of their professional identity is another factor. Teachers’ self-perception related to identity as a professional directly alters their development as well
as their ability to deal with a variety of situations in and out of the classroom (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000). Research conducted by Beijjard and his colleagues indicates it is beneficial to study professional identity, not only for current teachers examining their self-image as teachers, but also for pre-service teacher candidates and teacher prep programs designing orientation courses.

Following the growing interest in teachers’ professional identity, Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop’s (2004) research synthesis suggests three strands of research on teacher identity: 1) studies where the focus was on teachers’ professional identity formation, 2) studies in which the focus was on the identification of characteristics of teachers’ professional identity, and 3) studies in which professional identity was (re)presented by teachers’ stories. It is important to note that while many studies reviewed in the meta-analytic work discussed teachers’ practical knowledge, they rarely linked the relationship between teacher knowledge and teacher identity. Furthermore, the majority of the studies failed to offer theoretically sound and concise information, or only provided capricious definitions. Beijaard et al. suggest that future studies should focus on the relationship between “self” and “identity” based upon clear definitions of teacher identity and detailed accounts of professional identity formation processes.

It is important to understand factors possibly related to pivotal, reflective, and sometime intense student teaching experiences, as research literature suggests. This study examined how pre-service teacher candidates form their identity during one placement in their student teaching semester, as well as what contributes to (or hinders) this development.
Research Questions

The main purpose of this study is to examine how pre-service teachers form their professional identity during their student teaching experience. In addressing this purpose, two interrelated research questions are explored:

- How do pre-service teacher candidates form their professional identities during one placement in their student teaching experience?
- What factors contribute to or hinder pre-service teacher’s professional identity formation?

If the personnel in teacher education preparation programs acknowledge and understand how pre-service teacher candidates form their professional identities during their final semester of teacher preparation, they can create situations that allow pre-service candidates to reflect on, and analyze their identity development. Also, teacher educators and supervisors can use this information to determine which students were successful and any correlation between identity development and successful student teaching placements. By analyzing the factors that aid or hinder identify development during a student teaching placement, teacher preparation programs can work to provide more opportunities to aid in a pre-service teacher candidate’s identity development.

Research Methods

This case study focuses on four pre-service educators, concentrating on one placement during their student teaching semester. Participants are pre-service teachers at a small private college in the Midwest. Before participating in this study, participants have completed the required coursework for an elementary education and liberal arts major.
Participants also finalized additional coursework to meet reading endorsement requirements at the teacher education program. At the start of the study, each participant has passed multiple checkpoints set by the college. These checkpoints include maintaining a 2.75 GPA, faculty recommendations, multiple portfolio components, completed required coursework and approval by all education faculty members.

Data sources include pre-service teacher candidate interviews, mentoring and/or supervising teacher interviews and collected artifacts, including a philosophy of teaching, lesson plans, supervisor/mentor feedback or evaluation, and mid- and final evaluations conducted by the students mentoring teacher. The data are analyzed using a general inductive approach for qualitative data analysis (Thomas, 2006). The goal of data analysis is to identify and generate categories in response to research questions, grounded in the data. The next stage is to manipulate the categories, identifying segments that are then dispersed into different relevant categories and/or research questions or text that was not relevant to those areas. This analysis process provides appropriate quotes from the research to identify specific factors aiding or hindering identity development in pre-service teacher candidates.

Definitions of Terms

The purpose of my study was three-fold. The primary focus was on professional identity; professional identity can directly impact a teacher’s effectiveness and behaviors in a classroom setting. The study also focused on the student teaching semester during which students move from college student to practicing teacher. Finally, the study focused on identity built through social channels, constructed in multiple ways from childhood to
adulthood and recognizable to others (Moje & Luke, 2009). This section of the report highlights only terms associated with the three themes and corresponding explanations.

**Professional Identity**

The concept of identity proposed by Gee (2000-2001) is an informed understanding of pre-service teachers’ professional identity. According to Gee, the term referred to an ongoing, dynamic process situated in an unending continuum. Gee (2000-2001) argued that all people have multiple identities connected not only to the kind of person they are, but also by how society perceives them. From this perspective, professional identity can be defined by how a teacher identifies him or herself in the field of teaching. Beijaard et al. (2004) suggested four features critical for teachers’ professional identity: “1) professional identity is an ongoing process of interpretation and re-interpretation, 2) professional identity implies both person and context, 3) A teachers’ professional identity consists of sub-identities that more or less harmonize, and 4) agency is an important element of professional identity meaning that teachers have to be active in the process of professional identity.” (p. 122). These four factors aid teachers at all levels of experience.

**Mentor Teacher**

Mentor teachers assist pre-service teacher candidates by providing their classroom as a “practice” room with constant supervision and encouragement. Mentor teachers are K-12 educators who have met basic criteria and provide pre-service teacher candidates with feedback, advice, and structure for the weeks they are together. The criteria for pre-service teacher candidate mentors are shared with the district administrator and the selected mentor
teacher. The full mentor letter is given to each mentor prior to student teaching experiences, and an excerpt follows:

“As a reminder, you were selected on the basis of meeting the following criteria:

1) Valid Iowa teacher license for the grade level and endorsement areas;
2) Minimum of three years of successful, full time teaching;
3) Identified by your district or school administrator as a master teacher and
4) Ability to provide support and guidance in a manner that is consistent with the SUN College Teacher Education Program’s philosophy and goals.”

(College Handbook, 2011, p. 13)

**Student Teaching**

Student teaching is an experience required of students pursuing a teaching license who have completed all academic coursework required by the student’s higher education institution. Student teaching occurs in the final semester of teacher preparation. A student seeking a K-6 license is placed in an appropriate elementary classroom for at least fifteen weeks. The participants in this study were also required to attend a seminar during their student teaching semester, which met once per week for two hours. This allowed the students to debrief, tour the Area Education Agencies in Iowa (this is a statewide agency that provides material and support to both parents and teachers), fill out necessary paperwork, as well as any other topics the professor found helpful.

Student teaching is an essential part of the teacher education program, and is considered the transitional point from student to teacher. This is when students turn theory they have learned into practice in an actual elementary school setting. Often pre-service
teacher candidates feel tension during this semester, drawing from what they have been taught in college, what they have experienced in their prior years of education, and what they experience in a K-12 classroom. They must work with/through this tension so they can analyze their own professional identity.

**Contributions to the Field**

Identity development in pre-service teacher candidates is fundamental to the future of teaching in today’s educational climate. This crucial development process must continue throughout all pre-service education. This study will show what factors aid or hinder this development during the student teaching semester, as well as how pre-service teacher candidates’ identity is developed.

The present study examined teacher identity development among four preservice teacher candidates during their pre-service teacher candidate experience in a small Midwestern liberal arts college. The purpose of the study was to identify factors that contribute to or hinder identity development, as well as how their professional identity developed or evolved as revealed through the student teaching experience. The knowledge from this study provides a foundation for future research and makes suggestions for relevant changes in procedures and educational opportunities for pre-service teacher candidates.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study had several limitations. One limitation was the community where the study took place—a small private school with little to no diversity among college students or faculty and limited opportunity for an urban teaching experience. One requirement for the college’s education department is that each student completes one practicum in an urban
setting and one in a rural. For some students, this is their only opportunity to experience a diversified teaching environment or urban-setting classroom. This created a possible limitation to the study because the students were, for the most part, student teaching in classrooms similar those they attended in their community.

The second limitation was that student teaching is only one element of the teacher preparation process. However, the student teaching semester was chosen as the focus because students and faculty perceive it as a time of astronomical growth. College professors strive to help students form identity throughout preservice educational experiences. However, spending eight hours a day in a preK-12 classroom is an entirely different experience than spending an equal amount of time in a college classroom. This study, while only focusing on one semester, did not diminish the significance of studying identity from the freshman year on, perhaps into their first few years of teaching.

Finally, but equally restrictive, were gender limitations. Even in a large university, the male population of preservice elementary teachers is typically small. Thus, the numbers of potential male participants was very low, especially at the small college where the study took place. When the study was conducted, there were only three male students in their final semester of study. To find participants fitting within specific criteria (male/female, traditional/nontraditional), requesting participation was the only plausible choice.
CHAPTER 2 – TEACHER IDENTITY FORMATION: THEORETICAL AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Identity is a complex and multi-faceted construct. It refers to a person’s individuality, uniqueness, or personal characteristics setting her or him apart from others, and can involve interpersonal communication patterns. Also, identify is a social construct. It is linked to teacher development and success in important ways: identity labels can be used to stereotype, privilege, or marginalize students, teachers, and other professionals as effective or ineffective, proficient or non-proficient, or successful or unsuccessful. The complexity in defining the term identity requires careful examinations of the impact of identity on teacher development, retention, and overall effectiveness.

Teacher identity research is informed by various theoretical and research paradigms. It indicates that ways teachers view themselves as professionals determine to a great extent how successful they are as teachers, how long they stay in the profession, and how they feel about themselves as teachers within their classroom and school environments. However, while insights gained from existing research are valuable in understanding how, in general, practicing teachers form their identities, it is yet unclear how pre-service and beginning teachers form their identities, and what factors contribute to or hinder their identity development, especially when they transition from completing higher education teacher preparation coursework to engaging in full-time teaching in a “real-world” classroom.

This chapter will provide relevant theoretical and research background for studying teacher identity and its development by first offering an operational definition of teacher identity gleaned from three leading perspectives that provide competing yet complementary
lenses through which to examine identity formation among preservice teachers. Second, this chapter will include key research studies supporting or informing the three teacher identity development theoretical perspectives, while also focusing on studies identifying the student teaching semester as a pivotal development semester for pre-service teachers. Finally, a review of common approaches for studying teacher identity and its development, with an emphasis on identity development among pre-service teachers during their student teaching experience, will be presented. This review provides necessary background to help guide the study’s framework and answer the key research questions focused on (a) examining how pre-service teachers form their identities during their semester-long student teaching experience and (b) identifying the factors that may contribute to or hinder identity development among these beginning teacher candidates.

**Perspectives**

The concept of identity implies different meanings, leaving readers with vague and distant ideas about this growing topic in education—as reported by Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) in their comprehensive review of the research literature focused on teachers’ professional identity. Their overview indicated that the construct of teacher identity is defined in various ways depending on different theoretical traditions. These views and definitions often highlight different aspects of teacher identity as demonstrated by key research projects in this area of study. Accordingly, three complementary perspectives offered by Gee (1996, 2000-2001), Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2000), and Moje and Luke (2009) are considered, providing an opportunity to build operational definitions of
teacher identity and the identification of theoretical lenses for studying teacher identity formation.

**Who a Teacher Is: The Gee Framework**

In his influential book “Social linguistics and literacies: ideology in discourses,” (Gee, 1996) and later in his article titled: “Identity as an analytic lens for research in education,” (Gee, 2000-2001), Gee provided a framework often used as an analytic lens for studying identity in various situations. Gee defined identity in relation to what kind of person one is by considering four key components including nature, institution, discourse, and affinity group membership or affiliation. He argued that in “today’s fast changing and interconnected global world, research in a variety of areas have come to see identity as an important analytic tool for understanding school and society” (Gee, 2001-2001, p. 99). The dynamic approach implied in Gee’s notion of identity requires intensive focus on how people recognize their identities, the power structures that shape them, and how these identities affect their self, pedagogy, and dispositions. Gee (2000-2001) created an analytic tool for studying important identity issues from both theoretical and practical standpoints in education. In an occupation where *who a person is* remains so tightly interwoven with how one acts as a professional, both sides cannot be separated. This means that who we are and what we do complement each other in a way that one cannot happen without the other. Loughran (2007) argued that it “seems unlikely that the core of the personal will not impact the core of the professional” (p. 112). Therefore, who a teacher is and what a teacher does will always be closely intertwined.
Gee (2000-2001) viewed identity as being recognized as a certain “kind of person” (p. 99). He described four types of identities that may coexist, woven through an individual person and single event. The four identity categories or characteristics he described include Nature-Identity, Institution-Identity, Discourse-Identity, and Affinity-Identity (see Table 1)—these characteristics must be recognizable to others and are interrelated in complex and interesting ways. According to Gee, all people have “multiple identities connected not only to their ‘internal states’ but to their performances in society” (p. 99).

Table 1

**Identity as an Analytic Lens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Identity</th>
<th>Process of Construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature-Identity</td>
<td>Identity that contributes to biological factors. Characteristics that are ‘natural’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution-Identity</td>
<td>Positions an institution poses on an individual; both positive and negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse-Identity</td>
<td>How people see individual traits, achievements, and/or attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affinity-Identity</td>
<td>Groups with whom one shares a common interest or experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The first identity category Gee described in his framework was Nature-Identity (N-Identity). Within this identity, people are situated in the “nature of a person”. To be short, tall, obese, white, black, blue-eyed, intellectually bright represents the N-Identity of a person. Bullough (2005) added to Gee’s paradigm stating that a person’s identity must be recognizable by others, and the N-Identity is developed by how it is recognized. Gee argued
that other “ways” of knowing identity enter through institutions and affinity groups to shape and re-shape the N-Identity of a person.

The second category of identity is Institutional-Identities (I-Identity). These identities focus on the positions or roles fulfilled by a person. However, this role rests within the confines of a position or role. For example, teachers accept their I-Identity as educators and accept their roles and responsibilities in accordance with what it means to be a teacher; however, these responsibilities are sustained formally by state and federal control, district mandates, school board and parent estimations, as well as colleges and universities. Gee cited prisoners as pushing against their institutional-identity (I-Identity) because they might see that position imposed upon them.

Third, Discourse-Identity (or D-Identity) is related to achievement or an ascription that a person can work to achieve. The central idea of D-Identities is that they are recognizable by others. Whether a person is considered a caring, hard-headed, silly, funny, or charismatic person, these traits must be recognizable in others. Gee argues that D-Identities are represented on a continuum where a person can actively prescribe to the trait, or passively be a contributor. Additionally, these traits can be actively pursued differently depending on the group one is associating with at the current time. Teachers may want to be perceived as a certain kind of person to administrators and another to colleagues or children. Characteristics of a person are not natural traits, but ones that must be nurtured. Bullough (2005) notes that the outward recognition of a person’s D-Identity may affect what traits they represent in the future. He suggests that people respond in accordance to suggestions of a person’s D-Identity. For example, if someone recognizes a person’s D-Identity as a nasty
disposition, others will consider that person someone to avoid. If a person’s D-Identity is recognized as a comforting person, others will flock to that person when they are in need of comfort.

Gee labels the fourth and final type of identity as the Affinity-Identity (A-Identity). An affinity group consists of people with a common theme and possibility widely spread. This identity provides a sense of belonging and allegiances, and it focuses “on distinctive social practices that create and sustain group affiliations, rather than on institutions or discourse/dialogue directly” (Gee, 2000-2001, p. 105). Bullough (2005) suggests that within this “way of knowing” identities interact. For instance, if teachers identify an A-Identity with their teaching team at a new school, but they do not share similar philosophies, discourses, and/or pedagogical traits, their identities may become “inextricably knotted together” (p. 147).

Using Gee’s four identity types as a framework in this study, helps to understand the complexities of how each participant viewed their own identity. Using this information helped to analyze what it means to be a “certain type of person” (p. 100). What stands as increased interest is understanding the differences among each of the identify types and how each of the four interact with what a teacher does in their own classroom.

**What a Teacher Does: The Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt Framework**

Beijjard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) maintained that the construct of identity was not defined adequately in teacher education research and called for a more consistent conception of what is meant by identity, professional identity, and teacher identity.
However, they argued that while views of identity may differ, researchers concurred that the construct of teacher identity was an ongoing integration process of the personal and professional sides of becoming and being a teacher (Beijaard, et al., 2000). However, unlike the Gee framework in which teacher identity is defined as *who the teacher is*, Beijaard et al., (2000) described identity in terms of the factors influencing *what a teacher does* by asking teachers to allocate their expertise across three areas: content, pedagogy, and didactics. Teachers were able to devise their professional identity on how they saw themselves regarding to these three areas, namely content knowledge, pedagogical decisions, and didactical experiences.

Beijjard et al. (2000) emphasize the significant role that teacher subject matter or *content knowledge* plays in determining teacher effectiveness. Content knowledge can be defined as the extent a teacher understands their own subject area. Beijjard and his colleagues argue that teacher subject matter knowledge had been neglected in research efforts examining teacher identity, in part because of the focus on related areas such as classroom management. When studying the role of teacher identity development and success, they maintain that teacher subject matter knowledge be included in the study of teacher identity development and its role in teacher effectiveness.

Beijjard et al. (2000) placed emphasis on teachers’ *pedagogical knowledge*, a second key component in teacher identity development. They defined a pedagogical expert as someone with good balance between his or her pedagogical side as well as didactical side. Someone considered a pedagogical expert showed an awareness of their students’ needs, the funds of knowledge they bring to class, the personal problems or issues students may have,
as well as an overall awareness of broader societal issues and challenges affecting learning and teaching. The importance of teachers’ pedagogical skill is consistent with a preponderance of prior research related to the role of knowledge (content and pedagogical) on teachers’ practices and student achievement (e.g., Shulman, 1987).

A third significant aspect of the Beijjard et al. (2000) framework pertains to teachers’ reflection on their didactical experiences. The framework maintains that reflected decisions teachers make in the classroom in terms of what works and what does not work were critical in advancing not only their content knowledge but also their pedagogical skills. Teacher reflection had a number of documented benefits including an enhancement of teacher practices, which can often be linked directly to students’ academic achievement. Indeed, teacher reflection has been shown to play a pivotal role in teacher development (Alsup, 2006; Marcos, Sanchex & Tillema, 2008; Schon, 1983). While reflection has been commonly deemed a personal endeavor, some educators view the importance of reflection as a professional practice and a shared experience among teachers (Cohen, 2010). This position aligns closely with Gee’s notion that identity is identifiable and requires the participation of others (Gee, 2000-2001).

Beijjard et al. (2000) further argue that teachers’ professional identity perception affects their efficacy, professional development, and willingness to change and adapt new innovative ideas. In their work with experienced secondary teachers, they found participants had a tendency to see themselves as more subject matter and didactical experts and having less expertise with pedagogy. In a more recent study, Beijjard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) expands on the above ideas stating that “professional identity is not something teachers
have, but something they use in order to make sense of themselves” (pp.123). They further proposed four features they consider essential for teacher professional identity development. First, they maintained that teacher professional identity is an ongoing process. Indeed researchers and practitioners generally agree that identity formation is constantly evolving and shaping, not only during student teaching, but by previous schooling experiences, and will continue to change with additional teaching experience. Hong (2010) suggests there are clear connections between identifiable characteristics and the developing process a teacher may make throughout their career. Teaching generally takes place within professional learning communities, which promote teacher collaboration and continuous professional development and growth. As well, beginning and pre-service teachers come into the profession with tentative ideas about what a “teacher” should do and be prior to any professional preparation.

Second, Beijjard et al. (2004) argue that teacher professional identity consists of sub-entities. They note that these sub-identities harmonize together and may or may not be a central core identity. When there are conflicts among these identities, tension may arise. This tension may cause sub-identities to lack the balance essential for many pre-service teacher candidates.

Third, teacher professional identity involves agency. In this case, agency is defined by the teacher’s need to be an active participant in their professional development. They maintained that “professional identity is not something teachers have, but something they use in order to make sense of themselves” (pp.123). Other researchers (e.g., Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007) agree that agency is “a way of positioning oneself so as to allow for new
ways of being, new identities” (p.5). Given this conception of agency, teachers are able to refine or enhance their professional identities through decision-making, adaptation to change, and continued professional learning throughout their careers.

Finally, Beijjard et al. (2004) states that a teacher’s professional identity implies both person and context. Practicing teachers engage in continuous negotiation between the contexts in which they work and their own teaching philosophies, styles and preferences. Adapting and learning to work within this “teaching culture” is a part of becoming who a teacher is in their career, and this process starts as a person’s identity begins in the early stages of their teaching career and continues developing throughout their professional lives. Even beginning teachers do not simply adopt the building culture. While they may differ in how they initially fit in within their school cultures, they often have their own ways of dealing with the relationship between their person and the context of pre-service teaching.

The Beijard framework adds many elements to what typical teachers do in their classrooms. Using this research as a contributing framework in the present study helps considerably in identifying which data elements were consistent, clear, and focused upon during the student teaching semester. This framework also makes it possible to align which factors occurred in a pedagogical, content, and/or didactical capacity, and if those specific instances aid or hinder identity development during a pre-service teacher candidate’s student teaching semester

**Identity and Literacy: The Moje and Luke Framework**
Moje and Luke (2009) examine teacher identity within the context of literacy research and instruction. Consistent with other educators, they view identity as a complex theoretical and multifaceted construct. They also see literacy and identity as interdependent, while still arguing that one influences the other in unique ways. They further maintain that the relationship between literacy and identity is not sufficiently well understood and that such a relationship should be subjected to further study and theorizing.

Moje and Luke’s (2009) framework is informed by their recent comprehensive literature review to determine how particular views of identity shape the way in which researchers think about literacy and, conversely, how the view of literacy taken by researchers shape understandings made of identity. In developing a framework for examining the construct of identity and its relationship to literacy, they focus on five identity conceptions acknowledged in the literature. These conceptualizations include (a) identity as difference, (b) identity as sense of self/subjectivity, (c) identity as mind or consciousness, (d) identity as narrative, and (e) identity as position. When reviewing the literature they continually came back to their central question: What role does literacy play in this work or what role do identities play in literate practice?

Moje and Luke (2009) focusing on those five conceptions of identity and shared three assumptions about literacy and identity in their work, which are shared by other theorists and researchers including, but not limited to, Gee (1996; 2000-2001) and Bejjard et al. (2000; 2004). These assumptions contend that (a) identity is built through social channels as opposed to being individually constructed, (b) identity is no longer constructed as one single entity that begins at childhood and completed at adulthood, and (c) as a construct
identity, is recognizable by others. In fact, these ideas were consistent with prior research going back to Vygotsky (1978) who discussed scenarios for the development of an individual as he/she interacts with society, and as a consequence of these interactions forms opinions and beliefs about the world and him/herself. Whatever word is used: identity, self, character, etc., or whatever beliefs define identity: possessions, inner strength, beliefs, morals, they are not constructed individually but through social interaction. Clark (2008) extended social identity thinking to the shaping of identity in regards to power relations that operate, as well as the discourse an individual encounters, within these social groups.

While developing a framework for examining identity and literacy, Moje and Luke (2009) uncovered two important findings, providing motivation for the study of identity development among beginning and pre-service teachers. First, they found that only a small number of literacy studies have acknowledged a broad range of perspectives on, and views for conceptualizing identity. Second, they found these identity conceptualizations have subtle differences in identity theories, which in turn have widely different implications for ways in which literacy and identity matter to each other. These two findings led them to encourage more research and theorizing of both literacy and identity as social practices, and how they aid each other. From this theorizing they proposed key assumptions related to this study topic.

The subtle differences encountered by Moje and Luke (2009) pertain to each of the three key assumptions outlined above, namely whether (a) identity is built through social channels as opposed to being individually constructed, (b) identity is no longer constructed
as one single entity that begins at childhood and is complete at adulthood, and (c) as a construct identity, is recognized by others.

With respect to the first assumption, Moje and Luke (2009) found that what “social” means depends on the theoretical positions held. For instance, seeing identity as social could be based on a theory that links identity to what Moje and Luke refer to as sustained social group memberships such as those marked by race, social class, or other group affiliations. With respect to literacy, students may be associated with groups that have identities of good or average readers. A second view of identity as social might be that certain individuals are associated with stories told about or within past social interactions. For instance, a student who recounts a story about his history as a poor reader might be perceived as belonging to a group of poor readers. Yet a third view of identity as socially mediated or constructed may be less dependent on how people see or associate themselves with it, but on how other people see or perceive them based on what they think they know about them. For instance, a reader might be perceived by a teacher as a resistant reader based on his unwillingness to read teacher assigned school-related materials, when in fact he might react in a completely different way when reading self-selected readings for recreational purposes.

The second assumption noted was that no longer is identity constructed as one single entity that begins through childhood and is complete at adulthood. Currently, identities are often used to discuss the process of a person’s identity development through many channels and developmental levels (Moje & Luke, 2009). Many different perspectives strengthen and narrow this thinking throughout research. Some feel that identity can shift within the moment and is dependent on the interaction the person is having at that time. Others see
identity as a fluid movement through relationships or context, but retain interaction pieces shaping how one will act. Gee (2000-2001) described a “core identity” as having many dimensions over time influenced by the society’s complexities and the roles within.

The third and final assumption was that identity is recognizable by others. In other words, a person is assigned a particular identity based on how others recognize or see him or her. For instance, if a person is aware that he or she is perceived by others as a good reader, then he or she is likely to think of him or herself as belonging to a category of good readers. This assumption is consistent with the notion, also developed by Gee (2000-2001), in which identities are not inherent in individuals but are only brought into being when recognized within a relationship or social context. Clearly these assumptions about identity have important implications for the type of identities they assume, and how these identities impact their learning and growth as professional educators.

In understanding how a pre-service teacher candidate develops his or her identity during a student teaching semester, as well as what factors aid or hinder this development, using a framework addressing only who a teacher is and what a teacher does excluded some elements of identity development. By infusing Moje & Luke’s (2009) framework, this study also analyzed the outside factors that can enhance or deter identity development. While this framework focused on literacy and identity there are two connecting points. First, all teachers are literacy teachers and therefore this framework is appropriate in any teaching situation. Second, while the focus is literacy, supporting ideas flow elegantly with the other frameworks, filling the gaps caused when merging the two previous frameworks.

**Theoretical Frameworks Informing Teacher Identity Development**
The three frameworks listed in the previous sections offer complementary perspectives, operational definitions, and lenses for studying teacher identity formation. Since teaching is a profession where “who one is as a person is so much interwoven with how one acts as a professional, both sides cannot be separated” (Lamote & Engels, 2010). It is unlikely that the core of the person does not impact the core of the professional. While Gee (2000-2001) may not specifically describe pre-service teacher candidates in this lens of identity, his analysis of the kind of person one is directly impact the kind of professional he or she is as well. The framework that drives this particular research study is a combination of all three described frameworks.

Figure 1 illustrates an integrative framework that will drive this study to investigate research questions focusing on how pre-service teacher candidates develop their identity during one placement of their student teaching semester as well as factors that aid or hinder their identity development.
Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework’s foundation is *who a teacher is* and *what a teacher does*; both impact identity in unique and connected ways. While these two aspects are pivotal points there are outside mitigating circumstances impacting the development of these two ideas: (a) identity is an on-going process, (b) teachers have multiple identities, (c) identity is recognizable to others, and (d) identity is created through social channels. This research strives to satisfy two purposes by embedding the above framework: (1) to examine how pre-service teachers form their identities during their semester-long student teaching experience, and (2) to identify factors that may contribute to or hinder identity development among beginning teacher candidates.

To address the first purpose, the framework was used to make sense of the data and explicitly identify different ways pre-service teacher candidates form their identity through a variety of ideas and experiences. The process involved looking at the smaller pieces of the whole and asking how the pre-service teacher candidates viewed the on-going process of identity development, and how they manipulate who they are as a teacher with what they do in the real life professional experience of student teaching. By using this framework as a centerpiece, the study also attempted to address the second purpose by examining factors that push identity development in either a negative or positive way as viewed by the pre-service teacher candidate. This helped create an understanding of where the factors or experiences happened and how the pre-service teacher candidate manipulated these events during the student teaching semester.
The following sections of this chapter will review the literature previously conducted on identity development and student teaching. This literature will strengthen the theoretical framework proposed for this study and help provide clarity to the structure and methodology framing the research questions.

**The Role of Professional Development in Teacher Identity Formation**

While conceptions of teacher identity vary depending on theoretical views and perspectives, researchers agree that identity formation and teacher development are associated in important ways. Bullough (1997) expressed this sentiment as follows:

> Teacher identity—what beginning teachers believe about teaching and learning and self-as-a-teacher—is of vital concern to teacher education; it is the basis for meaning making and decision making… Teacher education must begin, then, by exploring the teaching self. (p.21)

Teacher identity formation is important in influencing teachers’ decision-making, professional lives, motivation, satisfaction, commitment, and career decisions. When considering the increasing teacher attrition rates in the Unites States (an estimated 30-50% of new teachers leave the field within their first five years, Ingersoll, 2003; Quality Counts, 2000), it is easy to understand the critical role teacher identity plays in recruitment, preparation, and retention of the teaching workforce, as well as the need to study teacher identity and the factors that contribute to its successful and less successful development.

An examination of the research literature about teacher identity indicates that teachers’ perceptions of their own identities as professional educators have been shown to
influence their development as well as their ability to deal with situations in and outside of their classroom and school environments (Beijaard et al., 2000). “Teachers’ talk about and experience of professional identity are central to the beliefs, values, and practices that guide their engagement, commitment, and actions in and out of the classroom” (Cohen, 2010, pp.473). Indeed, knowledge of teachers’ professional identity perceptions may help them cope with educational challenges and changes (Beijaard, et. al, 2000). Recognizing and addressing these perceptions may also help teacher education professionals, classroom teachers, and school administrators accommodate and attend to career-related tensions. Moore and Hoffman (1988) found that a teacher’s self-perception of their professional identity, if seen in a positive light, can override dissatisfaction with poor working conditions.

Flores and Day (2006) cited research that implies tension in the first few years of teaching as professionals work to make a place for themselves in the education world. Experiences vary, but some pre-service teacher candidates feel isolated, a disconnect between what they were doing in college and classroom expectations, and lack of support to name a few of the traits (Flores, 2001, Huberman, 1989). In this study, Flores and Day (2006) followed 14 new teachers, mostly situated in an elementary setting for two years as their professional identities were shaped and reshaped. Their findings indicated that personally situated identities were strongly integrated at the beginning of their careers, but seemed to destabilize as they progressed through the study. The climate of each school structure caused the teachers to be less creative and more routine as time passed. Flores and Day ascertained that workplace influence (positive or negative–perceptions of school culture
and leadership) played a key role in (re)shaping teachers’ understanding of teaching, in facilitating or hindering their professional learning and development, and in (re)constructing their professional identities.

Societal perceptions about teacher identity have also been shown to have a negative impact on decisions to enter the teaching profession. DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) examined the attitudes and perceptions of male teachers choosing to enter elementary education even though the social attitudes relate this occupation to mostly female teachers. Their argument was that if more men entered the field of teaching, especially in elementary education, schools could provide a more well-rounded education for many children. They discovered that the decision to enter a predominantly female-driven field corresponded with the amount of direct contact with, and nurturing children. Foster and Newman (2005) studied a group of male pre-service teachers for four years. They uncovered widespread stereotypes surrounding men in education. Men are often perceived as doing certain kinds of jobs such as handyman or sportsman, and are sometimes associated with certain negative social roles such as sexual predators, precocious careerists, potential child abusers, staff room sex symbols, discipline men, father figures, and the like. Foster and Newman followed four male teachers who had expressed interest in exploring these perceptions in more depth. They found these men had “bruised identities” in large part due to preconceived notions about male teachers often held by the public and often found in print and visual media. These preconceptions perceptions have a damaging effect on teacher identity and reinforce the prevailing view that teaching is a woman’s occupation. More importantly, they are likely to shape male teachers’ identity formation even before entering the teaching profession.
In one study, Hong (2010) identified six psychological factors that impact teacher career paths. These factors include self-efficacy, commitment, emotions, value, knowledge and beliefs, and micro politics. Hong maintained that pre-service teachers have a naïve and idealistic perspective on teaching and that emotional burnout is the leading factor for dropout. Allowing pre-service teachers to leave their professional training with their idealistic perspectives does not help prepare them for their future classrooms. She suggested that teacher preparation programs must challenge pre-service teachers' pre-existing beliefs about teaching by providing activities that help teachers reflect on beliefs that cause tension in their professional lives.

In a related study, Van Veen, Sleegers, and van de Ven (2005) examined teacher emotions and their connection to identity and how that, in turn impacts teacher decisions to embrace or reject educational reform. The emotions analyzed ranged from happiness/enthusiasm to guilt/shame and anxiety/anger. The social-psychological approach used to analyze emotions allowed them to look in-depth at the concerns teachers have when faced with the context of reforms and how their personal and professional identities are affected. They found that emotions play a key role in understanding commitment to change, quality of teaching, as well as identity.

McDougall (2010) focused her research on not only literacy and identity, but how teachers cope with changing views of identity and their professional growth. Adapting to change in education reform has been linked to professional identity in numerous studies (Day, 2002; van Veen & Sleegers, 2005). By using Gee’s discursive notion of identity, McDougall analyzed primary teachers’ comfort with the changing views of literacy. Her
findings categorized teachers in three different categories: traditionalism, survival, and futures. Traditionalism-oriented teachers felt their responsibility was to teach basic numeracy and literacy and were reluctant to accept any new curriculum alterations. Survival-oriented teachers’ acknowledged that literacy is changing and while it is important to embrace, they vocalize insecurities with this new, advanced idea. Future-oriented teachers embraced change and were enthusiastic about learning a new way of thinking. While none of these categories specifically referred to changes in literacy, future-oriented teachers implied their willingness and acceptance to change. This study highlights the changing responsibilities of primary teachers and the ease or discomfort they feel approaching these changes. The teachers who appeared to be more adaptable had already begun altering their identities to accommodate new, rapidly approaching literacies.

In addition to exploring the role of teacher identity in teacher learning and development, researchers have also explored best times for, as well as approaches for, fostering identity development among beginning teachers. For instance, Bullough (2005) suggested that teacher identity can and should be analyzed prior to, and during the student teaching experience. Bullough proposed using trained teacher mentors to help pre-service teachers grapple with identity formation and recognition issues. The role of teacher mentors is prescribed by organizations like the National Council for the Accreditation of Institutions of Teacher Education (NCATE). Teacher mentors are practicing teachers who allow a student-teacher to enter their classroom for a designated period. The mentor teacher has several responsibilities they must fulfill to successfully carry out this role.
Alternatively, Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry (2004) proposed a “sink-or-swim” approach by placing students in situations that provoke tension and challenge their identities. They argue this allows for self-exploration, growth and a shifting of their own identities. Others in the field have argued that we should allow pre-service teacher candidates to discover their “teaching selves” (Freese, 2006; p. 100) through reflective practice. An example of such a study, conducted by Gaudelli & Ousley (2009), targeted the student teaching semester and identity exploration of ten pre-service teacher candidates. The study was conducted in a large state school where the faculty had no regular contact with their pre-service teacher candidates. When they did have contact, faculty members stated they were often displeased with what they observed. Many of the teaching philosophies they presented in coursework had altered to more teacher-centered lessons taken from teaching kits as well as heavy-handed classroom management. The researchers’ goal, at a minimum, was to have contact with their pre-service teacher candidates. To accomplish this, they began a seminar class that allowed pre-service teacher candidates to meet weekly as a group during their student teaching semester. The categories reflected in their study focused on conflicts and perceptions/realities that pre-service teacher candidates encountered. Their findings indicated that pre-service teacher candidates needed the seminar to reflect and compare notes with other teachers, that beginning teachers navigate their identity differently due in large part to personality differences, and that the pre-service teacher candidates appreciated the opportunity to hear about others’ experiences.

**Approaches to the Study of Teacher Identity**
Both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been used to study various issues and questions pertaining to teacher identity formation. A common approach to examining how teachers view themselves and how they develop identities as professional educators is through survey methodology. For instance, Bejjard et al. (2004) developed a survey specifically designed to tap secondary teachers’ perceptions of their identities. The survey consisted of four parts. In the first section, the survey focused on general questions about the background of the subjects. In the second part of the survey, the participants were asked to award 100 points to three specific identity aspects representing their professional views of themselves (for example, 50 points to didactical expertise, 10 points to subject matter expertise, and 40 points to pedagogical expertise). In this section, the participants were asked to score their professional identity based on their current placement as well as their thoughts from their professional identity as beginning teachers. The participants were also asked to clarify why they ranked each of the three identity aspects the way they did. The third part of the survey was designed to compare the teachers’ subjective perceptions with their scores in relationship to more objective items. One example Beijard and his colleagues give for this section is questioning, “The subject I studied determined my decision to become a teacher” (p. 754). The final section of the questionnaire focused on influencing factors represented in the second section. Ranging on a four-point scale, the participants ranked the extent they agreed with different theoretical pieces of education. However, surveys are limited in that they only tap teachers’ perceptions of what they think they do to form identities and what factors impact such development.
In light of the complexities involved in studying teacher identity formation and development, researchers have also used qualitative approaches including teacher focus groups, interviews, and observations of teachers in practice, with the goal of constructing portraits of how teacher identities evolve and develop over time. For instance, during the past two decades, researchers have used narrative responses as a way of studying how teachers shift and shape identities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Cohen, 2010; Watson, 2006). Seemingly, using this format provides opportunities for exploring and revealing aspects of who teachers are as professionals. Watson (2006) used narratives to analyze the ways in which teachers actively construct their professional identities. Her findings indicate there are a number of resources teachers can draw from to help form their professional identity. Within these resources there can be both positive and negative impacts, but both can help show how teachers “integrate knowledge, practice and content within prevailing educational discourses” (p. 525). By telling stories teachers are able to reflect on the action of identity formation and (re)create meaning from their experiences.

Beijaard et al. (2004) cited two studies that fit into their category of “stories that (re)present professional identity.” Both of these studies emphasize the “influence of teachers’ professional landscape on their professional lives” (p.120). In addition, Clandinin and Connelly (1996) used storytelling to illustrate teachers’ practical knowledge. Through their analysis process, they found that questions about knowledge were answered with identify concepts. By using storytelling they discovered that teachers were more concerned about “who they were than about what they knew” (p.120).
Understanding teachers’ view of themselves through narratives has helped researchers follow identity formation driven to shift because of changes in policy (Clandinin, Huber, Huber, & Murphy, 2006; Soreide, 2006; Thomas 2003). This research has shown teacher professional identity to be “central to debates about education ranging from the discourse of crisis that is employed to warrant challenges in sustaining teachers’ commitment in the face of new initiatives” (Cohen, 2010; pp.473). Part of the appeal for using teacher narratives is that, as Day, Stobat, Sammons and Kington (2006) argue, teacher talk and experience is central to their professional identity development.

Cohen (2010) used focus groups in her study, for a year and a half, of three Humanities teachers who had all been teaching more than five years. Her intent in this study was to “argue that attention to the ways in which teachers implicitly address questions of identity within talk about curriculum and instruction sheds light on the importance of this type of talk as a discursive site for construction, negotiation, and contextualization of teacher professional identity.” (p.474). Cohen’s findings identified two specific reflective talk genres: personal storytelling and analytical talk. These narrative genres allowed teachers to recognize each other’s professional identity and extend shared meaning.

Phelan (2005) used a case study to examine how one teacher candidate struggled to shift from conception of knowledge to applied practice in an inquiry-based teacher education program. By examining coursework documents and conducting interviews, as well as classroom observations, Phelan suggested it is important to have prospective teachers experience heightened anxiety during field experiences so they can experience strong emotions and help shape identity. Without producing these tension-filled moments in
teacher preparation programs, candidates “abilities to perceive a situation and to respond to its specifics may be significantly reduced” (Phelan, 2005, p. 355).

Using observation techniques, Soreide (2006) followed five female elementary teachers and observed how they used narrative to shape their professional identities. Qualitative interviews were analyzed and interpreted in an attempt to understand how these four teachers understand themselves as teachers. Soreide found that although the teachers simultaneously construct different possible teacher identities, four major constructions of teacher identity emerged: the caring and kind teacher, the creative and innovative teacher, the professional teacher, and the typical teacher. These four categories are not to be seen as concrete, but flexible in nature and determined by the teacher’s positions on any given subject during the interviews.

In another study, Smagorinsky and colleagues (2004) analyzed how an elementary pre-service teacher candidate “negotiated the different conceptions of teaching that provided the expectations for good instruction in her university and the site of her student teaching and how her efforts to reconcile the different belief systems affected her identity as a teacher” (p.8). The data in this study ranged from individual to group interviews, observation, artifacts, and concept map activities. Sharon, the participant in this study, went into student teaching immersed in university ideals, which caused tension in her student teaching placement due to varying ideals. This tension left her feeling trapped and unable to allow her own professional identity to emerge. Such tension can potentially be productive in creating environments conducive to the shaping of teacher identity.

Studies on Pre-Service Education Programs and Identity Development
As teachers’ professional identity has become increasingly well researched worldwide during the last decade, studies on teacher preparation programs is still limited. Bullough (1995) stressed the importance of paying attention to identity as critical to the practice of teacher education. According to him an “understanding of student teachers’ views on learning and teaching and themselves as teachers is of vital importance for teacher educators as it is the foundation for meaning-making and decision-making” (p. 21). This understanding is a complex emotionally challenging process that not only impacts a teacher’s professional life, but their personal life as well (Meijer, Graaf, & Meirink, 2011).

Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, and Bransford (2005) designated three common issues in the “learning-to-teach” process. First, pre-service teacher candidates need to understand and acknowledge their own personal preconceptions about teaching based on their years of experience in classroom settings. Second, students need to put theory into practice. This requires a deep understanding of both theory and practice prior to student teaching. Finally, pre-service teacher candidates need to take control of their own learning so they can understand and navigate the complexities of teaching.

Meijer et al. (2011) investigated how pre-service teacher candidates view their own development after their year of student teaching, as well as any key experiences aiding their development. This study focused on each teacher’s first year of individual teaching and found that the participant’s positive and/or negative experiences played a role in their development. They found that teachers who had two or more “disillusionment phases” seemed to struggle to make meaning of their own role in key experiences. They report that the study’s findings suggest that teachers perceive their development as a steady ascending line, but the data indicates spikes and drops with transformative instances within.
Lamote and Engles (2010) studied preservice teachers’ perceptions of their professional identity at different stages of their education. They found shifts in student thinking after workplace experiences. They state “it is [also] remarkable that while after workplace experience students seem to attach less importance to pupils being quiet, diligent and obedient, their perceptions of self-efficacy in classroom management also declines” (p.14). Building on students’ emerging professional identities from the beginning of their educational journey will provide opportunities to explore the complexity of practice and provide systematic support.

Summary

It is evident from teacher identity research that the theoretical frameworks attempting to explain the nature of teacher identity have focused on different aspects of development and have used different approaches for studying various aspects of growth. However, the alternative ideas explored by these frameworks seem to offer complementary ways of explaining the nature of teacher identity and how it develops among teachers. In this study, the framework used integrates ideas from prevailing existing frameworks and their conceptions of teacher identity development (Gee, 2000-2001; Beijaard et al., 2000; Moje & Luke, 2009). These models complement each other in terms of key aspects of teacher identity development. The Gee model examined teacher identity from the perspective of “who a teacher is” in four areas: nature, institution, discourse, and affinity group affiliation. The Beijaard et al. model examined the critical factors that drive “what a teacher does” in his or her practice through examining teachers’ expertise within three related areas, including content, pedagogy, and didactics. The Moje and Luke framework provided a way of handling the subtle differences among the various conceptualizations of identity and its
development. Integrating key aspects from these three teacher identity development models provides a framework to help guide data collection, and analysis of the data pertaining to how participating pre-service teachers form their identities.

The theoretical and research background provided in this chapter offers competing theoretical and research perspectives on why identity research may be important—even central—to enhancing the preparation of beginning teacher candidates and why we, as teacher educators, should engage in this evolving area of research. By linking professional identity to beginning teacher development, we may be able to study this phenomenon in ways that enable us to better understand teacher identity development and the factors that contribute to its development among beginning and pre-service teacher candidates during the early stages of their teaching careers.
CHAPTER 3 – TEACHER IDENTITY FORMATION: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A case study approach was used as a research method to better understand the experiences of the pre-service teachers in their respective student teaching placements. It encompasses the logic of design, data collection, techniques and specific approaches to data analysis. Case study is a research strategy, an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2009). While case study methodology may prevent large-scale generalizations to be made from the study’s data, the case study provides specific insight into some of the ramifications of the ways in which pre-service teacher candidates form their identities during student teaching placement. Case studies are likely to be much more persuasive and precise if based on various sources of information and follow some system of collaboration (Yin, 2009). By investing in a system of “triangulation of information”, the bounded system can take on a multidimensional profile enhancing validity (Creswell, 2007). Triangulation, according to Merriam (1988) “uses multiple sources of data or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings” (p. 204). Three different sources were used for data collection: (1) pre-service teacher candidate interviews, (2) mentoring and supervising teacher interviews, and (3) artifact collection. This research examined how pre-service teacher candidates form their professional identity as well as what factors influence this development during one student teaching placement. The present study helps clarify the link between identity development in pre-service teachers and their critical, “real-world” final placement in student teaching.
Participants

Four pre-service teacher candidates participated in the study. To begin the participant search, I listed all students student teaching in the fall of 2012. After compiling the list, I narrowed the group down by eliminating students who were not elementary education majors, and students not working on a reading endorsement. From there, I contacted each of the four participants to satisfy the categories previously described in this manuscript (male/female, traditional/non-traditional) individually through email asking for their permission to participate in the study. Appendix C includes the email describing the study that was sent to participants. After receiving confirmation from each of the participants to partake in the study, I contacted the mentoring teacher to explain the nature of the study, the pre-service teacher candidate’s role, as well as their own. Appendix D includes the email sent to mentoring teachers.

Participants represent both male and female classifications as well as traditional and non-traditional roles. The participants in this study were pre-service teacher candidates in their student teaching semester of education at a small private college in the Midwest. For all of the four candidates this was their final semester of higher level education. Each teacher candidate had successfully completed all coursework required to obtain at least one endorsement, as well as an elementary education reading endorsement and liberal arts degree, including student teaching. Each participant graduated in Spring 2012 and applied for licensure in May of 2012. A description of each participant and the settings where they would do student teaching are described in the following sections.
David X.

David was a non-traditional white male student. He began his education career in 2009 seeking an elementary education degree as well as a liberal arts degree with endorsements in reading, special education, and early childhood. His previous degree, earned in 2002, was a bachelor of arts in mass communication with an area of specialization in public relations and a minor in art history studies. Prior to going back to school, David worked as an office coordinator, concierge/receptionist for a staffing agency, front desk clerk and manager at a local hotel, and sales associate at Pottery Barn Kids. He has lived in various places across the United States including Louisiana, New York, and the Midwest. He is married and has no children.

As stated above and in many cases at this college, students receive multiple endorsements to make them more marketable and expand their experience. David spent seven weeks in a lower elementary classroom, then transitioned to a special education classroom for seven weeks, and finished his student teaching semester with five weeks in an early childhood classroom. David’s participation in this study focused on his seven weeks of student teaching in a special education classroom.

David spent seven weeks in a special education classroom based in a mid-sized city (population less than 250,000). This school is one of 60 schools in the district and serves 332 students in grades PK-8. The student ethnicity for the 2010 school year was listed as 79% white, 9% two or more races, 4% black, and 3% Asian/Pacific Islander. This elementary school had 15% of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch programs in 2010, and has a 20:1 student-teacher ratio. There are currently 44% female and 56% male students.
Beth Y.

Beth was a white, non-traditional female student seeking an elementary education degree as well as a liberal arts degree with endorsements in reading and early childhood. She was not only a non-traditional student, but also considered a transfer student at this small private college. Her first degree was obtained in August, 2010 at a near-by community college. From there she transferred and began coursework for her education degree. Prior to working on her degrees she was employed as a lead teacher, on-site supervisor, and assistant preschool teacher at a neighboring development center and preschool. Before settling in the Midwest, Beth graduated from high school in Pennsylvania. From there she and her husband, who was in the service, traveled all over the world settling in a variety of places, including Germany. Beth, her husband and three children now live in a neighboring town.

Beth spent eight weeks in a lower elementary classroom and several weeks in a preschool class for her semester of student teaching. Her participation in this study involved the final placement in her student-teaching semester. Beth was also in a mid-sized city. Her school is one of 60 other elementary schools that has a total of 447 students where the student to teacher ratio is 14.7:1. The racial percentages as well as gender are similar to other schools in this area. Of the 447 students registered at the school, 328 are male and 322 female. Two hundred and twenty two students qualified for free and reduced price lunch; 17 students are Hispanic, 11 Asian/Pacific Islander, 91 Black, and 326 white, respectfully.

Ann Z.

Ann was a traditional female student who graduated in the spring, 2012 with degrees in both elementary education and liberal arts with endorsements in reading, early childhood and special education. After graduating from an Iowa high school, Ann followed her older sister to this small
private college in the Midwest. While a student here, Ann was involved in many activities including education club, intermural sports, work-study, and babysitting for local families. Before graduating from high school, she spent many hours in her mother’s kindergarten classroom.

Ann spent eight weeks in a fifth grade classroom for the first portion of her student teaching, seven weeks in a first grade classroom and four weeks in a special education classroom for the last portion of her student teaching. Her participation in this study focused on her time spent in the first grade classroom. The school where Ann student taught for first grade is one of 8 schools in a suburb that adjoins the same mid-sized city as the other participants listed previously. Of the 409 students who attend this school, 127 qualified for free and reduced price lunch. The racial make-up of the school is similar to others in the area: 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% two or more races, 4% black, 5% Hispanic, and 86% white students. This school is listed as having a 14:1 student-teacher ratio.

Grace W.

Grace was a traditional female student maintaining a grade point average of 3.85. She began her college career in August, 2008 after graduating from a small high school in Iowa where she was inducted into the National Honor Society and graduated at the top ten percent of her class. Grace graduated with an Elementary Education degree as well as a Liberal Arts degree with endorsements in reading and early childhood. Her work experience included child care provider (nanny), wellness center receptionist, and recreation center staff facilitator. She was involved in a variety of activities and clubs while in college. Some of these activities included Education Club, Delta Delta Delta Sorority, Dean’s List, London Study Abroad experience, and teaching assistant at a local middle school.
Grace spent seven weeks in a preschool classroom for the first portion of her student teaching and eight weeks in a second grade classroom for the last. Her participation in this study focused on her time spent in the second grade classroom. The school where Grace student taught for her second grade placement is one of four schools in the same small town where the college is situated. This is a public school that serves 345 students in grades PreK through fifth grade. Within this school 190 students are male and 150 female. There are 197 students who qualified for free and reduced price lunch, and the racial make-up is 97% white. Table 2 illustrates information on each placement listed for each of the participants in the study.

Table 2

*School Settings by Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>197.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Education.edu, Inc. &/or specific school district website

Each of the participants experienced different placements, settings, and time limits. These differences aligned with their individual goals and endorsement areas. The placement coordinator at this college takes student choice into consideration. For example, some students want an urban experience compared to a rural setting. Others choose to stay with a previous mentoring teacher because they developed a friendly rapport. None of the participants requested special accommodations for their student teaching. Depending on
their endorsement areas, the pre-service teacher candidates may have had a different amount of placements as well as different time lengths at each placement. Student teaching typically consists of fifteen weeks of full-time teaching. The focus of this study was on the final 7-8 weeks of student teaching for each participant.

**Data Collection**

Crestwell (1998) suggests drawing on multiple sources of information when attempting to understand complex phenomena such as identity. For this case study each participant was interviewed after completion of their student teaching experience. After interviewing each participant, their mentoring teacher present in their corresponding placement as well as the supervisor for that same placement was interviewed. Finally, various artifacts, including participants’ teaching philosophy, sample lesson plans, mentor and supervisor evaluations, and final portfolio documenting their work during the student teaching experience were collected. The timeline for data collection was approximately one month. The participants completed their student teaching experience mid/late-April. After the Institutional Review Board approved the research project and participants were contacted and accepted into the study, one month had passed since their graduation. This time limit, while not included in the initial proposed plan, allowed the pre-service teacher candidates time to process their intense semester which made the interviews, in alignment with the data, more fruitful.
**Pre-Service Teacher Candidate Interviews**

After completion of their pre-service teacher candidate experiences, an interview was scheduled with each of the participants. It is important to note that the interviewer was familiar with each pre-service teacher candidate and had already developed a teacher/student relationship in a previous semester or community/college interaction. Each interview was conducted in a neutral setting (college coffee shop, town bookstore/coffee shop, etc.). Since each participant had been placed in different school districts, the location of the interviews varied. The interviews were semi-structured and provided an informal setting designed to ease the participants. The interview questions ranged from introductory questions to determine previous K-12 educational experiences, background information focusing on the student teaching experience and relationships in their placements, and finally, identity development as seen through each participant’s own personal opinions and experiences. The questions listed were designed to encourage participants to discuss elements of their student teaching that would directly answer each of the interview questions. Asking background information helped determine what elements of *who a teacher is* and *what a teacher does* each participant brought to their student teaching experience. The identity questions asked for specific instances when they could recall identity development and factors that were a part of that development. Appendix B also includes sample questions for the interview process.

After interviewing each of the participants, an additional interview meeting was requested to take place after collecting the remainder of the data for each pre-service teacher candidate. This extra element was included in case the need for additional questions arose.
after meeting with the mentors, supervisors, and reviewing the artifacts. All follow-up questions were collected through phone calls and e-mails. Some of the questions that were asked during the follow up questions consisted of identifying turning points or experiences recognized by their mentor and/or supervisor to determine the relevance to each individual participant. For example, Beth’s supervisor identified a turning-point in her interview which was not mentioned during the pre-service teacher candidate’s interview. A follow-up phone call to Beth was needed to determine the impact this experience had on her own identity.

Mentoring/Supervising Teacher Interviews

For each student teaching placement, the student had an assigned supervisor and mentoring teacher. The mentoring teacher provided the classroom, experience, and expertise needed for each pre-service teacher candidate during their placement. The mentor observed the pre-service teacher candidate daily and provided valuable insight for their identity development during the placement. Interviewing the mentoring and supervising teachers made it possible to triangulate the data provided by the pre-service teacher candidate as well as the artifact notes collected by the supervisor. The interviews also provided insight into other pivotal moments that were observed and possibly not acknowledged by the pre-service teacher candidate. This stage of the data collection process aligned with the framework by illustrating the social channels and recognizable aspects of identity development. The interview questions asked during the mentor/supervisor interview focused on two different areas. The first interview category was designed to gain a deeper understanding of the mentor or supervisor and their educational philosophy and background. The second category of interview questions focused on the pre-service teacher
candidate for whom they were responsible and the mentor/supervisor’s account of events during the placement. Appendix A includes sample questions for the interview process.

**Artifacts**

Gee (2011) argued that identity is recognizable not only in *who* we are but in *what* we do. These aspects of our identity come from language as well as other factors influencing our lives and reflect who we are and what our identities possess. To be a particular “who” and to pull off a particular “what” requires that we “act, value, interact, and use language in sync with or in coordination with other people and with various objects ("props") in appropriate locations and at appropriate times” (p.31). In this study the additional elements, or props as Gee describes them, are included in the analysis and come in the form of a case record (e.g. mentor/supervisor evaluation, journals, philosophy of education). Student teaching produces many official documents that go into the candidates’ case record. Some of the artifacts that were collected included their philosophy of education, lesson plans, mentor/supervisor evaluation, mid and final evaluations, and weekly reflections (a requirement for a student teaching seminar they all must attend). Using these artifacts to triangulate the interview, and observation data helped connect and validate the responses and actions of each participant. Each of the artifacts collected for the case record are described in Table 3 in more detail.
Table 3

*Case Record Artifact List and Description*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Collected By:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of Education</td>
<td>Students are asked to update their philosophy of education as they progress through their education classes. Each of the participants will have updated his or her philosophy in their first student teaching placement</td>
<td>Supervisor &amp; Orientation faculty member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Plans</td>
<td>Students are required to show their written lesson plans for each lesson they teach during their placement. In these lesson plans we should see some of “who they are” represented</td>
<td>Supervisor &amp; Mentoring teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Mid &amp; Final Evaluation</td>
<td>Mentor teachers are asked to fill out a midterm and final evaluation for each of their pre-service teacher candidates</td>
<td>Survey Monkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Observation Notes</td>
<td>Supervisors observe pre-service teacher candidate bi-weekly if not weekly. When they observe they collect a detailed lesson plan and write extensive notes on the lesson.</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Journal Reflection</td>
<td>Each pre-service teacher candidate is enrolled in a student teaching orientation class. One requirement for this class is that the pre-service teacher candidate reflects twice a week in journal format on the growth they are making in their placement.</td>
<td>Orientation Faculty Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each student at this small liberal arts college is asked to write a “philosophy of education” at the start of their pre-service educational experience (freshman years) and to update this philosophy as they continue the program. Their final update is included in their case record. Each participant’s philosophy of education was collected to show consistency between what each of them do in their classrooms and how his or her actions align with their personal philosophy of education. This would, in turn show if there was tension between what they believed and what they did. Also collected in the case record were lesson plans from the student teaching placement along with the mentor and supervisor comments. This was expected to show the correlation between what they did and what they believed. The mentor mid and final evaluations were also included in the artifacts collected for data.
analysis. These artifacts would help show what identity is visible to others who interacted with the participants on a daily basis in their placement. These evaluations along with the supervisor notes show insight to how a pre-service teacher candidate is progressing as well as any experiences that show particular growth or lack thereof. Finally, each participant shared their required journal for data analysis. This artifact helped provide ample information of the pre-service teacher candidate’s personal reflection on identity growth, tensions, as well as specific experiences that were memorable to them personally.

**Data Analysis**

Miles and Huberman (1994) argued that one major feature of qualitative research is its focus on “naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings” so researchers and those reading the work have a good sense of what “real life” is like” (p. 10). While all forms of interaction are recognized, Bullough (2005) argued that identity tends to be submerged and “taken for granted” (p. 147). For this reason, during the analysis process only instances where identity surfaced were noted. These occurrences were explored to determine what “kind of person” the participant was working to become or the “kind of person” they were working to be (or who they were trying to please at the given time).

By employing the general inductive approach for analysis and following the suggested structure listed in the next paragraph, the data was organized by (1) condense a multitude of raw data, (2) establish clear links between the research questions and summary of findings, and (3) determine implications for future research (Thomas, 2006). While this approach is evident in several types of qualitative data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990—grounded theory), Thomas states one inconsistency: when using the general inductive
approach there is no emphasis on learning new technical terms (as different grounded theory approaches), which provides for a more straightforward and direct approach to data analysis.

Following the procedures used for inductive analysis set forth by Thomas (2006), Table 4 illustrates the process of data analysis that was used in this study.

**Table 4**  
*General Inductive Analysis Process*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Preparation of raw data files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Close reading of text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Creation of categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Overlapping coding and uncoded text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Continuing revision and refinement of category system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from Thomas (2007)

The first step in the inductive analysis process is to prepare the raw data files for viewing. This includes not only preparing the text but backing up each data source (observations, interviews, and artifacts). The next phase is to read through each page and/or piece of the raw data so that it is possible to be familiar with the data and start thinking about ways to categorize the information. After this stage, the researcher will reread the data, identified and defined categories. The fourth stage of the inductive analysis process is to reduce overlap and remove uncoded text from the relevant categories. This helps “trim down” the
bulk of the data collected. Finally, the researcher must continue to revise and refine the category system. After these stages had all been manipulated to the reported data in this study, approximately eight major themes emerged.

While the process for the general inductive analysis described in Table 6 shares an overall summary of the procedure, Table 7 shares more specific details in regards to the coding and creating of categories within the study.

Table 5

*The Coding Process in Inductive Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Many pages of text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Initial read through of text data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Many segments of text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Identify specific segments of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>30-40 categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Label the segments of information to create categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>15-20 categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Reduce overlap and redundancy among the categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>3-8 categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Create a model incorporating the most important categories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the area of qualitative research increases, social and behavioral scientist critique on the validity of studies that use such methodology; therefore, many strategies are used to oppose these arguments. Hence, qualitative research utilizes various validation strategies to make their studies credible and rigorous (Crestwell & Miller, 2000). Credibility for this
study was achieved using the validation strategies of triangulation, thick rich description, peer debriefing and participation review. Thomas (2006) suggests several ways to assess trustworthiness. This study employed three different techniques to determine trustworthiness in this study.

First, the data was triangulated with the various forms of data collected in this study (i.e., pre-service teacher candidate interviews, artifacts, and mentor/supervisor interviews). Thick description was achieved by presenting the participants’ voices under each theme and by providing detailed description of each of the cases.

As listed previously in this chapter, triangulation was used consistently with each participant and the study in general. Each of the participants interviewed were asked to review the transcribed interviews to add, delete, or amend any statements made. Within three days of the interview, the transcribed interview documents were emailed to each participant and requested an email response with any comments included in their interview document. In this return email each participant was asked to give consent that the information provided in the transcribed interview document was accurate and aligned with their views and opinions.

Furthermore, two colleagues were asked to conduct a coding consistency check. There were three total readers, including the researcher, involved in the analysis process. One coder holds a doctorate degree in curriculum instruction with a focus on literacy. She is a full professor at a small Midwestern liberal arts college. The second coder holds a master’s degree general education and currently works as a reading specialist in a large Midwestern school district. Each of the independent coders were provided with the proposal
for this study (to illustrate background research and framework literature), Thomas’s (2006) article on general inductive approach, and the raw data for analysis. After a training session on the analysis approach, which included a sample data set, and a practice coding session, each coder worked independently. After each coder completed his or her individual coding, the group came together to discuss the appropriate codes and defend data points. At this meeting each coder shared his or her final categories and the number of data points in each category. Differing data points and/or categorization elements were debated. Finally, the group determined common categories, labeled them accordingly, and then began to process the data points within each category. The coding group did not identify any specific number of data points required for each category and/or a specific number of categories.

An example of a data points during the collaboration meeting is listed here. Each of the three coders identified the following statement during their reading of the raw material.

“He made class so fun and you could go into the room and talk where you aren’t afraid to speak in front of your classmates because they weren’t going to disrespect you. I think he brought in the idea of having a caring community that is so vital.” Ann: Journal

Each of the coders identified this statement, but categorized the label in different ways. One placed it under dispositions, another I-Identity (according to Gee’s definitions), and one classroom community. After discussing the reasons for categorizing this statement the way each coder had identified, a unanimous consensus was made to place this data point under dispositions. Although it was not needed, the researchers stated at the beginning of the
meeting that any data points where there was not a consensus, another reviewer would weigh input. There were no data points identified left out of the final collection.

The data collection and analysis process allowed for extensive examination of the proposed research questions across three different data sources. The results of this study provide useful information that will help educators understand the relationship between the student teaching experience and the formation of identity in pre-service educators. The findings contribute to student teaching and pre-service institutions, as well as in-service educators.
CHAPTER 4 – TEACHER IDENTITY FORMATION: RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the findings related to the key questions posed in the study:

(a) What factors contribute to or hinder a pre-service teacher’s professional identity formation? 
(b) How do pre-service teacher candidates form their professional identities during one placement in their student teaching experience? In the first section of this chapter, I present findings pertaining to factors contributing to or hindering pre-service teacher’s professional identity formation. I do so by describing the main themes that emerged through data analysis, as well as how those themes mesh with the proposed theoretical framework. In the second section of this chapter, I present the results pertaining to the second research question, namely what evidence is available in support of participants’ identity development. I do so by presenting evidence of identity development for each participant as gleaned from the various data sources analyzed.

Research Questions #1: The Factors That Affect Pre-service Teachers’ Professional Identity Formation

Eight major themes emerged as the data was reviewed and coded according to the inductive analysis approach by three separate coders. For some themes, data points were found more readily in certain sources than others; however, each source provided valuable information for the question as a whole. Several of the main themes also have a few subcategories. These were designed to more specifically identify the factors that contribute to or hinder pre-service teacher’s professional identity formation. Table 6 lists the categories and subcategories as well as where the data points were identified and the number of supporting
data excerpts. The main categories that emerged from the data are: past experiences, mentor/supervisor, identity recognition, content area, pedagogy, dispositions, and tension.

Table 6

*Data Points Organized by Category*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-Category</th>
<th>Total Data Points</th>
<th>Student Teacher Folder</th>
<th>Journal Entries</th>
<th>Mentor/Supervisor Interviews</th>
<th>Student Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past Experience</td>
<td>Identity Recognition</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family Connection</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor/Supervisor</td>
<td>Background and Experiences</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finding Similarities/Differences</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affirmations</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type of Recognition</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition by Others</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Recognition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Area</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispositions</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tension</td>
<td>Institutional Pressure</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in Philosophy</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turning Points</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td></td>
<td>430</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each of these categories and sub-categories are described in detail with supporting data points expressed in this chapter. All coders purposefully shied away from the framework presented in previous chapters during the coding of the raw data. It was tempting to align the data with the framework and create containers for the data to be placed. However, purposefully not using that framework allowed the data to reveal themes that emerged naturally. This section of the chapter will take the themes themselves and answer research questions, while incorporating these ideas into the theoretical frameworks and research reports that have guided the study’s design and implementation.

As stated previously, teaching is a profession where “who one is as a person is so much interwoven with how one acts as a professional, and because of this both sides cannot be separated” (Lamote & Engels, 2010). It is unlikely the core of the person does not impact the core of the professional. The framework proposed merge three leading frames together and creates a combination framework that will lead the research design process. Looking at the themes through the lens of the proposed framework, figure 2 illustrates how each theme aligns within this frame.

The chart below adds each of the major themes that emerged from the data analysis process. While the framework as a whole blends together and each separate area impacts the others, it was possible to place themes into a specific category of the theoretical framework while still implying the connection to the other areas. For example, the theme classroom management is placed in ‘Who a Teacher Is’ but still impacts ‘What a Teacher Does’. For the purposes of reporting the data to the reader, this model will be used as an organizational tool for this section of the chapter, dividing the data into four separate
categories: (1) who a teacher is, (2) what a teacher does (3) who a teacher is/what a teacher does and (4) mitigating factors (the outer ring of the framework).

Figure 2: Updated heuristics in thinking about pre-service teachers’ professional identity development
Who a Teacher Is

A pre-service teacher candidate’s past experiences affect his or her identity development during student teaching

Identity is an ongoing, dynamic process. In this process, individuals negotiate internal and external expectations as others work to make sense of themselves and their work, in this case, as educators. Our past experiences are deeply involved in the formation and development of this dynamic process because identity is a continuum, where what we know about ourselves now, helps to form or shape how we know ourselves in future activities. This is not to say that people cannot stray from the path their past experiences have trained them to take, but only that this change could cause tension when that adjustment occurs.

A teacher’s perception on his or her identity as a professional educator influences the ability to deal with situations both in and outside their classroom and school (Beijaard et al., 2000). As a teacher enters into a student teaching placement, ‘who they are’ in terms of identity has already begun. By examining individual pre-service candidates’ prior experiences, teacher educators can refine assumptions about how these candidates’ experience, knowledge or perception of themselves situated in the profession and identify a starting point of understanding the candidates’ identity formation and development.
The data analysis revealed a total of 23 out of 430 data points across three of the four data collection methods representing this theme, as shown in Table 6. While there were data excerpts in the journal entries, mentor/supervisor interviews, most of the notable information was extracted from the participating teacher candidates’ interviews. The identified data points representing the participant’s prior experiences in relation to their identity can be addressed in two sub-categories: identity recognition and family connections. Identity recognition refers to data entries that speak specifically to identity recognized in past experiences. For example, how the participant acknowledges the identity of previous teachers or classrooms they knew as students. Family connections indicate data points where participants noted that a close family or friend is or has been involved in the field of education. The following subsections describe how a pre-service teacher candidate’s past experiences affect the candidate’s identity development during his or her student teaching placements, with representative examples of student interview protocols.

**Identity Recognition from Prior Experience**

The data from this particular sub-category indicated when each noted event from previous K-12 educational experiences where identity was shaped occurred. While both non-traditional students had multiple experiences between their K-12 experiences and attending their educational preparation program, which is talked about briefly, the focus is on each of the participants K-12 experiences. One of the notable remarks from the participating candidates is about their own PreK-12 experiences, as the following excerpts show:
“Private schools can be nice because we never had to deal with the state mandates.” David: Interview

“One teacher that really stands out [in a negative way] would have to be my kindergarten teacher. She was the older teacher and I just felt like she didn’t have any patience.” Beth: Interview

“She was very nice and caring like a kindergarten teacher should be.” Grace: Interview

“My second grade teacher was good because she knew everybody learns differently and she would mix it up a lot.” Ann: Interview

Both of the non-traditional students, Beth and David, who have been out of high school for over twenty years, went into detail about where they were raised, what type of PK-12 education they had, but they also discussed other educational experiences they have encountered since graduating from high school.

“It’s different with me than the other students [traditional students] because I’ve had so much life experience. I really kind of had my philosophy built ahead of time. I learned a lot during my schooling but it was more tweaking my philosophy than building it.” Beth: Interview

“My nephews were little when I first started dating my wife and I loved working with them and hanging out with them. Reading to them was a blast so I decided I would go back to school [to be a teacher].” David: Interview
David and Beth also talked about how these experiences affected their philosophies and teacher preparation programs. The two traditional students talked factually about their K-12 experiences and had limited details to share. The data reveals that non-traditional students see their past educational experiences in very general terms, blending them with the experiences encountered since leaving high school and living as an adult for twenty years. The traditional students who went directly from high school into their teacher preparation programs focus more narrowly on the traits of their previous teachers.

In David’s interview he indicated that his experience at a private elementary school was beneficial because they did not have to adhere to as many of the mandates public schools must follow. He stated the following during his interview:

Private schools can be nice because we never had any pressure to deal with the state mandates. The teachers wanted to do it they did it. It was kind of a little bit like Montessori schools. I think I remember in sixth grade we would spend half the day on a science project. I did Catholic school all the way through, so I never had to deal with any of the public school things that kids had to deal with. We got all the learning that we needed and didn't have to worry about all the extra tests that we had in the public schools. The kids that need extra help they listed the pullout and no one was really that far behind.

He repeatedly revisits this topic in his journal throughout his student teaching experience, indicating how frustrated he is with district, state and national mandates, and the pressure schools face because of them. In this instance, his previous positive experience is how he
remembers his elementary years and the freedom his teachers had. This recollection has impacted his feelings, which in this case are negative, towards his current experience during student teaching in an elementary classroom. The following are two examples of his journal entries on this topic:

“Everything is so scripted and rigid; I need to work on getting the flow of the basal down.”

“I am trying to incorporate games into my lesson to keep the kids motivated and find the fun in learning….I’ve loved that the kids get to explore at their own pace, not something we get to do very often anymore. Maybe that will make a comeback in our standard schools-probably not until NCLB goes away though.”

And his final reflections during the interview process when asked what a teacher does:

“What you have to do is mandates by a group of people who never taught and student teaching is giving you this fair warning of what’s to come. I would have things piled on me and wanted to scream that there’s only eight hours a day! Can I take these kids [home] with me and teach all through the night also (sarcastic).”

In this case, David’s positive feeling for his elementary school experience and his interpretation of how it was organized conflicts with what he sees during his student teaching experience. This conflict causes him to question the current state of education and
elicits strong feelings about government involvement in schools and mandates passed down. This data indicates that pre-service teacher candidates come into student teaching experiences with ideas on how the structure of schools should look, and when they don’t look that way, new ideas and feelings emerge. In David’s case, negative feelings.

The structure of pre-service teacher candidates K-12 experiences were analyzed, as well as the behaviors of teachers they encountered. At this point in their educational careers, each of the participants had encountered multiple educators (as all participants were enrolled in K-12 schools as opposed to home schooled or another alternate option). These experiences provided them with a notion of what a teacher is or should be. When the participants talked about what a teacher should be, the common thread was the disposition a teacher should possess. Each participant was asked about a favorite elementary teacher they had during their K-6 experience and one they did not enjoy, as well as supporting reasons for each response category. Table 7 shows the adjectives the participants used to describe their most and least favorite teachers.

Table 7

*Description Words for Who a Teacher Is*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Favorite</th>
<th>Least Favorite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td>Strict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft, soothing voice</td>
<td>Poor routing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Hard-core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Leader</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Real World Expectations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 shows there are distinct adjectives students entering into a pre-service educational program already think describe a “good” and “bad” teacher. While each of the participants discussed multiple characteristics for the “good” and “bad” teacher, only the two traditional students (Ann and Grace) felt a connection with their favorite teacher so strongly that they recognized part of their identity and teaching philosophy stems from their image of that person from years ago.

“I had a first grade teacher and she was good. I think it was because she knew everybody learned differently and she would mix it up a lot. My philosophy reflects some of what she showed in those classes.” Ann: Interview

“My first grade teacher was really sweet and I just loved her and so I’ve never changed my mind [about wanting to be a teacher]. I wanted to be just like her and be a teacher.” Grace: Interview

These connections to elementary school teachers are present with only the traditional participants. The non-traditional participants talked of their schooling in detail, but were less specific about teachers and how those teachers affected their philosophies up to this point. This data indicates there is a pre-determined idea of what a teacher should be, built upon years of education experience before entering into a per-service program. These differences can be attributed to the amount of time elapsing between when the traditional and non-traditional participants attended previous schooling. During interviews the traditional students were very passionate and animated in recanting their favorite teachers, while the non-traditional students were vague and non-descript. These observations
illustrate the connection traditional students had to previous educational experiences that motivated them to enter their college preparation programs, and shed light on the lack of motivation demonstrated by non-traditional students at the end of their K-12 experiences. Also, it could indicate that the presence of a significant connection to a previous teacher prompted the traditional participants to go directly into the field of education upon high school graduation, while the non-traditional participants who had no significant connection did not realize their desire to teach directly after high school.

*Family Connections Juxtapose*

Identity is developed through social channels. In this instance, the view of identity as socially mediated or constructed is less dependent on how people see or associate themselves with, but on how other people see or perceive them based on what they think they know about them (Moje & Luke, 2009). The data indicate there were several points that indicated a “family of teachers” in a teaching or teacher related profession. In this instance a “family of teachers” indicates an association with teachers (more than one) within family or close friends. During interviews, all participants mentioned their family history with or without the presence of a member in the teaching profession.

During the interview process, each of the non-traditional students (David and Beth) indicated they do not have strong family ties to education. David indicated that while his immediate family had no teachers, his married family has several. He shared that he has enjoyed talking with his in-laws about teaching as he has progressed through the teacher preparation program.
“I have maybe a second or third cousin who is a math teacher in high school, but nobody else in my family is in education. My in-laws have lots of teachers, mostly high school but it is still fun to talk teaching with them at Christmas and get-togethers.” David: Interview

This data shows the social connection to identity development and how David worked to build his identity through conversations and encounters with his in-laws.

Each of the traditional students shared a family connection with the education profession. When asked in her interview when she knew she wanted to be a teacher, Ann replied;

I knew in high school because my mom’s a kindergarten teacher. I did work experience with her [in her classroom]. I was in a classroom with her and another teacher for two hours every day. So I knew before I even came to college.

Although there are a limited number of data points in this category and most of those points come from the interview, when each of the traditional students discussed their family connections to education, they became very passionate and animated in a positive manner. They both indicated proud, positive feelings in regard to their education connections. The strong feelings expressed during the interview process indicated this was an important part of the data, and only present with the traditional students. The data shows that the non-traditional participants did not have a strong family connection to education during their K-12 experiences, limiting their experiences with educational professionals in comfortable and
relaxed settings. Both of the traditional students indicated a connection to a “family of educators” which allowed them to have conversations and experiences with educators—helping them prepare for college preparation programs in education and, essentially, their first teaching positions.

As shown in the above examples, these preservice candidates’ past experiences associated with PK-12 experiences and their family teaching profession history impact preservice teacher candidates’ identity development during their student teaching experience. As indicated, both of the non-traditional participants had more vague and general thoughts that they brought to their student teaching experience, but were evident none-the-less. The traditional students’ prior experiences seemed to stem from specific former teachers, and they both strived to imitate their recollection of those favored educators throughout their student teaching experience.

Educators at preparation programs can make similar assumptions from this data, as revealed in the sub-category identifying a family connection to education. Both traditional students indicated they grew up with family ties to the teaching profession. This provided them with regular discussions related to educational change, teaching pedagogy, classroom management, as well as a variety of other topics discussed at family gatherings. These conversations helped to shape their identity prior to entering the college teacher preparation programs. The non-traditional participants did not receive the same level of interaction before entering the college’s education program, indicating they may have less defined professional educator identity development. Traditional or non-traditional, male or female,
the data indicates that prior experiences with education affect identity development for pre-service teacher candidates—especially on who they are as a teacher.

A teacher’s views on classroom management impacts identity development

The data in this study revealed a substantial amount of entries from all four participants indicating each participant’s ideas and thoughts relative to classroom management. There were a total of 41 out of 430 total data points, all found in the journal entries and case record file. As expected, many of the comments reflect the management system and strategies used in the pre-service teacher candidate’s classroom, due to the amount of time each pre-service teacher candidate spent observing and interacting with their assigned classroom. David notes in his journal experiencing discomfort with management in his classroom.

“It has been a long morning. Hopefully, I will make it through the rest of the day. Not sure if these discipline charts are effective. Parts of me like them and the other part wants to send them to the office.”

He states further:

“Don’t let the children get the upper hand and keep them engaged!”

“My mentor thinks the children are testing me and I think she is right!

Classroom management is tough all around.”
His comments indicate his frustration with classroom management and his discomfort with the current system. How he manipulates this conflict and develops his identity through the use of his mentor’s management system, and then attempts to implement his own system has interesting elements. His journal shows many comments vacillating between comfort and frustration with management. He notes at the end of his interview:

“I came to the realization that college is like Disneyland. It’s a fantasy world of teaching….Thinking on your feet is a huge part of teaching. Being able to come up with something really quick and adjusting if it’s not working was one of the biggest things I learned in student teaching. If you can’t the kids will start acting up.”

Each of the participants were assessed in the case record file on their ability to “Organize, facilitate, teach, and manage research-lead and evidence-based instruction that meets the needs of all students (including talented and gifted students, English Language Learners, students with special needs, at-risk students, etc.)”. In this section of the evaluation, the mentor and supervising teachers typically talk about the pre-service teacher candidate’s ability to perform classroom management skills during a lesson. However, at no juncture in the mid-point or final evaluation does it specifically discuss classroom management skills. Each supervisor’s observation has a section entitled “Classroom Management”. Some of the specific data from this section include:

“Ann related well with students. She is very patient and redirects students when needed. Ann includes all students in review of the lesson.” Ann: Supervisor Observation
“You are encouraging and your voice is so pleasant. It matches the music nicely. Can you get kids to help pick up or pass out?” Beth: Supervisor Observation

“David is very calm and even tempered. He divides his time between two groups doing two different things well. Corrects student in private and quietly (calmly) building rapport with each student. Students are engaged and attending very well.” David: Supervisor Observation

“Grace explicitly states behavioral expectations: ‘raise your hands’ and ‘quickly get your notebook out’. She was also very observant of the entire room”. Grace: Supervisor Observation

That there are so many journal data entries about management indicates that classroom management was a concern for all participants during their student teaching placement. Studies have indicated that classroom management is one of the leading reasons new teachers leave the field of education (Friman-Namser, 2003; McCann & Johannessen, 2004). The mid and final evaluations did not point directly to this theme, but the observation provided by the supervising teacher did.

Beth and David noted their students were less likely to comply with their requests. In Beth and David’s cases their focus was on parental involvement and the lack of administrative assistance with classroom management issues.

“[student’s name], poor thing has so many problems with her home life that any structure is difficult to hold onto. The staff and I are working so hard
at positive discipline but when she’s done, she’s done. It makes me so angry that her family allows things to happen at home the way they do.”

David: Journal

“One student we were having problems with decided to get up on his desk and jump off it and then proceeded to hit my mentoring teacher and call her some choice words. I tried to call the principal or assistant [principal] but I had to run and get one. Conferences were that night and the parents were okay with the plan we came up with, but not all that excited, or really seemed to care.” Beth: Journal

In both of these cases the participants noted parental involvement, or lack thereof during an interaction with a student exhibiting behaviors not aligned with classroom rules. Their initial reaction was to blame the parents for what the child experienced at home. This reaction contradicted the reaction of both Ann and Grace, the traditional participants.

Grace and Ann felt their students were being treated unfairly by their classroom teacher’s placements.

“I noticed throughout the week that my mentor wasn’t very professional in her tactics with the students. If some students weren’t listening she called them names…Students may not listen, but you, as the teacher, have to learn to get them to listen.”

Grace: Journal

“My teacher seems to be awful toward the students today…I have been trying to make it a point to say at least one nice thing to each student per day.” Ann: Journal
In both of these instances, and throughout the traditional students journals, there was less mention of individual student examples where rules were broken, but more broad ideas of how the mentoring teacher could change his or her attitudes towards the students to help create a more cohesive management system.

While each of the participants focused some energy and dialog on classroom management, the traditional students seemed to take a different tactic than the non-traditional. One explanation for this could be that David and Beth grew up in a different generation, where there were different rules and ideas on home life as well as the connection to school. These differences may add to the diverse focus when discussing student teaching classroom management, as well as identity development during this time.

**What a Teacher Does**

**A teacher’s content area knowledge determines how he or she teaches**

The content knowledge of teachers plays a significant role in determining teacher effectiveness (Beijjard et al., 2000). However, during the past several years teacher subject matter knowledge research has been neglected in favor of other aspects of teaching. The data analysis process from this study revealed an alignment with these statements. While focusing on teacher identity and pedagogy as a critical part of education, subject matter knowledge must be included as well. At the national and state levels, educators are seeing this requirement expand to college preparation programs. For example, in Iowa, the state is now requiring licensure candidates to not only pass pedagogy exam requirements, but
content knowledge exam requirements for both elementary and secondary teaching candidates as well.

One theme that emerged from the data was content area knowledge—at a time when content area knowledge is being regarded as critical in teaching. This theme, while somewhat low with data excerpts identifying only 19 out of 430 total data points, showed data points in every category of data collection. David identified his struggle with math skills at his level of instruction, and described this frustration in his journal.

“I need to brainstorm a plan for fitting everything in when I teach bell-to-bell next week. I am okay with the lesson just scheduling everything! Also, I need to practice my fifth grade math skills; they are starting a new unit when we return from break…time to research.”

His reference to the amount of review he needs to teach the math unit indicates his desire to excel as a content knowledgeable professional. David also talked about content area related topics in his interview as well as his confidence level in teaching content area topics.

“I felt like I could do okay with the lower step [grade levels]…easy, but some of the upper grade things were so difficult I was on YouTube all the time trying to reteach myself.”

“I always like to know that I’m doing, and if they’re learning new stuff, I need to know what it is all about.”
While David often discussed his discomfort with content material, Beth focused more on district mandates related to content area pieces. In her journal she identified her district’s curriculum requirements as an issue for mixing content and enjoyment of learning.

“I am enjoying this week so far since we are not doing activities from [the basal program] in reading for comprehension and vocabulary.”

“I just feel that reading books together are such a huge part [of reading instructing] and that every child needs that bonding time together.”

“It was decided not to introduce anything new this year and I have to respect the other staff.”

It was interesting to note that David and Beth, both non-traditional students, focused some of their comments on content area discussions during the interview and in their journals. Their struggle with subject area concepts was evident in their data collection, but not with either of the traditional participants.

Neither Ann nor Grace discussed content area topics in specific enough terms for any data points to be identified in any of their data collection methods. However, each of the case artifact files contained midterm and final evaluations. In this evaluation there is one question relating to content area knowledge listed. The mentoring and supervising teachers were asked to mark the pre-service teacher candidate as not observed, beginning, developing, competent basic, competent advanced, or exceeds advanced under the heading “understands and applies the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the subject matter” and more specifically under that heading “demonstrates knowledge of the content
area”. Three of the four participants were marked at “exceeds advanced” and the fourth was marked at “competent advanced” in their final evaluations.

These data and the lack of its presence indicate that college preparation programs neglect content area knowledge in the assessment and reflection process during student teaching. Each of the data points provides a vague generalization to content knowledge. Only four of the nineteen data points identified referred specifically to researching the content or topic students are studying. All other excerpts reflected on the district’s curriculum as opposed to the standard or teaching objective. This data indicates that while college students must maintain a set grade point average to stay in the education program, take a specific set of courses, and graduate, college and universities do not do enough to connect a pre-service candidate’s content knowledge to their teaching during the student teaching semester.

**A teacher’s pedagogy or teaching philosophy impacts his or her identify development**

Beijaard and his colleagues (2004) contend that pedagogy, dispositions and content expertise make up what a teacher does in the classroom. As indicated in the previous section, content knowledge was rarely identified in the participants’ data sets, while pedagogy contained the most data points when compared to all of the themes presented, totaling 82 out of 430 total excerpts. The data points came from each of the four different data collection methods, with the highest numbers identified in the case record file and journal entries, respectively.
Within the mid and final evaluations there are multiple questions focusing on a pre-service teacher candidate’s pedagogy. The first states, “Personal Vision for Education: Develops a personal vision for education that is informed by a crucial examination of the historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations of education and serves as a guiding force in professional choices and actions.” This standard was met with all participants ranging from Competent Advanced to Exceeds Advanced. Some of the related comments from mentors and supervisors are as follows:

“Grace is true to her philosophy of education, incorporating historical, philosophical and sociological and uses it as a guiding force in her professional choices and actions.” Grace: Final Evaluation

“Ann continues to show strength in this area. Her philosophy of education was implemented daily in her lessons and general teaching routine. She provided guidance and instruction to all students, always adjusting and assisting those that needed assistance.” Ann: Final Evaluation

The second question in the mid and final evaluation that relates to this theme states, “Plans varied, research-lead and evidence-based developmentally appropriate instruction that supports the development and learning of all students (including talented and gifted students, English Language Learners, students with special needs, at-risk students, etc.).” All of the participants scored at the Competent Advanced or Exceeds Advanced levels. Some of the comments in this category are as follows:
“Beth has been planning all of the instruction (small groups, large groups, mature play role/scenarios for center time, Parent and Child Together (PACT) time). She peruses and locates resources ahead of time, so is prepared to be an active participant during team planning.” Beth: Final Evaluation

“David did an excellent job of writing lesson plans. His plans were very clear, organized, and well written. He used some very engaging activities that were adapted to each student’s performance level.” David: Final Evaluation

The final standard relating to this theme in the mid and final evaluation states that student will, “organize, facilitate, teach, and manage research-led and evidence based instruction that meets the needs of all students (including talented and gifted students, English Language Learners, students with special needs, at-risk students, etc.).” As with the other standards relating to this theme, all participants scored Competent Advanced or Exceeds Advanced, respectively.

The mid and final evaluations were helpful in understanding the impressions from both the mentor and supervisor for each participant; however, the comments made (and identified previously) indicate the positive aspect of pedagogy for each of the candidates. Many references were made in the case study artifact that discuss the pedagogy of the pre-service teacher candidate, but fail to capture the struggle each of them encountered as they worked their way through individual student teaching placement.
As indicated, there were many comments in the case record file from the mentor and supervisor for each participant; however, there were also numerous comments within the journal entries for each pre-service teacher candidate. Several of the data excerpts talk about reflections of the mentor teacher’s pedagogy choices and the district mandates on pedagogy. David shares the following in his journal:

“Everything is scripted so I just need to work on the flow.”

“I am trying to incorporate games into my lesson to keep the kids motivated to learn and find the fun in learning.”

Beth shared similar reflections in her journal entries:

“I have been using more music through the day and the kids really like it!”

“I am enjoying this week so far since we are not doing activities from the basal for comprehension and vocabulary. We did a snow experiment on Monday and the kids loved it.”

David and Beth both reflected on their own teaching in their classrooms and how what they did impacted their students. They provided several examples where they discussed a specific lesson with their mentor and asked for detailed feedback to help them prepare and plan for future lessons. In this case, the non-traditional students focused their attention on their own pedagogy and efforts to use their time to hone their student teaching skills.
Grace and Ann, both traditional students, reflected more about the pedagogy of their mentoring teachers and the frustrations they felt when personal and professional philosophies did not mirror their mentoring teachers’. Ann shared the following in her journal:

“They [kids] are so full of energy. I try my best to channel that energy into a love of learning. I also think I try to be more fun because I am aware of what they normally have [with their regular classroom teacher]. Not that I wouldn’t want to be fun anyway, but I think I am more aware of it.”

Grace shared a change in her routine from the mentoring teacher’s normal instruction.

“Normally they come to the teacher’s table and she checks their paper and if they get anything wrong they have to go back and correct it. I decided to do a whole group discussion on it and go over the math on the board if needed. I was really nervous having the principal in there even though she may not be exactly paying attention to what I was doing. The students really enjoyed learning that way.”

In both of the shares excerpts from Ann and Grace, they were very pleased with their pedagogical decisions and asked for little guidance to improve their lesson. This behavior was common throughout the traditional students’ journal entries. Their focus was less on growth and more on attempting to prove their choices were always correct the first time.

The data indicate that there is a difference between traditional and non-traditional students, showing traditional students less likely to reflect and respond to ideas of
improvement in their pedagogical choices for lessons taught. The non-traditional
participants seem to focus lessons on their mentoring teachers and strive to take suggestions
and make alterations to their lesson plans in the future.

The data related to this theme indicate that pedagogy is a huge focal point of
education both before student teaching and during. Due to the sheer number of data points
exhibited, the students see this as an essential element of success in their student teaching
and future teaching. This assumption aligns with Beijjard et al. (2000) and their
acknowledgement that areas other than content knowledge have been the focal point in the
last several years. This data indicates that pedagogy is one of those focal points in
education.

A teacher’s involvement in or engagement with students affects development

Dispositions, along with pedagogy and content knowledge, are a prevalent part of
what a teacher does (Beijjard et al., 2004). At this small Midwest college, dispositions are
categorized into four different areas: caring dispositions, communication dispositions,
creative dispositions, and critical thinking dispositions. Each of the specific categories is
described in detail in both the mid and final student teaching evaluations. One major feature
of this category, dispositions, concerns a teacher’s involvement in, or engagement with
students. This can encompass, among many things, knowing what is going on in a student’s
mind, communicating and speaking about other people, and dealing with personal or private
issues with their students.
The data points in this category came from all four participants in all of the data collection methods. There were a total of 50 out of 430 total data excerpts representing the second highest collected data experts for the eight themes identified. Many of these points indicate a pre-service teacher candidate’s discourse-identify recognition. Gee (2000-2001) describes a person’s D-identity as individual traits, achievements, and/or attributes. The data collected from the mentor and supervising teachers vary greatly from those data excerpts collected from the participants.

In the mid and final evaluation one question related to this theme. It states that a pre-service teacher candidate, “models dispositions, professionalism, and ethics that are characteristic of effective educators”. All of the participants in this study scored a Competence Advanced or Exceeds Advanced. Grace’s mentor provided an exceptionally positive comment in regard to this standard.

“Grace showed up and executed the role as teacher and did a job that would take a first year teacher some getting used to. She came right in and started instruction, got to know the students, asked the right question and, yes, had days that were challenging; she did not give up. Through car troubles and not feeling good she came back the next day. That is the stuff that makes a great teacher. There for their students.”

Ann’s teacher responds:

“Ann continues to demonstrate professionalism in every way. She is respectful to student, teachers, and parents.”
While the mentoring and supervisor’s comments about dispositions seemed to focus on professionalism, the student comments reflected in their journals and interviews are less about professional identity and more on disposition-identify as described by Gee (2000-2001). Some examples from the participant’s interviews are as follows.

“She had humor and a soft soothing voice [favored teacher]” Grace

“She was very strict. She didn’t want to budge on anything and she was a fourth grade teacher![least favored teacher]” Grace: Interview

“I am very calm and patient. And a little kid at heart, hoping to make things fun.” Grace: Interview

“I would describe myself as organized. Compassionate. I think it’s important to get to know the students and to know what they like and don’t like.” Ann: Interview

“I think I make parents and students feel very comfortable and that they can approach me any time under any circumstances and I’m not going to bite their heads off or say negative things back to them. I am a very positive person” Beth: Interview

In each of these examples, the three female participants identified D-Identities as their descriptions of teachers. In most cases, the descriptors align with the earlier sub-category of Identity Recognition. What is interesting to note is that the participants use the same adjectives to describe their own dispositions as they use to describe their “favorite” teachers.
David’s identified dispositions, while still very different from his mentor and supervising teachers, also differed from his female counter-parts. In his interview he used more specific and content-based descriptions than adjectives, with positive connotations like the examples given by the female participants.

Interviewer: How would you describe yourself as a teacher now?

David: Student teaching was a very ‘grow up’ experience for me [sigh]. I had to quickly pull it together but I think I have learned a lot. You can get information and you want to make sure the kids get the information, but you have to make sure the kids can explore and have lots of discovery learning….I feel like I’m more mature now. I know when to pick battles and when to let them go.

This excerpt reveals a difference between male and female pre-service teacher candidates.

This data indicates that there is a disconnect between what pre-service teachers understand about dispositions and what colleges and universities assess and look for in regard to this standard. Under the heading of the disposition standard in the final evaluation listed above are five criteria identified as having a caring disposition, communication dispositions, creative dispositions, critical thinking dispositions, and professionalism and ethics. These criteria provide specific direction and precise vocabulary on how a student would meet these standards. Each participant met each criterion during their student teaching placement; however, they did not comment on those aspects in their journals or interviews.
Who a Teacher Is/What a Teacher Does

Pre-service teacher candidate identity recognition is critical for identify development

Understanding the background identity and past experiences of all pre-service teacher candidates involved in teacher preparation is an important step. Also critical is taking prior identity development and seeing how it merges with new development gleaned through experiences happening in the now. Gee (2000-2001) indicates identity in relation to what “kind of person” you are can fall into four different categories. These categories are not independent of each other but can be interwoven in interesting and complex ways. In a profession where *who a person is* can be so intertwined with *how one acts*, it is imperative to understand how a person identifies oneself. This category focused on identity recognition occurring during the student teaching experiences. There were two types of identity recognition: personal and recognition by others. These are sub-categories that were revealed through the data.

*Type of Recognition*

Throughout the different data pieces collected, there were instances of identity recognition in terms of identifying who the participant was becoming and/or the kinds of person he or she was being pressed, sought, or invited to become. This sub-category focused on individual recollection and identification of episodes occurring during the student teaching experience. These experiences are personal in nature so it is only natural that the majority of the data sources came from the participants’ journal entries.
For all of the participants, each listed identity characteristics they felt they possess as a teacher after their student teaching experience. Who they are as a teacher was the focal point for many of the pre-service teacher candidates. Numerous remarks focused on the surface of their identity and did not cause much, if any tension in their development. Some examples from the participants’ data points are as follows:

“I am one of those people who like to follow ‘script’ and if I don’t have it written out, I am not sure what to do”. Grace: Journal

“It’s great working with the kids, but I’m not sure of my place”. David: Journal

“Man, I’m exhausted! It takes a lot to work with younger kids”. David: Journal

“I would describe myself as organized and compassionate. I think it’s important to get to know the kids and what they like and what they don’t like. I would say I am very approachable”. Ann: Interview

“I just felt that this was way out of my comfort zone and it was not what I was used to at all. At first I was very apprehensive about having to deal with this huge class filled with diversity. By the end of my placement I fell in love with them and I could feel them bloom right in front of me”. Beth: Interview

Interestingly, when these surface level episodes of recognition occurred, the participants would compare those acknowledgments to that of their mentoring teacher. In some cases these occurrences would create a tension and strengthen their identity and
resolve in their actions during student teaching. Beth’s journal entry discusses how her students felt when a reward system put in place by the mentoring teacher was taken away and her determination to not have the same philosophy in her own classroom.

“I felt so bad for the kids. The kids were so happy to see that they had gotten ten smiles on the board and they thought they were getting rewarded but my mentor told them that they were working for 40 and that was just ten more added to what they already have. You could see the disappointment on their faces. It broke my heart because they really try hard to get those smiles. I just know that I will be doing it differently in my future classroom no matter what type of reward system I use.”

Her identity was strengthened through this one experience and this experience resulted in an absolute resolve about her future classroom. In this case, Beth acknowledged the change to her identity from one episode. Ann had a similar reflection in her journal in regards to how her mentoring teacher treats the children after a long weekend in her classroom.

“They [the students] weren’t back into a routine yet, nor did they even seem interested in following the normal routine. This didn’t seem to fly with my mentor. I heard what seemed like constant yelling! It is so hard for me to hear that and watch the kids’ reactions. It breaks my heart. I have been trying to make it a point to say at least one nice thing to each student per day.”
While in Beth’s experience, she states her identity change, but Ann alters her actions to exemplify her identity shift from this one experience. She examined the situation and worked to make the change to that experience. How this altered her identity development on a more longitudinal scale is unknown or at least not reflected upon.

David had a strengthening experience that included feelings from his previous K-12 education that carried through to his student teaching. While he may not have recognized it before, it became apparent that this element of his identity is difficult to continue inside a classroom. As he is describing one of his favorite teachers from his past during his interview he uses the following description:

“He [the teacher] was my favorite because he was always willing to answer questions and guide you. The hardest thing for me was letting the kids do things on their own. Failing is part of learning but it’s hard to do. I guess the ones who do guide you and let you fall down if you have to were always the teachers I liked the best…when I was a kid I thought teachers knew everything and the entire Internet was in their heads. And now I know that it isn’t totally true and it’s a lot of work to be a teacher”.

By acknowledging the connection and reflection from David’s former teacher, he feels comfortable making the statement of how difficult teaching can be. His comments show the connection he feels to his favorite teacher and can now acknowledge how he made things look easy when in reality, teaching is very time consuming and difficult.
As described earlier in this chapter, Ann had a difficult placement recognized by both her supervisor and personally in journals and interviews. In her final journal reflection, she talks about how her mentor’s attitude towards the children has altered her identity and impacts how she will be as a teacher.

“As a teacher, you have to have limits; however, if the students are scared of you, they aren’t going to listen to others when you aren’t in the room. I know it will happen, but as a teacher, you shouldn’t purposeful make a student cry. I feel like that is not how we should treat our students. We need to treat them how we want to be treated. On multiple occasions, my mentoring teacher has made students cry and she tells them to save it for their parents. I think that is so wrong! Teachers are known for their compassion, and that’s what you need to show them….I have gained that I don’t want to do that to my students.”

Ann’s student teaching placement seemed to cause a lot of tension within her and hinder some of her identity development. She shares her resolve in conducting her classroom in the opposite manner her mentor does. In all cases but Ann’s, the participants found both positive and negative aspects within their mentoring teacher’s philosophy where they could relate to their own notions and strengthen their identity whether it was equal or opposing ideas. Interestingly, when compared to Gee’s four types of identity, many of the data excerpts were connected to discourse-identity and very few acknowledgements in the other three areas.

Recognition by Others
When discussing identity research in chapter two, several references were made to identity being recognized by others (Beijaard et. al, 2004; Gee, 2000-2001; Moje & Luke, 2009). In this research there were many instances where the pre-service teacher candidates’ identity was recognized by others. The data points ranged across data collection methods in each area except the journal entries. Journals were personal recognition and were listed in the previous sub-category. This category, recognition by others, is specific to others identifying and acknowledging identity in the pre-service teacher candidate.

As with the type of recognition sub-category, many of the comments were surface level comments said during the interview with the mentor or supervisor or written in the case record file. Table 8 lists several of the words used to describe the pre-service teacher candidates. Notice again how when aligned with Gee’s (2000-2001) ways of knowing identity, only discourse-identity and nature-identity were recognized.

Table 8

*Identity Recognition by Others: Descriptive Words*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Teacher Folder</th>
<th>Mentor/Supervisor Interviews</th>
<th>Student Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Cheerful disposition</td>
<td>Made to be a teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated</td>
<td>Respect for children</td>
<td>She thought I was better than I was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to try new things</td>
<td>Poise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td>Determination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Never gives up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>Compassionate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive guidance</td>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcoming</td>
<td>Patient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approachable</td>
<td>Lifelong learner</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In the case record file and mentor/supervisor interviews categories there were many references to character identity or who they are as a person that then carries over into their teaching lives. In the final column of Table 8, student interviews, the two excerpts listed are comments reflected from the mentor and repeated by the pre-service teacher candidate during their interview. It was interesting to see the tension in the pre-service teacher candidates when the recognition of identity from others does not match their own personal thoughts on their identity. In Beth’s case, there were several data points where there was a difference between her impressions and the mentoring teacher and/or the supervisor’s. When talking with her supervising teacher during the interview, the following transcribed:

Interviewer: Beth talked about the fact that she didn’t like the special-education placement as well. It was more difficult than she thought it would be. Her mentoring teacher suggested that she had no idea Beth was thinking that way.

Beth’s Supervisor: I would agree. I would have no idea that she didn’t love the special education setting.

There were other instances with Beth where her personal identity recognition clashed with her mentoring or supervising teacher’s. While in her student teaching placement, there were multiple adults in the room. The following is what her mentor said about Beth’s reaction to adults in the classroom.
“I thought she worked well as a team. We had to team plan and I thought she did well with that. She at first felt like she was really not used to people watching her that often but I think she got more comfortable with that.”

And the following is Beth’s observation of her reaction to the numerous adults in the classroom:

“There were a lot of adults in there at one time and I am not sure that always worked out to our benefit. I think the kids sometimes felt there were too many adults. They would wonder who they needed to listen to and the special education students especially would not so much take me seriously and had a tough time seeing me as an adult.”

In this instance, Beth does not seem to be uncomfortable with the adults as a pre-service teacher candidate but acknowledges that it may be difficult for the kids in the classroom. The recognition of identity from other sources conflicted with the recognition of the individual participant.

David also has a recognition difference with his mentor. She felt that his success in the classroom was apparent and shared this view with his supervisor from the beginning of the experience. His internal recognition suggested that he felt he was in over his head and sinking quickly. There were comments from both his supervisor and mentor stating “I don’t think he gave himself credit for his ability. He really didn’t have the confidence at the beginning and I think he saw that at the end.” “His mentor did say give yourself credit.” “He
needs to not underestimate himself.” David expressed surprise when comments like these were given to him throughout his student teaching placement.

This data indicates the identity recognition from others causes tension, some positive and some negative, in the pre-service teacher candidate. In many cases the participants’ identity was strengthened when this tension occurred, whether it was in agreement or disagreement with their mentoring teacher. Acknowledging what authority figures in student teaching situations see as an identity characteristic as a part of their pre-service teacher candidate needs to be discussed and reflected upon to help identity development occur.

**Experiencing heightened tension helps shape teacher identity**

Student teaching is described by Phlean (2005) as a time when pre-service teacher candidates are asked to take their conception of knowledge and apply it to practice in and already structured K-12 classroom. During this time, Phlean suggest it is important to have these pre-service teachers experience heightened anxiety so they can experience strong emotions and help shape identity. Through these tension-filled moments, identity is shaped and shifted to help a pre-service teacher candidate grow into his or her own craft.

In this study, each of the participants had multiple occurrences of tension that were revealed in each of the data collection methods except the student teaching folder. Some of the data excerpts were interpreted tension that came from the mentoring or supervising teachers, but the majority of the experiences were identified by the pre-service teacher candidate themselves. There were a total of 75 out of 430 data points identified in the
category of tension. Within this category are three sub-categories: institutional pressure, change in philosophy and turning-points. While institutional pressure seemed to be a factor in the pre-service teacher candidates, the other two sub-categories seem to indicate specifically how each of the pre-service teacher candidates developed their identity individually and are described in the next section of this chapter. The institutional pressure theme is described in the following section.

**Institutional Pressure**

It is argued that universities and schools remain “two largely separate worlds that exist side by side” (Beck & Kosnik, 2002, p. 7) which produces distrust and misunderstanding (Bullough, Hobbs, Kauchak, Crow & Stokes, 1997; Bullough, 2005). As a pre-service teacher candidate enters into the world of K-12 education her or he not only feels the tension of the differences between university life and school life, but the pressure placed on K-12 teachers by their districts. In the areas where institutional pressure was exposed, identity development was shaped. This pressure was noted in each participant’s data.

Grace indicates in her interview that the tensions she felt not only came from the school setting, but her mentoring teacher specifically. She states,

“My teacher right off the bat was very strict with the kids. She said things that were not tactful on the very first day to the kids so I knew right away that the placement would be stressful.”
As Grace acknowledged the pressure she feels because of differences between herself and her mentor, her own identity is shaped and strengthened to act in a manor opposite her mentor.

Ann noted several similar comments in her data. For instance,

“I feel that this may be a frustrating placement simply because I feel the stress from [my mentoring teacher] and the schedule that we have to stay on.”

In both cases (Grace and Ann) the mentoring teacher is representing the pressure which they may or may not be experiencing from outside factors. One thing to note is that Grace and Ann are both the traditional participants from the study and they noted many cases where the pressure they felt was from differences between themselves and their mentoring teacher.

Several excerpts were related to the amount of required work and mandated curriculum teachers in K-12 are responsible for.

“I could tell the teachers did not want to spend their afternoon there [professional development].” Ann: Journal

“[Mandated assessments] I think that because this is their first year to do this assessment they are just trying to get through.” Ann: Journal

“One thing that had definitely bothered me this week is all the assessment that has to happen…I understand that it has to be done, but I am somewhat upset about how much time it [the assessment] is taking…I know this is the
reality but I wish I could see these fun things/units instead of assessment.”

Ann: Journal

“Sometimes it was planning and others it was professional development and sometime we would work all day long. So it’s just the extra stuff that you have to be on top of it all, all the time! You can’t stop even after you think you are done. You’re never done.” Beth: Interview

“I could tell that the test days were not only exhausting for the students but the teachers.” David: Journal

“I love that the kids get to explore at their own pace [in this unit], something we don’t do anymore. Maybe that will make a comeback in our standard schools—probably not until NCLB goes away thought.” David: Journal

Each of the comments indicates stress and tension at the center of the institution that the pre-service teacher candidate is a part of. In some cases, it helped the pre-service teacher candidate question the reality of what they will be doing and in others, as with David’s last comment, frustration with mandates that seem to be a never-ending path. This data reveals a disconnect between what preservice teachers expect to see in k-12 classroom settings and what actually happens. In some cases, as with each of the participants in this study, frustration leads to the tension that aided their identity development during this student teaching placement.

As this data indicates, each of the participants felt tension in regards to the differences between the college or university setting and an actual k-12 setting. This tension
created impressions for each of the pre-service teacher candidates and asked them to challenge their identity and how they will ‘fit’ into a classroom after they graduate. These assumptions seem to align with Phlean’s (2005) indications that heightened anxiety and strong emotional experience can help to share identity.

**Mitigating Factors (outer ring of Figure 2)**

**Mentor/Supervisor experience and connections impact a pre-service teacher candidate’s identify development**

Pre-service teacher candidates typically have a multitude of people observing them at any given time during their placements in schools. These observers can be from either the college where they have done preparation work, the school district they are completing their student teaching placement or even a parent spending the day with their child. Though there are many adult observers, two people are consistent throughout the entire placement. The mentoring and supervising teachers both observe, provide feedback, and reflect with the on a pre-service teacher candidate regular basis.

Mentoring teachers provide their classrooms and personal teaching experience to the pre-service teacher candidate and are in constant contact with them throughout the
placement. Supervising teachers are provided by the college and observe weekly or bi-weekly depending on the need of each individual pre-service teacher candidate. Due to the fact that both of these roles are pivotal and consistently present during each student teaching placement, there were many data points that tied to one or both of these persons.

The mentor/supervisor category required excerpts to include information regarding the mentoring or supervising teachers. Three sub-categories emerged from the data. First, it was noted that there were wide background and various capabilities which included philosophies, past experiences, and/or relevant stories shared by the participant or mentor/supervisor in the data collection stage. Second, similarities and differences were consistently compared between the pre-service teacher candidate and the mentor and/or supervisor throughout most different data sources. Finally, affirmations of actions, philosophies, work ethic, and dispositions seemed to be noted across all four sources as well. Each of these three sub-categories is discussed in further detail along with specific data points in the following pages.

**Wide-Ranging Background and Experiences**

The data points that came from this sub-category were primarily through journal entries and interviews. In each of the mentor and supervisor interviews, the secondary participants were asked multiple questions in regards to their background, their own philosophies and experience to set the stage for what they believe about who a teacher is and what a teacher does (Appendix A). This helps to understand what characteristics are being shown to the pre-service teacher candidates every day they are working in their placement.
Some of the mentors and supervisors described their philosophies in many of the same ways the pre-service teacher candidates identified them; however, it is noted that for many of the supervisors, they had a tough time describing what their philosophy is and how it was shown in their classrooms. Each of the supervisors had been out of the classroom for several years and many were retired. One of the supervisors commented about her retirement with the following:

“I consider myself a good teacher and always did consider that I was good. I think one of the reasons for that was because it became too much of my identity. It was too much of what I was. When I retired, I had a very hard time coping with my free time and the change to my identity. It was literally like cutting off my arm. I did not realize it until I made that decision.” PZ: Interview

It should be noted here that while I was able to interview both of Beth and David’s mentor and supervisor, I was only able to interview Ann and Grace’s supervisor as their mentors were unavailable. Of the secondary participants interviewed there were a wide range of years of experience and philosophies presented. Grace shared in her interview in regards to the experience of her supervisor.

“It is nice to have somebody that you can talk to where you feel comfortable and not always worried about your grade being held over your head. It’s nice for them to have teaching experience so we can talk about it in real world situations.”
Some of the differences between the pre-service teacher candidate and their mentor and/or supervisor caused a variety of issues throughout the student teaching placement.

**Finding Similarities and/or Differences.**

As listed in the sub-category above, pre-service teacher candidates spend the majority of their time observing and discussing teaching strategies with their mentors and supervisors. As these pre-service teacher candidates interact they find and identify different characteristics, teaching points, and/or philosophy traits that they see as parallel or contradictory to their own viewpoints. The data showed that depending on the level of tension or strength the pre-service teacher candidate found in the viewpoint shown, it provided some reassurances to their thinking. The sub-category labeled affirmation is discussed in more detail in the next section. For the purposes of this sub-category, I am indicating the acknowledgement of similarities and differences the data expressed.

The majority of the data points included in this sub-category came from the pre-service teacher candidate’s journal. This journal was a requirement of the college and the students were asked to write a minimum of two times per week reflecting on what was happening in their classrooms, with the mentor, as well as any other experiences they wanted to share. These journals are reviewed by the supervisor only. In her journal, Ann acknowledges that she and her mentoring teacher do not share philosophies in any way but still manage to get along on a personal basis. She states,
“It was really weird because we get along on a personal basis but on a teaching basis we did not get along at all. I’m more about letting the kids talk and learn through socializing and she was more about the room being silent”.

Beth found similarities with her mentor as well, but confesses a feeling of discomfort that she interprets as dislike from a co-teacher who shares the room with her and her mentoring teacher.

“I know it is hard for [the additional teacher] to sit back and just observe because she has even said that it is really different but it allows her to really take a step back and reevaluate her teaching.”

While each of these differences or similarities are identified, it seems only a portion of them create an emotion within the pre-service teacher candidate that aids or hinders an identity change or shift. When the similarities are identified and the connation strong enough the participant does acknowledge that his or her identity has been reinforced. When there is a difference that causes high amounts of tension, the pre-service teacher candidates strengthen his or her identity, but still contradicts their mentoring teacher. The results from these data ask the question, “How can we help create high tension or strong similarities within the student teaching semester to aid in identity development?”

**Affirmations**

Affirmations are termed as the act of affirming, something affirmed: a positive assertion. This sub-category was determined because it seemed that there were instances where the participants made a realization that seemed to affirm something within their
philosophy, identity, pedagogy, and/or dispositions. In some instances, as listed in the previous section, there weren’t necessarily strong determination in either positive or negative aspects, but those acclamations were present. In this sub-category there were personal affirming statements present with the observation of the mentor and/or supervisor. Each of the participants shared instances of this affirmation so I will share examples from each pre-service teacher candidate.

David had the least amount of data points under this category. Throughout his entire placement in a special education classroom he second-guessed himself by his own admission. Throughout his interview transcripts, mentor and supervisor interview, and journal entries he questions his capabilities despite his mentor and supervisors contradictory and positive comments both in writing and vocally. His mentoring teacher continually stated she would encourage David to give himself credit for all his hard work. With this participant, he seemed to need his own affirmation to confirm or deny his ability and identity as an educator. Towards the end of his placement he wrote in his journal,

“I was pretty pleased with myself for being able to keep the kids entertained and learning until [my mentor] came back”.

Throughout all of the data collected he seemed reluctant to admit his positive attributes as an educator, especially of students with needs and younger children.

Grace’s experience during her placement was, admittedly, a difficult experience for her. Early in her interview she states,
“My teacher right off the bat was very strict with the kids. She said not tactful things to the kids the very first day so I knew right off the bat that the placement was going to be stressful.”

She seemed to find so many differences between her mentor teacher and her own personal and professional philosophy that she stated feeling her own identity strengthening. She shares later in her interview the following

“At one point she [the mentoring teacher] said there were only three weeks left and she would have control back of her classroom. She said it right in front of the class in that tone. At that point it was easy to say that it wouldn’t both me, but after school it really did. It brought my confidence way down.”

In Grace’s case, her supervisor was the opposing force that helped to pull her back up after continually being pushed down. During the interview of her supervisor she states that:

“The mentor was very harsh, if not unprofessional with her own students. She had incredible difficulty turning over the classroom to Grace, which caused her to feel less than adequate on more than one occasion. However, because Grace chose to stay with her mentor and the class and due to the fact that she not only survived but also thrived regardless of the mentor’s behavior, she proved to herself that she is much stronger, smarter and braver than she once gave herself credit for. This was a huge epiphany for Julie and one for which we both are extraordinarily grateful!”
Ann had a different experience than the others. She acknowledged similarities and differences with both her mentor and supervisor, but it was the students’ recognition that affirmed her philosophy and strengthened her identity and teaching capabilities. She acknowledges that she has a different noise level acceptance than her mentor and has a certain belief in how you should treat students, but most of her comments are a concern for the students’ feelings and motivation to learn. Ann shared in her journal the following,

“One thing that has been difficult for me lately is how many of the students are treated. My mentor is a great person, but I feel that she is very harsh with/to the students.”

This comment comes up four different times in this journal. Always the focus is the students and their needs.

Beth had the most data points recognizing affirmation from mentors or supervisors. She had many comments that indicated she had an equal partnership with her mentoring teacher as well as the other paraprofessionals in the classroom. Beth’s mentor states in her interview that,

“Compared to some traditional students, some can be responsible, but just with all of her experiences, married at twenty and having kids and her work experiences, even her family background helped Beth to have a very nurturing attitude that was ready to go. She really knew what she wanted which is great to see. I do not see traditional students with that edge.”
While Beth’s age and life experience may have helped her become a peer in her placement classroom, she heard words like valued, prepared, equal, and advanced to help to set the stage for her identity to be affirmed.

The data from this theme indicate the variety of experiences each pre-service teacher received during this paramount semester. Each of the participants learned something from their mentor and supervisor, the question then remains, “Is it best to have a mentor and supervisor with ample experience while still aligning with the pre-service teacher candidate’s philosophy or is the tension beneficial for the pre-service teacher candidate in developing identity?”

The data reported in the previous sections has attempted to answer the first question in this research. What factors contribute to or hinder a pre-service teacher’s professional identity formation? There were many themes represented identifying eight different factors that contribute to identity during the student teaching semester. Each of the themes presented provided corresponding data points, a description, and a reflection on what the data indicates.

**Summary of Research Question #1**

The first research question focused on factors that affect preservice teacher candidates’ professional identity formation. After the data analysis process was complete, a total of eight themes emerged. For each of the eight themes a claim was made, data was provided to support the claim and finally connections to current research and/or practical educational benefits were presented.
The first theme identified that a pre-service teacher candidate’s past experiences affect their identity development during student teaching. It was noted that both a pre-service teacher candidate’s identity recognition from prior experiences and family connections played a pivotal role in all participants but in different ways. The traditional students both had strong family connections and could convey positive feelings towards a prior teacher that lead them to the path of educational preparation. Neither of the non-traditional students had family connections to education and could discuss their k-12 experiences, but in vague remembrance.

The second theme acknowledged that a teacher’s views on classroom management impacts identity development. Again, within this theme there were discrepancies between the non-traditional students and the traditional students. The non-traditional students focus on how management was affected due to the students in their classroom’s home lives and the traditional students focused on how the classroom was run by the mentoring teacher. Another noteworthy element of this factor that affects identity development is that management is not an area that is assessed on the mid and final evaluations, but is discussed often in the pre-service teacher candidate’s journals.

The next factor that affects a pre-service teacher candidate’s identity development is that a teacher’s content area knowledge determines how he or she teaches. This theme supports previous research indicating that content area knowledge of teachers is being researched less and pedagogy, management, and dispositions more. Only the non-traditional students commented on the difficult nature of the content they were being asked to present during their lessons. While college preparation programs typically require students to
maintain a particular grade point average and take specific courses, the content knowledge they exude during their time student teaching appears to be a minimal aspect.

The fourth theme presented in this chapter indicates that a teacher’s pedagogy or teaching philosophy impacts his or her identity development. This factor was revealed in all four data collection methods and occurred the most number of times throughout the data (82/430 total excerpts). This factor was common among all four of the participants; however, the non-traditional students focused more on their own teaching through reflection and questioning the impact they made on their students. Both traditional students focused more on their mentor’s pedagogical decisions and the differences they would have done if they were the lead teacher.

The next theme that was discussed in this chapter identified that a teacher’s involvement in or engagement with students (dispositions) affects development. In this study, all of the female participants noted disposition-identity characteristics throughout their journals and interviews. Interestingly, the D-Identity characteristics used to describe themselves coincided with the individual teacher’s description of their favored teacher from their own elementary experiences.

The next factor that affects a pre-service teacher candidate’s identity development is that recognition is critical for identity development. Each of the participants experienced identity development throughout their student teaching experience. One interesting note was that when there was a discrepancy between what the pre-service teacher candidate identifies on their own personal identity and what their supervisor or mentor describe, a tension occurs that can impact in positive or negative ways, depending on the situation.
Pre-service teacher candidates must experience heightened tension to help shape teacher identity. Tension was apparent through three modes of themes: (a) institutional pressure, (b) change in philosophy and (c) turning-points. Changes in philosophy and turning-points were very individual tensions experiences and are discussed in more length under the second research questions. However, the institutional pressure was present for each of the four participants. The data revealed that there is disconnect between what pre-service teacher candidates are expecting a k-12 classroom to look and feel like and how it actually operates.

The final factor which affects a pre-service teacher candidate’s identity development is the mentor/supervisor experience and connections. Throughout the student teaching semester, pre-service teacher candidates are in contact with many people, but the mentor and supervisor are at the top of the list. Each participant acknowledges learning from their mentor and supervisor; however, when the tension is too great, there seems to be less room for growth and identify development.

**Research Question #2: How Pre-Service Teacher Candidates Form Their Professional Identities During Placement in Their Student Teaching Experience**

The data from this dissertation attempts to not only answer the question of specific factors that aid or hinder a pre-service teacher’s professional identify formation, but how these specific pre-service teacher candidates report forming their identities during their student teaching experience. Each of the participants had different placements with different mentors and supervisors present. For each of the participants their identify formation was personal and different. While some aspects may have been similar, this data reveals that
identity development is indeed extremely complex and personal. For each of the participants listed below, I provide a dialogue of their identity development throughout their student teaching experience.

### David

David is a non-traditional white male student. He began his education career in 2009 seeking an elementary education degree as well as a liberal arts degree with endorsements in reading, special education, and early childhood. His previous degree earned in 2002 was a bachelor of arts in mass communication with an area of specialization in public relations and a minor in art history studies. Prior to going back to school, David worked as an office coordinator, concierge/receptionist for a staffing agency, front desk clerk and manager at a local hotel, and as a sales associate at Pottery Barn Kids. He has lived in various places across the United States including Louisiana, New York, and the Midwest. He is married and has no children.

In his student teaching placement, David was seen as a very intellectual, student-centered teacher but had very little confidence in his abilities as an educator. His mentor and supervisor provided comments stating,

“I don’t think he gave himself credit for his ability. He really didn’t have the confidence at the beginning and I think he saw that at the end. At the beginning of his placement he was very shaky.”

David himself noted in his journal that his mentor and supervisor would praise a lesson that he felt did not go very well.
David’s journal provided an excellent look into his thoughts and feelings during his student teaching placement. At one point he states,

“I’m having mixed feelings about teaching. I love working with the kids but I’m not 100% comfortable teaching another person’s lessons. It makes it very difficult for me. I just need to buckle down and get into the groove.”

Later he states,

“I’m getting much more comfortable in the role of teacher.”

David also noted in his interview the differences between college work and student teaching.

“It’s [college classrooms] a fantasy world of teaching. What you have to do [in a k-12 classroom] is mandated by a group of people who never taught and student teaching is giving you this fair warning of what’s to come. I would have things piled on me and wanted to scream that there’s only eight hours a day I can take these kids with me without teaching all through the night also.”

While David didn’t have any specific “turning-point” moments, it seemed as though experience in the classroom gave him more confidence and allowed him to reflect on his professional identity as a teacher. He did not necessarily agree with his mentor’s philosophy but felt that their ideal of “kids getting what they needed to know and doing things on their level” helped him to grow and learn in the mentor’s classroom.

Grace
Grace is a traditional female student who maintains a grade point average of 3.85. She began her college career in August of 2008 after graduating from a small high school in Iowa where she was inducted into the National Honor Society and graduated at the top ten percent of the class. Grace graduated with an Elementary Education degree as well as a Liberal Arts degree with endorsements in reading and early childhood. Her work experience includes being a child care provider (nanny), wellness center receptionist, and recreation center staff facilitator. She has been involved in a variety of activities and clubs while in college. Some of these activities include Education Club, Delta Sorority, Dean’s List, London Study Abroad experience, and teaching assistant at a local middle school.

Grace had a difficult placement as identified by both herself and her supervisor. In fact, during her interview her supervisor stated,

“Grace’s mentor provided no immediate feedback…ever. The mentor was very harsh, if not unprofessional with her students. She had incredible difficulty turning over the classroom to Grace, which caused her to feel less than adequate on more than one occasion.”

Despite the differences and sometimes animosity between Grace and her mentor, Grace still formed her identity through other channels.

While Grace’s placement used for this research was not a suitable match, she had previous placements where the mentor/mentee relationship lasted. She shared this statement in her interview,
“I was kind of in a slump [during this placement] and my previous mentor pulled me aside after school one day and we talked for an hour. She said that I was meant to do this. Afterwards I kept going back to that and I kept reminding myself that I can do this. I saw a quote online [later that day] that said to have confidence on the inside you have to have confidence on the outside. That really helped me put thing into perspective during this placement.”

With the support of previous mentors and reflection, Grace developed her identify during this student teaching placement. In her final reflection of the student teaching experience she states,

“We need to treat them [students] how we want to be treated. On multiple occasions, my mentoring teacher has made students cry and tells them to save it for their parents. I think that is so wrong! Teachers are known for their compassion, and that’s what you need to show them.”

Also at the end of her placement she reflected that she was glad it was over, but still managed to take away a lot from the experience.

Ann

Ann is a traditional female student who graduated in the spring 2012 with degrees in both elementary education and liberal arts with endorsements in reading, early childhood and special education. After graduating from an Iowa high school, Ann followed her older sister to this small private college in the Midwest. While a student here, Ann was involved in many activities including
education club, intermural sports, work-study, and babysitting for surrounding families. Before graduating high school Ann had spent many hours in her mother’s kindergarten classroom.

As stated previously, Ann knew she wanted to be a teacher as early as high school. She identified that her philosophy was already in her mind and has been more of a slight shaping than major changes in her years at college. Ann’s personality is self-described as an “easy going person and very laid back and go with the flow”. This may have caused her to see many positives in reflecting on her student teaching placement. The following are transcripts from Ann’s supervising teacher.

Interviewer: Can you think of any events that happened during this placement that may have caused Ann to really think about herself as a teacher and what she was doing?

Ann’s Supervisor: The mentor she had really handled the classroom in a strict, firm way. Sometimes she bordered on scaring the kids into doing what she wanted them to do. One day she was gone and so Ann was in charge. You could feel the tension drop and the kids changed and they had such a wonderful day I feel this was a turning point for Ann. It really reinforced what she felt all along.

Interviewer: Do you think she would have had the same realization if she would have been with somebody that had a similar philosophy to hers?

Ann’s Supervisor: I think that she needed to see the difference before she was sure that she felt that was the right way. She really felt in a tough spot. And
I think there were points in this placement where she questioned if she could go on.

In her journal, Ann reflected on this day with the same attitude.

“The sub and I talked in the morning and decided I would do most of the teaching because I knew the routine. The day went great! The kids had fun. I had fun and we got everything done that needed to be done. “

Ann’s identity was strengthened from her initial feelings at the start of her experience not from examples of what she would want to do in her classroom, although she does identify classroom design and building schedule she thought were beneficial, but what she and her mentor did not agree philosophically with. This shaped Ann’s identity and solidified her professional identity that was already in place.

Beth

Beth is a white, non-traditional female student seeking an elementary education degree as well as a liberal arts degree with endorsements in reading and early childhood. Beth is not only a non-traditional student, but she is also considered a transfer student into this small private college. Her first degree was obtained in August 2010 at a surrounding community college. From there she transferred and began coursework for her education degree. Prior to working on her degrees she worked as a lead teacher, on-site supervisor, and assistant preschool teacher at a neighboring development center and preschool. Before settling in the Midwest, Beth graduated high school in Pennsylvania. From there she and her husband, who was in the service, traveled all over the world settling in a variety of
places; one of which being Germany. Beth, her husband and three kids now live in a neighboring town.

Of all the participants in this study, Beth had the most prior experience with education and teaching. During her interview she states,

“I think it’s different with me than the other students because I’ve had so much life experiences. That I really kind of had my philosophy built in ahead of time. I learned a lot during my schooling, but it was more tweaking my philosophy than building it. As my last mentor said, you already have your philosophy in place, some of the experience will change it and they have a little bit.”

At the beginning of her placement Beth felt as though she had to please her mentor. In her journal she notes that she needs to open up and please herself and her students first. This was a turning point that gave Beth the confidence to become part of the teaching team in her placement as opposed to a student. Beth was in a unique situation where she was in a room that team-taught. Her mentoring teacher and another teacher co-planned all of the teaching activities. Shortly after this reflection, she shares an incident in her journal where she stood her ground with the co-teacher.

“I stood my ground and told her that we were going to keep the original song. My mentor was within ear range and later told me she was glad that I held my own and voiced my opinion.”
Teaching with multiple adults in the classroom was difficult for Beth at the beginning, but as the placement went on, she became more comfortable at assigning tasks and providing direction the other adults in the classroom. As indicated at the beginning, Beth strengthened her identity through this placement and worked more as a co-teacher than a pre-service teacher candidate for the majority of the time.

**Summary of Research Question #2**

The data presented above seem to indicate that each of the pre-service teacher candidates did form identity during their student teaching placement. The differences on how that identity formed are an intriguing phenomenon. David needed time to grow and learn, Ann and Beth both had major turning-points to aid in their identity development, and Grace’s discord with her mentor teacher and support from outside forces created an experience for each to be successful in their student teaching placement and form their professional identity. Chapter 5 will discuss the implications and future research this data supports.
CHAPTER 5 – TEACHER IDENTITY FORMATION: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This case study examined teacher identity development among four pre-service teacher candidates during their student teaching experience in a small Midwestern Liberal Arts College. Guided by three competing yet complimentary theoretical frameworks for investigating teacher professional identities (e.g., Gee, 2000-2001; Bijaard, Meijer, & Verloop; Moje & Luke, 2009), the study focused on two closely related research questions: (a) what factors contributed to or hindered the identity formation of these four pre-service teacher candidates?, and (b) how did their professional identity develop or evolve as exposed through the student teaching experience?

Study participants consisted of four pre-service teacher candidates: one male and three females. All four were recruited from a large group of pre-service teacher candidates who were completing an undergraduate teacher education program at a small Midwestern Liberal Arts College. Two of the participants were considered non-traditional students while the remaining two were traditional students entering college straight from high school. The data examined for purposes of this study consisted of two sets of interviews—one conducted with the four teacher candidates; the other with their teacher mentors or supervisors—and an examination of case record artifacts and work samples. Qualitative data analysis methods were used to extract themes from the data obtained, which then helped shed light on the two key questions in the study.

An examination of the data obtained revealed a total of eight themes, which can be tied directly to students’ past world experiences, experience and connections with teachers and mentors, student recognition of their own identities, student knowledge of subject
matter, teaching pedagogy, teacher dispositions, classroom management, and differing tensions. Analyses of these themes highlight the various factors which contributed to these students’ identity development and the source of influence for their developing identities as aspiring teachers.

The first research question focused on factors that affect pre-service teacher candidates’ professional identity formation. After the data analysis process was complete, a total of eight themes emerged. For each of the eight themes a claim was made, data was provided to support the claim and finally connections to current research and/or practical educational benefits were presented. There were differences among the non-traditional and traditional students as well as across genders. Key factors that affect a pre-service teacher candidate’s identity development were identified as the following:

- A pre-service teacher candidate’s past experiences affect his or her identity development during student teaching.
- A teacher’s views on classroom management impacts identity development.
- A teacher’s content area knowledge determines how he or she teaches.
- A teacher’s pedagogy or teaching philosophy impacts his or her identity development.
- A teacher’s involvement in or engagement with students’ affects development (dispositions).
- Pre-service teacher candidate identity recognition is critical for identity development.
- Experiencing heightened tension helps shape teacher identity.
Mentor/Supervisor experience and connections impact a pre-service teacher candidate’s identity development.

The results presented in chapter four in reference to the second research question indicate that each of the pre-service teacher candidates did form identity during their student teaching placement. The differences on how that identity formed are an intriguing phenomenon. David needed time to grow and learn, Ann and Beth both had major turning-points to aid in their identity development, and Grace’s discord with her mentor teacher and support from outside forces created an experience for each to be successful in their student teaching placement and form their professional identity.

The next section provides a discussion of how the findings from this study relate and support the theoretical frameworks and previous research. In this section, a new figure is proposed in response to the results of the analysis of all data from this study.

As the idea of “Who a teacher is” truly blends with “What a teacher does” the themes found in the data analysis process merge together in new and interesting ways. Pre-service teacher candidates bring to college with them years of experience in classrooms of varying success and accomplishments. These early experiences have left impressions and begun the process of identity formation in each pre-service teaching candidate. Professional identity appears to be on a continuum which is constantly shifting and reshaping to form identity through experiences and reflection.

What a teacher does inside his or her classroom as well as outside is of great consideration and concern for professional identity development. As Bullough (1997) suggests so much of what beginning teachers believe about teaching and learning is of vital
concern to education and is the basis for meaning-making and decision making. As the data indicated there were many factors that aided or hampered identity development during the student teaching semester. They factors are not isolated events that occur independent of each other, but merge to help or hinder a pre-service teacher candidate’s identity development.

As indicated in the data from both the journals and pre-service teacher candidate interviews, content area knowledge was referenced minimally compared to classroom management, dispositions, and pedagogy. In pre-service education classrooms across the country, our focus lies in management, dispositions, and pedagogy as instructional strategies emerge. This is not to imply that content knowledge is in any way lower in the minds of professors, but simply less focused on and explicitly taught.

Beijard and his colleagues (1999) report that traditionally content knowledge has been a relevant part of a teacher’s professional knowledge base; however, in recent years, it has become more accepted that teaching is a complex occupation encompassing classroom management, facilitator of knowledge, researcher, etc. The data from this study shows a lack of engagement with content knowledge questions or ideas during the study teaching placement. Teacher preparation programs have become so involved with pedagogy, dispositions, and classroom management that content knowledge seems as though it is assumed that pre-service teachers have this skill as demonstrated through tests such as the C-Base, ACT, Praxis II or an alternate standardized assessment.

As Iowa moves forward in the Common Core initiative, more requirements are being placed on pre-service teachers for licensure. One new policy that has recently been sent to
institutions is the implementation of the required Praxis II to be passed by all students wishing to become licensed. Not only do students need to pass the pedagogy portion of the assessment but also a content specific portion. With all of these new requirements and the support of previous research (Beijaard, et. al, 1999; Hoyle & John, 1995), colleges and universities with education programs must make content knowledge requirements and reflections consistent and regular. This will help students see the importance of this aspect of teaching in addition to pedagogy, classroom management, and dispositions.

The three frameworks introduced in this study have stood alone in other research prior to this study. By blending these three competing yet complimentary frameworks, new insight is provided into the development of identity for pre-service teaching candidates. The initial framework model (see Figure 1) represents a blending of the frameworks while still allowing for some isolation among the three theories. After analysis of the data, these three frameworks show that there is a great amount of blending between who a teacher is, what a teacher does, as well as other mitigating factors that affect identify development. Figure 3 shows a representation of all themes found in the data. This figure is proposed as a model that pre-service programs should work from to show the connection and importance of the involved factors that aid or hinder identity development.

This figure shows the relationship between what a teacher does, who they are, as well as outside factors in a new relationship. The data indicates that what a teacher does is in the center of the student teaching experience, but what a teacher is, what they bring with them in terms of philosophy, identity, and pre-conceived notions about teaching, impact what they do. Also creating an impact on what a teacher does, are factors that are out of a
pre-service teacher candidate’s control. Their mentoring and supervising teachers’ past experience and philosophy, their own past experiences and/or how identity is recognized by others. Some of these factors may be controlled by the pre-service teacher candidate but many times they have no control over these themes. These outside factors and a teacher’s identity of who they are directly impact what they do and in turn, management, content knowledge, pedagogy, and dispositions.

Figure 3: What a Teacher Does
Implications

College and universities can aid in the dissection of factors that promote professional identity development by providing relevant content knowledge discussions alongside content area coursework. By teaching across the curriculum, students can see the relevance in their liberal arts or general education studies and how that impacts their instructional decisions as a teacher. Also, pre-service programs can provide explicit questions for pre-service teacher candidates to reflect on during their student teaching placement(s) that provide opportunities to expand and think critically about their own identities. These explicit questions can also direct pre-service teachers to think about all ways they can know their identities as defined by Gee’s four categories of identity (2000-2001). Finally, allowing students ample time to practice teaching in a non-threatening environment will help to create a space where identity development can happen. Allowing more role-playing sceneries to take place in college classrooms, videotaping teaching sessions, or even requiring more teaching examples of a longer period of time will help pre-service teacher candidates gain confidence and make the transition from student to teacher more seamlessly.

As discussed previously, the data related to question two, how do professional identities develop or evolve as revealed through the student teaching experience, each of the participants formed their professional identity in unique and interesting ways. While this is true, each pre-service teacher candidate also noted how stressful and draining student teaching can be. Making the connections between college coursework and practical application can be a difficult transition for many. In the data presented, all of the participants but David seemed to notice and reflect on the affirmations of the mentor and/or
supervisor. Focusing on the gender differences, it was noted that three female participants all identified feelings, both positive and negative, when their philosophy, teaching, presentation, and or dispositions were affirmed by their mentor. The one male participant noted very few instances where his philosophy or identity was affirmed by his mentor or supervisor. Some of these affirmations or the lack of them caused tension in the pre-service teacher candidate.

The data revealed that tension was present in each of the participants’ student teaching experiences. Much of the tension was caused by the mentor/ pre-service teacher candidate relationship and alignment of philosophies. If pre-service education institutions can match the philosophy of the pre-service teacher candidate with that of the mentor they are placed with, some of that tension may subside. While Grace was able to form her professional identity in spite of the differences between her and her mentor’s philosophies, the question is would the transition have been smoother? Would the formation be greater?

There are several issues with this suggestion. First, is that many institutions have a “take anyone willing” philosophy on placing pre-service teacher candidates in practicum or student teaching experiences simply because the numbers needed for these placements in proximity to the college or university are simply not available. A second issue with this suggestion is that many people have a pre-determined view of what a teacher should be. This idea could sway some pre-service teacher candidates to appear, on any application, the need to align with those predetermined thoughts. As indicated in the data, students Discourse-Identity, as recognized by others as well as self-recognized, used words such as kind, caring, nice, positive, etc. to describe what a teacher should be. There is room in
education for teachers with all different types of D-identity and students benefit from those various aspects of identity represented in our teaching population.

Results demonstrate that each student’s path to identity development is individual and personal. This can make the task seem daunting to aid in a pre-service teacher candidates’ development; however, by understanding that the continuum of identity is individual, colleges and universities can help by providing the space, time, and experiences to allow pre-service teacher candidates to examine their own personal identity and the growth that they need to make individually.

As a final step, recommendations are proposed that target first toward those in the field who design and deliver professional development for educators working with pre-service teaching candidates and second toward researchers who conduct research on teacher identity development in pre-service candidates as well as first and second year teachers. The conclusions of this study lead to recommendations which impact various areas of pre-service education and which also pertain to various groups of stakeholders in the process of teacher preparation and professional development. These groups include researchers, policymakers, teacher educators and teacher preparation faculty, school system leaders, school administrators and teachers themselves. Accordingly, recommendations are organized below as they pertain to the following groups of stakeholders, in the realms of practice as well as future research.
Recommendations for practice

The study found that pre-service teacher candidates all develop their identity at different rates and in different ways. However, there are some core factors that affect identity development during their student teaching placement. Teacher preparation programs need to help their students better understand their own personal identity and aid them in continuing the process of developing that identity as they leave college and enter into the workplace. Accordingly, there are five recommendations for teacher preparation programs:

1. Focus more on what the pre-service teacher candidate knows about the subject they’re teaching during the student teaching experience in both evaluation and reflection.

   Content areas knowledge is measured by grades and specific courses taken in a pre-service teachers’ college preparation program. For example, elementary education pre-service teachers must take a science course in life science, physical science, and biological science to satisfy their content knowledge requirements for science. These same students must take two courses in math. This coursework is assumed to be enough to show they have adequate content base to teach that content area. These students then take methods courses in each content area (math, science, reading, social studies). Teacher preparation programs spend ample time in training elementary education students in content area knowledge, but then only briefly discuss or assess this area during student teaching.
As education expectations rise, content knowledge must be more prevalent during the student teaching semester. Focusing on the content of the lessons pre-service teacher candidates lead, assessing those knowledge bases, and reflecting upon those experiences is critical for educational growth. Mentors must assess pre-service teacher candidates through discussion and review of plans prior to a lesson being taught. Supervisors should reflect on the depth of the content knowledge shown for a lesson taught and question the detail and research a pre-service teacher candidate conducted prior to teaching the lesson. This aspect of what a teacher does is a critical element of teaching and should be assessed, reflected upon, and discussed as a part of a pre-service teacher candidate’s review.

2. Encourage closer collaboration among schools and universities so as to promote shared educational philosophies between mentor teachers and pre-service teachers.

   Tensions are a part of student teaching as apparent in the data revealed in this study. While some tension can be beneficial and aid in identity development, constant tension with the classroom structure and mentor can create an imbalance between growth and determent. As some of the participants noted, they were unreceptive to feedback from a mentor due to the lack of consistency with philosophies. If education preparation programs made an effort to match the philosophies of mentor and pre-service teacher candidate, tension would still be a part of the learning process, but would strike the balance needed to try new things and expand identity development.

3. Colleges and K-12 schools must provide independent practice without pressure.
Along with attempting to match pre-service teacher candidates and mentors with like philosophies, educational programs must provide independent practice without pressure early in a pre-service teacher’s coursework. The data revealed that two of the participants were allowed to teach independently while their mentor was absent or out of the room. This experience lowered the pressure and allowed the pre-service teacher candidates to teach independently without the pressure that is typically present when they are being observed. Allowing students to practice without pressure should provide them with the opportunity to critique their lessons without fear of failure. This experience will permit honest and open reflection among supervisor, mentor, and pre-service teacher.

4. Teach in ways that promote and support pre-service teachers’ reflective practices throughout the student teaching experience.

As the data revealed, the traditional students focus was on perfection while the non-traditional students would take risks and reflect honestly on the students’ responses to the lessons, mentor comments, and their own impressions. Starting early in a preparation program identifying the positive impacts reflection has on the growth of teachers will help aid in a pre-service teacher candidate’s ability to take chances and critically critique their own lessons and philosophies.

5. Teach pre-service teachers to develop awareness and importance of teacher identity as an important aspect of effective teacher development.

Teaching is a profession where who you are impacts what you do. Teachers at every level must be able to identify their own ways of knowing themselves (Gee,
The data in this study revealed that pre-service teacher candidates identify disposition-identity characteristics only. If teachers know themselves at a deeper level across multiple identity categories, it can enhance what we do in the classroom. Teacher preparation programs need to aid students in identifying these “ways of knowing” starting in their methods courses as they begin teaching lessons in K-12 classrooms.

Recommendations for future research

Research in this area has been consistently growing in the last several years (Britzman, 1986; Hong, 2012; Ingersoll, 2003; Mahan, 2010; etc.). This research has added to our knowledge base in regards to teachers and their professional identity development. The data, discussion, and implications from this study suggest three suggestions for future research.

1. Study pre-service teacher candidates’ identity formation throughout their teacher preparation program

   This study focused on only one semester of a teacher preparation program. If we truly want to understand how identity develops in pre- and in-service teachers we must be willing to take the time to investigate their identity formation over several years beginning with their entrance into college through their first few years of teaching. This length of time can show us the multiple ways in which a participant manages, alters, and negotiates their identity and which factors proved to be the most beneficial in their identity formation.
2. Investigate the effects of differing educational philosophies and teaching orientations on pre-service teacher identity development and teacher quality.

In each of the four participants from this study, there was tension present during their student teaching semester experience. Researchers have indicated this tension impacts identity development in both positive and negative ways for pre-service teachers (Flores & Day, 2006; Smagorinsky, et al., 2004). This phenomenon needs to be studied further. The data indicated that the amount of tension within the student teaching semester seemed to imply positive or negative identity development. For example, one participant felt tension from the school requirements which sediment her philosophy and strengthened her identity. However, another participant felt severe tension that stemmed from the differences between her mentor and herself. This tension created questions about the participant’s teaching, identity, and self-esteem.

There are many factors that will make this topic difficult to research; however, finding the answers to the question of how a pre-service teacher candidate forms their identity with a mentor with matching philosophy will help aid identity research. Identity is always forming, but the question remains, will it form stronger and with more ease if there is a mentor who shares the philosophy of their pre-service teacher candidate?

3. Conduct research studies aimed at determining the impact of teacher identity development on teacher effectiveness.
The model presented in Figure 5.1 shows a new way of thinking about what a teacher does and all of the impacting factors identified in this study. By isolating the factors which affect identity, researchers can indicate how to ease some of the tension felt during the sometimes stressful student teaching semester and possibly into the first few years of teaching. For this suggestion to make an impact on teacher identity development, it would be most effective to conduct a longitudinal study, analyzing the impact of identity over several years of education as well as the first several years of teaching. With the high attrition rates of teachers’ (Ingersoll, 2003; Quality Counts, 2000), studies with this topic can aid the conversation as to why teachers are leaving in the first few years of having their own independent classroom.

4. Conduct research on early childhood, elementary, and secondary pre-service teacher candidates.

This study was focused on elementary education pre-service teacher candidates. It would be interesting to see if similar findings would occur if alternate grade level/areas were studies. For example, pedagogy and dispositions contained extremely high data points compared to other categories when considering factors that affect identity and content knowledge was relatively low. It would be interesting to see if, when studying secondary pre-service teacher candidates, the results would be the same or reverse.
Limitations

This study was designed to provide qualitative information about pre-service teacher candidates’ identity development during one placement of their semester of student teaching as well as factors that affect identity development during this time. The study results are limited to this particular population of pre-service teacher candidates and have a number of limitations in regards to the participants and the study itself.

The study population consisted of only four pre-service teacher candidates all in their final semester of the college preparation programs. Every attempt was made to distribute gender equally through the study; however, male students in education are low in numbers in the majority of teacher preparation programs at the elementary level. Also, in reference to the participants, only four were selected to allow for deep understanding and rich description; however, the low numbers of participants will make generalizability of findings beyond the study difficult.

The research setting in this study is limiting. This small private school has little to no diversity among college students or faculty and limited experiences with urban teaching for pre-service candidates. While each student spends a minimum of one practicum experience in an urban setting, for many students the rest of their time in classrooms is spent in rural elementary settings with less diversity apparent.

The final limitation is the focus on the student teaching semester only. Identity is developed through a person’s life and focusing on this one semester of student teaching may limit some data that could be revealed by conducting a longitudinal study of identity over all four years of college preparation and into the first few years of teaching.
References


APPENDIX A: GUIDEING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Mentoring/Supervisor Teacher Interview Protocol

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher will remind the mentoring teacher that they can skip any question during the interview process.

**Introductory Questions**
- Name of individual and age
- Schooling background (preschool, elementary, high school, college, other?)
- Have you always taught here? If not, where else have you attended?
- What would you consider to be elements of who you are as a teacher?
- What do you do as a teacher to show how you are as a person?

**Student Teacher Specifics**
- What are some characteristics that you would use to describe _______________?
- How did he/she change from the beginning of his/her time with you to the end of their placement?
- What are some strengths you see in this person as a teacher?
- What are some weaknesses or suggestions for improvement you would suggest?
- Were there any specific instances where you saw a shift in _______________ that you think altered their ideas on teaching or own personal idea of how they are as a teacher?
APPENDIX B: GUIDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Pre-Service Teacher Interview Protocol

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher will remind the participant that they can skip any question during the interview process.

**Introductory Questions**

Name of individual and age

Schooling background (preschool, elementary, high school, college, other?)

**Background Information**

CONGRATS!! You are done student teaching!! How does it feel??

What grade level were you student teaching in for the last half of the semester?

How did it go?

How did you get along with your mentoring teacher?

How did you get along with your supervisor?

When did you know you wanted to be a teacher? What factors helped you make this decision?

Who was your favorite teacher growing up? What characteristics did he/she possess?

Did you have a teacher that was not your favorite? Why?

**Identity Development**

Has your perception of what a teacher is changed during your time at ________? If so, how has it changed and what examples can you provide to show this transformation?

How has your perception of what a teacher does changed during your student teaching experience?

What are some examples that you can think of where what you did as a teacher reflected who you are?

Can you tell me of any specific events that helped to shape your identity?
Throughout education there are ‘turning points’ in everyone’s careers. Think about all of your education and tell me about some turning points for you, specifically during student teaching?

How would you describe yourself as a teacher now?
APPENDIX C: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT
Participant Form

Title of Study: Teacher Identity Formation: How Four Pre-service Teacher Candidates Formed Their Professional Identities

Investigators: Kathryn Lerseth, Principal Investigator
Denise Schmidt, PhD, Supervising Faculty Member

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher identity, in its most basic interpretation, refers to a person’s individuality, uniqueness, or characteristics, which sets one apart, is related to teacher development in important ways. Research indicates that the ways teachers view themselves as professionals determines to a great extend how well they do as teachers, how long they stay in the profession, and how they feel about themselves as teachers in the classroom. This study examines the professional identity of pre-service teacher candidates during their student teaching semester. The study’s purpose is to find out (a) the ways in which they perceive their professional identities, and (b) the factors that contribute to or hinder pre-service teacher professional identity formation.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will consist of two interviews during the months of May and June 2012. During the study you may expect the following study procedures to be followed: I will be interviewing you at the end of your student teaching semester, interviewing your final mentoring teacher and supervisor, and collecting your student teaching file.

RISKS

While participating in this study you may experience the following risks: There may be some privacy issues addressed during the survey when you are sharing personal information about yourself as a learner/teacher. These tapes will be only listened to by me and you always have the right to not answer any question you feel necessary.
BENEFITS

At this time there are no demonstrated direct benefits to participating in this study. You may potentially benefit as a participant because you will be able to explore and describe your experiences and identity formation during your student teaching semester. This retrospection may assist you to clarify your experience and increase self-awareness and understanding. The study’s results will also increase social understanding of the student teaching experience.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not incur any costs by participating in this and you will not be compensated for participating in this study.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken, participants will only be referred to by their first name and will meet with the researcher in a place on or off campus (whichever the participant feels more comfortable with). Also, as stated before the researcher will be the only person listening to the recorded conversations. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact Kate Lerseth
  Education Department, Simpson College
  Office: Wallace Hall 312
If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant’s Name (printed) __________________________________________

______________________________  ________________________________
(Participant’s Signature)   (Date)

INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

__________________________________________________________________  ________________________________
(Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent)   (Date)
APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT GROUP EMAIL

To: Participant Group
From: Kate Lerseth
Date: March 5, 2012
Re: Identity Study

Message

Hi Participant~

I hope this email finds you enjoying your student teaching experience! I am developing a research proposal for my doctoral dissertation at Iowa State University titled Teacher Identity Formation: How Four Pre-service Teacher Candidates Formed Their Professional Identities. I am requesting your participation in this study. In this email, I have outlined the participant responsibility as well as included a copy of the consent form for you to review.

This study examines the professional identity of pre-service teacher candidates during their student teaching semester. The study’s purpose is to find out (a) the ways in which they form their professional identities, and (b) the factors that contribute to or hinder pre-service teacher professional identity formation.

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will consist of one interview during the month of May 2012. During the study you may expect the following study procedures to be followed: I will be interviewing you at the end of your student teaching semester, interviewing your final mentoring teacher, and collecting your student teaching file. If you agree to participate, I will contact your mentoring teacher to schedule a time (after your interview) that we will be able to talk.

Your confidentiality will be kept confidential and the data collection process will happen after you have completed the semester and received a final grade. Please see the consent form for further confidentiality statements. Any publications that come from this study will use pseudonyms to keep your participation anonymous.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you by phone if that would be helpful. In addition, I would be happy to provide any further information you may require in order to make a decision.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kate Lerseth
515-450-6058
kate.lerseth@simpson.edu
APPENDIX E: MENTORING TEACHER EMAIL

To: Mentoring Teacher/Supervising Teacher
From: Kate Lerseth
Date: March 5, 2012
Re: Identity Study

Message

Dear Mentoring/Supervising Teacher~

My name is Kate Lerseth and I am a professor at Simpson College. I am developing a research proposal for my doctoral dissertation at Iowa State University titled Teacher Identity Formation: How Four Pre-service Teacher Candidates Formed Their Professional Identities. I have received permission from your current student teacher to participate in this study. As a part of their participation in the study, I would like to interview you, as their final mentoring teacher to triangulate the data I have collected. In this email, I have outlined the purposed and process of the study.

This study examines the professional identity of pre-service teacher candidates during their student teaching semester. The study’s purpose is to find out (a) the ways in which they form their professional identities, and (b) the factors that contribute to or hinder pre-service teacher professional identity formation.

I will be interviewing the participants early in May and would like to meet with your after that initial interview. After I have scheduled all of the meetings with the student teachers, I will contact you again to find a time that works for me to come talk with you at your school. I appreciate your cooperation in this study and know will be very flexible in the interview time as I know how busy the end of the year can be.

Your confidentiality will be kept confidential and the data collection process will happen after you have completed the semester and given a final evaluation. Any publications that come from this study will use pseudonyms to keep your participation anonymous.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you by phone if that would be helpful. In addition, I would be happy to provide any further information you may require in order to make a decision.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely

Kate Lerseth
515-450-6058
kate.lerseth@simpson.edu