BECOMING A SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER EDUCATOR:
REFLECTION, REPRESENTATION, AND REFRAMING ACROSS
NARRATIVE FIELD TEXTS

by

JASON K. RITTER

(Under the Direction of Todd Dinkelman)

ABSTRACT

Drawing from my experiences as a former classroom teacher making the transition to
teacher education, this study examined the question of what it means to become a social studies
teacher educator. The primary goals of this research were to examine how my vision of social
studies teacher education developed, how the relationship between my practices and beliefs
evolved, and what representations of my development were offered through my methodology of
self-study through narrative inquiry.

Over the course of my first three years as a graduate teaching assistant, data were
collected in the form of written interpretive accounts of my experiences. These field texts
included personal journal entries; discussion board interactions written for peers, colleagues, and
students; formal observation reports written for student teachers; formal papers written for
professors; and conference papers written for the wider community of scholars. Data were
analyzed using a categorical-content approach to code typologies of narratives in relation to my
research questions.
Findings indicated that the development of my vision of social studies teacher education was influenced by completing graduate coursework, engaging in the work of teacher education, interacting or collaborating with peers, and studying my practice as it developed and unfolded. The relationship between my practices and beliefs slowly evolved as I moved from embracing certain default assumptions about education, to rethinking the social studies content, to recognizing that both what and how I taught as a teacher educator held potential significance in the development of pre-service teachers. Finally, this research revealed that becoming a social studies teacher educator represented an ongoing process fraught with competing and constantly changing tensions more so than it did a stage of professional development that was simply achieved.

Summarily, this dissertation increased understanding of what it means to become a social studies teacher educator, thereby adding to the sparse body of theory on the initial development of teacher educators. Moreover, by highlighting and examining the challenges involved in this important transition, this research better positioned the educational community at-large to consider how novice teacher educators should be inducted into their new roles.

INDEX WORDS: Social Studies, Teacher Education, Professional Development, Self-Study, Narrative Inquiry
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DEDICATION

To my Mom and Dad

For believing in me when I offered little reason for doing so.
I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to my major professor, Todd Dinkelman. In addition to overseeing the completion of this dissertation, he was - and will continue to be - very much implicated in my process of becoming a social studies teacher educator. I am also deeply appreciative of the guidance and support provided by the other members of my committee, Betty Bisplinghoff and Cheryl Fields-Smith.

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CHAPTER 1: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The quality of public education in the United States represents an ongoing concern in contemporary society. In light of this concern, teacher education offers a distinctively promising site in which to conduct educational research. According to Pinnegar and Russell (1995), “Teacher education is a unique place to study teaching because in many ways it most visibly represents the essential test of teaching, one which involves three people: the teacher, the student becoming a teacher, and the student-teacher’s students” (p. 6, emphases in original).

In this arrangement, the role of the teacher educator can take on a particular significance. Wisniewski and Ducharme (1989) described this potential significance in terms of the following two interrelated ideas: “the belief that the quality of education is directly related to the quality of classroom teachers, and the realization that the quality of teachers is directly related to their preparation for teaching” (p. 3). If teacher education can, in fact, influence the quality of classroom teaching, then seeking to better understand the role assumed and played by teacher educators in the preparation of pre-service teachers marks a proper starting point for improving the quality of public education.

Along these lines, Korthagen, Loughran, and Lunenberg (2005) suggested that teacher education:

…demands skills, expertise and knowledge that cannot simply be taken for granted. Rather there is a need for such skills, expertise and knowledge to be carefully examined, articulated and communicated so that the significance of the role of the teacher educator might be more appropriately highlighted and understood within the profession. (p. 107)
Most research to date has essentially taken for granted the skills, expertise, and knowledge required to do effective teacher education by not explicitly focusing on the role of the teacher educator in the preparation of pre-service teachers.

The notion that teacher education is not the same as teaching directs attention to the role of the teacher educator. Loughran (2005) suggested the distinction between teaching, per se, and teaching about teaching can be understood in terms of “the overarching need for teacher educators to pay attention to their own pedagogical reasoning and reflective practice and to create opportunities for their student teachers to access this thinking about, and practice of, teaching” (p. 9). Put another way, how one teaches as a teacher educator is an essential part of what one teaches (Loughran & Russell, 1997). This distinction is mirrored, but also elaborated, in the work of Koster, Brekelmans, Korthagen, and Wubbels (2005) who found that teacher educators understand their roles as consisting of the ability to perform various tasks in the following competency areas: content competencies, communicative and reflective competencies, organizational competencies, and pedagogical competencies.

What remains unclear from existing literature is how teacher educators acquire the aforementioned competencies deemed necessary for their work in teacher education. Another relatively unexamined question in the literature is the degree to which teacher educators’ beliefs about what they should be doing in each of the competence areas meshes with their actual practice. It seems likely that at least some of the paucity of research from this perspective is related to the collective failure of teacher educators to ask such difficult questions of themselves and their practice. But given the questionable influence of teacher education programs on pre-service teachers’ beliefs and practices (see Bullough & Gitlin, 2001; Clift & Brady, 2005; Korthagen, Kessels, Koster, Lagerwerf, & Wubbels, 2001; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon,
1998; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981), the time seems ripe to more closely interrogate the role assumed and played by teacher educators in teacher preparation.

Research Problem

A vast majority of teacher educators were classroom teachers in the public schools prior to their university appointments (Ducharme & Kluender, 1990; Lanier & Little, 1986). For many, this time spent in the public schools represents the most significant enculturating experience of their professional lives (Ducharme & Agne, 1989). In fact, Ducharme (1993) found that teacher educators uniformly reference “how important, how invaluable their lower-school experience was” (p. 46). However, “useful as these backgrounds may be for teacher educators,” Ducharme and Agne argued, “they may be counterproductive to their enculturation to the higher education environment” (emphasis in original, p. 78). This assertion implies that differences exist between the classroom teaching environment and the teacher education environment; and, by extension, between the roles assumed and played by classroom teachers and teacher educators.

Incorporating Goodlad’s (1984) seminal research on the condition of public schools as a frame of reference, Ducharme and Agne (1989) conjectured that certain behaviors and beliefs sanctioned or facilitated by the institutional context of public schooling are inappropriate within the context of higher education. According to the authors, “Life in the lower schools is marked by much activity, great busyness, rapid decision-making, and quick responses. While not necessarily anti-intellectual, the life is not one of inquiry and introspection” (p. 78). In this way, the authors argued that the behaviors and beliefs facilitated in classroom teachers as a result of their working contexts “suggest a sameness; a once-demonstrated, never-questioned attitude; and little aptitude for inquiry” (p. 79). Although surely not representative of all classroom teachers
and teaching contexts, the implication here is that the university context tends to uniformly encourage, or at least value, behaviors and beliefs that contrast with such descriptions.

As an additional point of contrast, there is a different emphasis for instruction in teacher education. Northfield and Gunstone (1997) suggested that teacher education has at least two fundamental purposes:

- Firstly, it must be concerned with assisting teachers to learn and apply important ideas about teaching and learning. Secondly, teacher education must be presented in ways that achieve some balance between the existing context and role of teaching and the possibilities for improving teaching and learning. (p. 48)

In this sense, while classroom teachers are expected to teach subject matter, university-based teacher educators are expected to teach about how to teach subject matter in both the present, and in the imagined, presumably improved, future.

Unfortunately, the knowledge of pedagogy acquired through classroom teaching may not be sufficient for the task of teaching about teaching (Bullock, 2007; Heaton & Lampert, 1993; Kosnik, 2007; Loughran, 1997a). Indeed, Russell (1997) claimed that learning to teach about teaching is a two-step process that involves taking both a ‘content turn’ and a ‘pedagogical turn.’ Russell argued that many teachers naturally undergo the content turn as their earliest years in the classroom compel them to rethink their subject matter. However, he suggested that teachers who move on to work in the university setting must also confront a new dimension in their work:

- When individuals find themselves recommending particular teaching strategies for particular purposes, they start to realize that their own teaching must be judged similarly. This new perspective constitutes making the ‘pedagogical turn,’ thinking long and hard
about *how* we teach and the messages conveyed by how we teach. (emphases in original, p. 44)

Similarly, Loughran (1997b) added that “teaching about teaching by using engaging strategies is in itself not sufficient…[teacher educators] must also be able to articulate [their] understanding of [their] practice; purpose and intent” (p. 58).

Even with the different institutional and instructional expectations for teacher education, no formal or specific training is typically provided to former classroom teachers as they transition into their new roles as beginning teacher educators (Kremer-Hayon & Zuzovsky, 1995; Louie, Stackman, Drevdahl, & Purdy, 2002). Perhaps this lack of attention is related to Berry’s (2004) observation of how teacher education is often perceived:

…as little more than the transference of pedagogical tips, tricks and techniques, most of which will be rendered irrelevant when new teachers enter the classroom and begin their real learning about teaching. The assumption appears to be that teacher educators require little more than subject specific expertise and prior experiences of teaching in order to be qualified to prepare prospective teachers. (p. 1297)

In this sense, teacher education is frequently regarded as a “self-evident activity” (Zeichner, 2005, p. 118). It is commonly assumed “that a good teacher will also make a good teacher educator” (Korthagen et al., 2005, p. 110).

Given these perceptions of teacher education, many supervisory and beginning teacher educator positions are hastily filled by former classroom teachers turned graduate assistants who are wholly unaware of the contextual and pedagogical challenges their new roles will present (Korthagen & Russell, 1995; Russell, 2002; Zeichner, 2002). These former classroom teachers technically become teacher educators as soon as they accept their university appointments.
However, as Bullough (2005) cautioned, “simply declaring teachers to be teacher educators or mentors, as is so often done, and occasionally meeting with them on campus to discuss problems and programs does very little to improve the situation” (p. 144).

It appears the actual transition from classroom teacher to teacher educator is considerably more involved than generally assumed. Along these lines, Murray and Male (2005) claimed, “This is a transition that entails the learning of new social mores as a teacher educator and the creation of a new professional identity” (p. 126). According to Dinkelman, Margolis, & Sikkenga (2006a):

Becoming a teacher educator involves much more than a job title. Even if one becomes a teacher educator at the moment one begins working as a teacher educator, one’s professional identity as a teacher educator is constructed over time. Developing an identity and a set of successful practices in teacher education is best understood as a process of becoming. Although the work of teaching has much in common with the work of teacher education, the two positions are significantly different in important ways. (p. 6)

If it is true that teacher education demands unique skills, expertise, and knowledge that distinguish it from classroom teaching, then it seems more should be done to uncover how understandings of teaching and teacher preparation develop and play out in the visions and practices of beginning teacher educators.

Research Purpose, Questions, and Goals

This study was undertaken with the desire to better understand and subsequently to inform the process of becoming a teacher educator from my perspective as a former classroom teacher involved in just such a transition. Given my interest in interrogating the role assumed and played by teacher educators, the following research questions guided my inquiry:
1. How has my vision for social studies teacher education developed?

2. How has the relationship between my practices as a teacher educator and my beliefs evolved?

3. What representations of my development as a teacher educator does self-study through narrative inquiry yield?

By more fully understanding the challenges involved regarding how beginning teacher educators develop and implement their visions and practices for teacher education, I believe endeavors such as mine hold the potential to improve public education by improving the quality and consistency of teacher preparation. I also believe the understandings generated from this research can improve the quality of public education and teacher preparation by encouraging colleges and departments of education to reconsider how novice teacher educators should be being inducted into their new roles at the university.

Although this study focusing on my own experiences as a beginning educator was privately useful for my own professional development, I believe it also afforded me the opportunity to identify and relate certain problematic themes associated with developing an understanding of the role of teacher educator that will be recognizable and useful to others. For instance, given the demographic profile of teacher educators as well as teacher education students, readers may note similar experiences to mine rooted in our similar backgrounds (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005; Ducharme, 1993). Additionally, readers may also recognize similar experiences to mine regarding how forces connected with the nature and structure of teacher education programs compel beginning teacher educators to define their roles in certain ways and not others.
While not generalizable in terms of traditional research paradigms, I believe this study fulfilled its potential “to generate local, situated, provisional knowledge of teaching,” and that it will effectively “trigger further deliberations, explorations, and change by other educators in their contexts” (LaBoskey, 2004b, p. 1170). Similar to Russell (2002), I feel this study has import for at least three audiences outside of myself: (a) my future students, “their seeing my questions and dilemmas may make it easier for them to help me work with them;” (b) my future colleagues, “their seeing my questions and dilemmas may help all of us move forward in developing” our understandings of teacher education; and (c) “teacher educators around the globe who may read this…and find similarities to and differences from their own roles and their efforts to better understand and improve their practices” (p. 83). In the end, in true self-study fashion, the aim of this research was “to provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than confirm and settle” (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 20).

Overview of Structure of this Dissertation

This first chapter has presented my research problem, questions, and goals for this study. Chapter two presents a review of the literature related to existing contextual and instructional challenges commonly experienced by new university professors and former classroom teachers as they transition into their teaching roles in the higher education environment. Chapter three explains the qualitative methodology, self-study through narrative inquiry, developed and employed for this study. Chapter four describes the context of my development as a beginning teacher educator, including the research sites where I conducted my work. Chapters five, six, and seven present the analysis and discussion of the data collected. More specifically, chapter five addresses the question of how my vision for social studies teacher education has developed. Chapter six addresses the question of how the relationship between my practices as a teacher
educator and my beliefs has evolved. Chapter seven describes the representations of my development as a teacher educator that were generated as a result of my methodological approach of self-study through narrative inquiry. Finally, chapter eight provides a summary of these findings and concludes with a discussion of potential implications for future research directions.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As an individual involved in the transition from classroom teacher to teacher educator, the purpose of this study was to examine the development of my vision for social studies teacher education, as well as the evolving relationship between my practices and beliefs as a teacher educator. This was accomplished by analyzing a variety of data sources created throughout my first three years in graduate school. The design of the study and the interpretations I drew from the data have been informed by the extant literature reviewed in this chapter.

For this review, I primarily sought out literature dealing with the induction and/or professional development of beginning social studies teacher educators. Given the scarcity of literature dealing exclusively with this particular subset of the professoriate, I also included some material dealing with the experiences of new professors at large. In any case, given my research questions, it should be understood that I was not simply interested in how beginning teacher educators were received or treated in their higher education environments. Instead, perhaps more importantly, I was interested in how they acted or reacted given their particular situations. The process of how one becomes a teacher educator, in this sense, remains a relatively unexamined question (see Berry, 2004; Korthagen et al., 2005; Russell & Korthagen, 1995; Zeichner, 2005).

In general, I intended for this literature review to identify and examine the issues, factors, and challenges that typically affect beginning social studies teacher educators as they are compelled to develop their visions and practices for their university-based work. Additionally, given these circumstances, I sought literature that provided descriptions of how beginning
teacher educators came to understand their roles at the university, as well as how they navigated the relationship between their practices and beliefs in their work with pre-service teachers.

This literature review began in the summer of 2004 as part of the course requirements for a collaborative teacher-research seminar called Teacher Support Specialist in Social Studies (hereafter, TS4). At the time of this seminar, I had already been accepted into the graduate program at the University of Georgia to pursue my doctoral studies in social studies education; however, I had not yet officially started my work as a graduate assistant/beginning teacher educator. Since the purpose of TS4 was to discuss the effective mentoring of beginning teachers as well as to formally and systematically conduct investigations on selected problems of practice associated with such work, I ultimately, and perhaps quite naturally given my limited experience, decided to carry-out a self-study examining my own transition from a classroom teacher to a teacher educator. This TS4 action research project, later published (Ritter, 2007), marked the beginning of my interest in some of the topics explored in this dissertation.

Since my first year as a graduate student, I have been involved in several other studies that have explored related issues in teacher education (see Fields-Smith, Hawley, & Ritter, 2006; Hawley, Ritter, & Powell, 2006; Ritter, 2006; Ritter, Powell, & Hawley, 2007). My involvement in each of these studies compelled me to regularly find and review additional literature related to, and useful for, this dissertation over the past four years. Also, many of the primary sources consulted in this review were brought to my attention by colleagues I met at various professional conferences where my work was presented. To extend my literature review beyond these sources, I also consulted several databases available through the University of Georgia Library System, including the Galileo and GIL databases. Despite the limited attention that has traditionally been given to understanding and examining the process of becoming a teacher
educator, especially in the field of social studies, I have attempted to focus this review on books, refereed journal publications, and papers from refereed conferences.

In the following sections, I first examine a model of how new professors at large develop as teachers in the university context. This developmental model is then considered as it relates to some of the situational and personal factors that have been shown to affect new faculty as they struggle to develop a vision and set of practices for their work in higher education. After examining these factors, I offer examples drawn from previous studies of how new faculty have come to understand their roles as university professors, as well as the relationships formed between their beliefs and their actual teaching practices.

Next I present literature dealing exclusively with the development of teacher educators. In order to make comparisons between the experiences and development of this group of professors compared to other university professors at large, I follow the same basic outline as I did in the previous sections. In other words, I first examine a model of how former classroom teachers develop as teacher educators. Then I identify and examine some of the situational and personal factors that affect them as they attempt to engage in the work of teacher education. Finally, I offer examples from other studies of how beginning teacher educators have come to understand their roles, as well as the apparent relationships formed between their beliefs regarding their work and their actual teaching practices.

To conclude the literature review, I reflect back on the information presented concerning the development of new faculty and suggest some ways in which becoming a social studies teacher educator might represent a special case. This is accomplished by examining literature dealing with some of the prevalent forces at work in the typical public school climate, as well as by describing the ideological dimension of social studies and social studies teacher education.
Both of these are sections are intended to highlight some of the key challenges social studies teacher educators specifically must face as they strive to develop a vision and set of practices for their work.

How New Professors Develop as Teachers

Given the scarcity of research focusing exclusively on what happens when former classroom teachers become teacher educators, it seems worthwhile to consider how new professors in general develop as teachers of university students. Along these lines, Kugel (1993) proposed a model, derived from informal observations of his own career as well as the careers of his colleagues, in which he argued that the teaching of new college professors seems to advance through incremental stages marked primarily by shifts in the focus of their teaching. These stages include initially focusing on one’s self and one’s role in the classroom, then focusing more intently on the content and presentation of the subject matter, and finally focusing on the students and what they actually learn as a result of their teaching. In this final stage of focusing on the students, new professors continue to develop in increasingly nuanced ways according to the views they hold of their students. Kugel suggested that the progression here for new professors seems to consist of initially viewing their students as receptive, then as active, and finally as independent learners.

As a starting point, Kugel (1993) claimed that fear of failure compels new professors to initially focus on their own role in the classroom. According to Kugel, this fear is intensified “for novice professors because they have seldom been taught much about the skill they are about to perform. They have been taught a lot about they subject they are about to teach, but little about how to teach it” (p. 3). Thus, they think mainly about themselves when thinking about their teaching. New professors only transition out of this stage after developing what they feel are
good ways to present their material. Effectively tackling this challenge provides new professors with a sense of legitimacy regarding their new role as teachers.

The next stage in Kugel’s (1993) model suggests that, after becoming comfortable with their new roles as teachers, professors return their focus to their subject matter. In this stage, new professors “think of the courses they teach much as cooks think about the courses they serve. They lay out the information as attractively and enticingly as they can, hoping that their students will enjoy it and digest it” (p. 5). Unfortunately, “as professors increase the quantity and the quality of what they teach, the quantity and quality of what the students learn seems to decrease” (p. 5). This learning problem causes many new professors to then turn their attention back to their students.

As their attention returns to their students, many new professors begin to notice that the learners in their classes “are not an undifferentiated mass of identical people” (Kugel, 1993, p. 7). Therefore, as a way to accommodate the diverse learning styles and interests of their students, many new professors incorporate a “buckshot” approach into their teaching in which they purposefully spread their teaching out and “give all their students a bit of telling, a bit of showing and a bit of doing” (p. 7). Despite these efforts to increase student learning, many professors still note that they are unable to actually construct understandings for their students.

In all of the stages discussed thus far, new professors understood or viewed their students as passive recipients of knowledge. However, according to Kugel (1993), this notion can change when professors begin to understand that “perhaps learning is something students do rather than something that is done to them” (p. 9). Such a realization signifies the beginning of the professor coming to view his or her students as active. In this stage professors start to see themselves more as coaches than experts. Along these lines, Kugel claimed:
As the professors’ views of how to teach change, their views of what to teach may also change. They may decide that it is more important that students learn how to think than that they learn what to think. They may worry less about coverage and more about ‘uncoverage.’ They may respond to student questions with other questions, hoping to encourage their students to figure the answers out for themselves. (p.11)

This change in thinking regarding both how and what to teach naturally leads into the final developmental stage for new professors of viewing students as independent learners.

Obviously the goal in the final stage is to allow students to learn for themselves. This is a frightening proposition for some new faculty. As Kugel (1993) made clear:

Turning students into independent learners may call for more patience and sensitivity than some professors have. It may call for a broader understanding of the material than some can develop. If students are allowed to control what they learn, they can try to visit corners of a discipline that their professors have not yet visited. (p. 12)

At the same time as these concerns manifest themselves, many professors, recognizing they can never teach their students all that there is to know about a given topic, find value in this approach because of its potential to prepare students to continue their learning for themselves as they move on with their lives.

In the end, Kugel (1993) offers a useful model to consider how new professors, without any previous teaching experience, might develop as teachers. However, as model, the stages of development are offered as a general map of the journey taken by new faculty. The specific paths taken by individuals likely vary. At the very least, there are certain situational and personal factors that complicate the process. These issues are examined in the following sections as they pertain to the development of a vision and set of practices by new university professors at large.
Situational Factors Affecting New Professors

There have been a couple of large-scale studies conducted that examined the experiences of new college and university faculty from various academic disciplines (see, for example, Boice, 1991; Fink, 1984). For the purposes of this dissertation, these studies are useful in so far as they highlight some of the inherent challenges involved in working in the university environment. These situational factors are important to identify and examine because of their possible influence on new university professors as they develop and implement their visions and practices for their work.

Fink (1984) collected information about ninety-seven new college professors of geography in an effort to better understand their initial development as teachers. Although teaching loads varied according to the types of institutions in which the new faculty were employed, a majority of the participants reported feeling overwhelmed due to what they considered excessive teaching loads. One of the most significant findings from this study was that the new university faculty felt as though they “seldom had time to think about and experiment with different teaching techniques or to undertake work on their own development as a teacher” (p. 59). Ironically, the most commonly cited reason provided to explain the stagnant and underdeveloped teaching styles amongst the new professors was that they were too busy teaching classes.

Additionally, the apparent dilemma facing the new faculty in Fink’s (1984) study of whether or not to purposefully set aside time to develop a vision and set of successful practices for their university teaching was further compounded by at least three variables. First, many of the participants did not believe that the reward structures at their institutions encouraged high-quality teaching. Many also reported that they experienced only a limited amount of
collaboration or support from their senior colleagues. Finally, some of the participants had difficulty relating to their students, especially those who came from different social backgrounds.

Some of these same situational factors were evident in Boice’s (1991) study focusing on the experiences of new university professors across two large campuses. In particular, Boice corroborated Fink’s finding that new faculty frequently felt overwhelmed by their obligations as professors. Moreover, he suggested this problem was compounded by an unsupportive university environment content to let new faculty “sink or swim” of their own accord. Although it was unclear if the new faculty in this study felt like their teaching loads were excessive, most did report spending a majority of their time preparing for classes. For these professors, this preparation involved reviewing and organizing content knowledge for their lectures. Little attention was paid to issues like student needs or effective pedagogy. The lack of attention to teaching reflects a similar devaluing of collaboration around this common feature of new faculty responsibility. As Boice (1991) explained, “Less than 5 percent of new faculty in their first semesters at either campus could identify any sort of social network for discussing teaching” (p.155).

Taken as a whole, the situational factors identified by Fink and Boice suggest that, while most new university faculty face challenges in terms of developing their teaching visions and practices, neither the incentive nor the means to improve upon this area of professorial responsibility are readily facilitated in the university environment. In this respect, it seems quite possible that many new professors content themselves with their teaching after they become comfortable presenting their content to their students. If true, this means that many new university professors only advance through the first two stages of Kugel’s (1993) model and
never get to a point where they pay any particular attention to the needs or learning of the students in their classes.

*Personal Factors Affecting New Professors*

As suggested in the previous section, many situational factors affect new university professors as they are thrust into the higher education environment. Although the previous section described some of the features or circumstances of the university environment that may affect new faculty, faculty still maintain agency to influence their environments. The values, beliefs, and understandings that new professors bring with them to their work play out in how they come to understand their roles, develop their visions, and enact their practices as teachers.

Fink (1984) also examined the values and beliefs of new university faculty concerning the nature and purpose of their teaching. The new faculty in this study mentioned the following educational goals, listed in rank order, for their students: promoting general intellectual growth, teaching subject matter mastery, developing applications skills, engaging students’ feelings, and preparing students for further learning (p. 63). When left decontextualized, these goals suggest a variety of different meanings and images. Therefore, it is important to understand how such objectives translated into the actual practice of the participants in this study.

In this respect, the study revealed that most of the new faculty “preferred the ‘principles-and-facts’ teaching prototype, desired the ‘expert’ role more than any other role, and thought that the knowledge required for teaching was similar to (rather than different from) the knowledge required to do research” (Fink, 1984, p. 92). Comments made by participants in the study revealed that they modeled their teaching after one or more of their former teachers, lending credence to Lortie’s (1975) notion of coming to understand teaching through an “apprenticeship of observation.”
The tendency of new faculty to teach in the same ways in which they were taught was evident in Boice’s (1991) study as well. Perhaps more disturbing, however, was his finding that most of them were not very interested in changing or improving their teaching. Similar to Fink (1984), Boice found that many new faculty placed blame for difficulties in the classroom on external factors such as poor students, heavy teaching loads, and invalid rating systems. Most new faculty understood good teaching as synonymous with having content knowledge. As long as the new professors in this study were knowledgeable about, and up to date, on the subject matter of their discipline, then their teaching was not really considered as a distinct area for improvement.

Moreover, Boice (1991) found that most new faculty “do not expect to enjoy teaching until they no longer have to spend large amounts of time preparing for it and until it no longer offers prospects of public criticism” (p. 171). Since comfort, efficiency, and student acceptance in the classroom are only established slowly if at all, “professors often begin in styles that persist in disappointingly narrow fashion” (p. 172). Again, such findings suggest that many new professors become content with their teaching after they become comfortable with traditional methods of presenting subject matter to their students.

Taken together, the Fink (1984) and Boice (1991) studies of new college and university faculty make it clear that many new professors embrace traditional “banking” models of education whereby they seek to deposit appropriate content into the minds of their students through teacher centered methods like lecture (see Freire, 1970/1993). Many seem to uncritically teach in this way because it was the same way in which they were taught. As well, the educational backgrounds of most new faculty appear to be focused more on content and research than on learning theories or instructional strategies (Louie, Stackman, Drevdahl, & Purdy, 2002).
These studies indicate that the typical university environment does not require, or even encourage, new professors to do anything more with regard to their teaching than what has always been done. Facilitating student learning may not be a priority for new faculty members unless they have, or develop, strong personal convictions regarding its importance. This highlights a need to learn more about the induction process for new faculty so that changes might be implemented to improve the general quality of university teaching.

The Visions and Practices of New Professors Enacted

Given the situational and personal factors affecting new faculty, the question of how their visions and practices were actually implemented in their university-based work has yet to be addressed. Regardless of their particular values or beliefs, Fink (1984) found that “many of the new teachers had difficulty converting them into effective action” (p. 93). As a result:

What most of the teachers did was resort to the traditional and relatively time-efficient mode of teaching: lectures and readings. The tragic part of this is that many of the teachers did not plan to go back and do a more thorough job of developing their courses because of the pressure from other duties. Hence the mode of teaching that was fashioned in a time-short condition became the dominant and regular pattern for these teachers. (p. 93)

Unfortunately, engaging in this mode of time-efficient teaching situates many university professors at a place on Kugel’s (1993) developmental model in which student learning is not necessarily the primary focus.

Similar results surfaced in Boice’s (1991) study of how new faculty established their teaching styles. Boice reported that a number of generalities emerged from his study regarding how new faculty behave as teachers. Many of these behaviors represent simple coping
mechanisms that develop as new faculty, many with no teaching backgrounds, are thrust into relatively unsupportive higher education environments that do not particularly value teaching. For instance, it was found that new faculty members often teach cautiously and equate good teaching with good content knowledge and enthusiasm. In order to avoid public failures, and to perform reasonably well on course evaluations, many of the new professors in his study also taught defensively. This defensive teaching was accomplished by spending much of their planning time preparing lecture notes and making sure they at least had their facts straight. Such defensive teaching might preserve the false image of new faculty as experts in the eyes of their students, but does little to extend their understandings of what they are teaching for and how they are going to plan to reach their objectives.

How Former Classroom Teachers Develop as Teacher Educators

The previous sections described the development of new professors because of the similar conditions and constraints present in the university environment across all new faculty. However, teacher educators represent a distinct sector of the professoriate that deserves special attention. One of the main differences between teacher educators and other university professors is that a vast majority of beginning teacher educators were classroom teachers prior to their university appointments (Ducharme & Kluender, 1990; Lanier & Little, 1986). In this respect, these individuals came to their university positions with previous teaching experience. Another major difference is that teacher educators, unlike most other university professors, are charged with teaching others how to teach. These differences complicate the application of Kugel’s (1993) model to new teachers of teachers.

Taking up the challenge of articulating a developmental model more appropriate for former classroom teachers making the transition to teacher education, Russell (1997) suggested
that becoming a teacher educator can involve progressing through two distinct steps. The first of these entails a ‘content turn,’ while the other involves a ‘pedagogical turn.’ According to Russell, many teacher educators actually take the ‘content turn’ while classroom teaching:

Most people who begin a teaching career seem to focus, naturally and understandably, on what they teach. Most seem to report that the earliest years of teaching a subject (or age group, if elementary) generate significant rethinking of subject matter (or how children of a particular age think about their world, across the curriculum). (p. 44, emphasis in original)

Russell claimed, “The content turn seems to come naturally, because preparing and presenting familiar material to those who find it unfamiliar seems to lead most people to ‘fill in the gaps’ in their own understanding of the topic” (p. 44).

In this way, Russell (1997) argued that the transition from simply knowing content to attempting to teach content for understanding leads many classroom teachers to rethink the nature of the content for themselves. This part of Russell’s developmental theory for teacher educators is comparable to Kugel’s (1993) model for professors at large in that it involves teachers focusing to varying degrees on self, subject matter, and students (although not necessarily in an incremental staged fashion).

A major point of departure, however, can be found in Russell’s (1997) notion of the importance of former classroom teachers taking a ‘pedagogical turn’ while engaging in the work of teacher education. According to Russell:

People who move on to work in a teacher education context must continue to think about how teaching affects one’s understanding of what one teaches, but a new dimension also appears. When individuals find themselves recommending particular teaching strategies
for particular purposes, they start to realize that their own teaching must be judged similarly. This new perspective constitutes making the ‘pedagogical turn,’ thinking long and hard about how we teach and the messages conveyed by how we teach. (p. 44, emphases in original)

Essentially taking the ‘pedagogical turn’ means “realizing that how we teach teachers may send much more influential messages than what we teach them” (p. 44).

As was the case with university professors at large, the process described by Russell is not experienced exactly the same, if indeed it is experienced at all, by every former classroom teacher making the move to teacher education. Again, there are situational and personal factors that complicate the process. Some of these are similar to those experienced by professors at large. However, there are important differences that must be addressed. These issues are examined in the following sections as they pertain to the development of a vision and set of practices by beginning teacher educators.

Situational Factors Affecting Beginning Teacher Educators

A small number of studies have been conducted that specifically examined the experiences of new teacher educators as they made the transition to higher education. For the most part, these studies highlighted how the situational factors affecting new college and university faculty in general also exert their influence over beginning teacher educators. Yet there are important differences regarding how teacher educators perceive of their environments that need to be examined as they relate to the development of their vision and practices for their university-based work.

Perhaps more than any other single researcher, Ducharme (1993) has done the most to provide a glimpse into the lives of teacher educators. Although his study effectively described
some of the typical reasons why former classroom teachers leave their teaching positions (i.e. isolation, low autonomy, poor intellectual climate, fear of becoming boring to students, and a lack of personal time), it fails to substantially explain how the roles played by these former classroom teachers might have changed as a result of their transitions to teaching at the university-level. Most of Ducharme’s participants claimed that their experiences teaching in the classroom were useful for their work as teacher educators, but it is unclear how or for what purposes.

In terms of the differences between the classroom teaching environment and the university teaching environment, Ducharme (1993) found that most of his participants understood their new lives at the university replete with new freedoms and opportunities (i.e. self-direction and autonomy), but also with new responsibilities and pressures (i.e. research and publication). Most of the study participants, especially the males, noted that they had experiences with mentors as doctoral students, but that these kinds of relationships grew more unlikely as the participants moved into the university as professors. Ducharme (1993) suggested that the new responsibilities and pressures as professors, perhaps coupled with the lack of ongoing mentoring or collaboration, might have limited the amount of time the teacher educators could devote to their teaching. However, fundamental questions of what that teaching looked like or what it was designed to accomplish go unaddressed. Thus, in the end, Ducharme’s work leaves an unclear impression of how the vision and practices of a teacher educator might compare to those of a classroom teacher.

Dinkelman, Margolis, and Sikkenga (2006a, 2006b) also made a contribution to the literature on the development of teacher educators with their study focusing on the experiences of the second and third authors as they underwent the transition from classroom teachers to
teacher educators. One important finding that emerged from this study (2006a) was that the transition to teacher educator for both of the participants was mediated by their institutional contexts. Sometimes this context supported their growth as teacher educators, provided they took the initiative to make sense of their own learning. For example, both beginning teacher educators noted benefits such as having increased time for reflection and collaboration, being able to take courses geared toward the work of teacher education, and being able to actually teach beginning teachers while engaging in self-study of their own teaching practices.

On the other hand, the university context also challenged the participants in unexpected ways, most notably by sending implicit, and sometimes explicit, messages that ground-level teacher education was not as highly valued as other activities and research endeavors. All of these contextual factors seem important to consider as they relate to the professional development of teacher educators. However, many seemingly important questions go unaddressed. Although there was some discussion around which factors appeared to have the greatest impact on the development of the beginning teacher educators, the authors never really inquired into the more difficult questions of how and why those particular factors might have had such an impact. These questions seem key to understanding how and why some teacher educators choose to confront, and persevere through, the challenges presented by their environments to consciously develop a vision and practices to guide their work.

In a different study, Murray and Male (2005) found that a significant challenge facing beginning teacher educators centers on establishing new professional identities for their university-based work. According to the authors, these new identities are forced to emerge over the course of two to three years as individuals confront two key challenges during the transition from classroom teacher to teacher educator: becoming active researchers, and developing a
pedagogy for their work in higher-education. Regarding the first challenge, Burch (1989) showed that most teacher educators do not enter into higher education to conduct research. Nonetheless, engaging in research is one of the most pressing and demanding expectations placed on teacher educators at the university level (Ducharme, 1993; Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990; Labaree, 2004). As a pressing aspect of faculty responsibilities, and as a dimension largely absent from public school settings, research expectations likely figure prominently into how beginning teacher educators perceive of themselves and their work.

In a study focusing on beliefs about knowledge and research in education, Joram (2007) showed how the espistemologies of pre-service and practicing teachers were considerably different from those of teacher educators. More specifically, she found that while “professors may consider research-based findings and general principles of teaching to be important for their students to learn, many preservice teachers will discount the validity of such material” (p. 133). Joram attributed this to the “case based” thinking of many teachers, or the “cult of the particular.” These findings are revealing of the values and beliefs held by teacher educators, but they do not address how or why teacher educators might adopt new epistemologies when they transition to the university.

For better or for worse, the pressure to engage in research also sometimes compels teacher educators to actually shift their focus away from their teaching (Raths, Katz, & McAninch, 1989). Soder and Sirotnik (1990) described how some former classroom teachers experienced their transitions to higher education, with its emphasis on research instead of teaching:

That which was honored no longer is, leading to a sense of betrayal and resentment.

Faculty feel resentful, too, because the addition of new tasks and responsibilities is not
accompanied by a reduction of demands in other areas. Finally-and perhaps most critically-faculty members share, along with others in the teacher preparing enterprise and the larger institution, a sense of loss of identity. It is difficult to define yourself in relationship to your job when the definition of your job appears to be in a constant flux, subject to addenda and qualifying footnotes added by a bewildering array of politicians, education bureaucrats, and academic administrators. (p. 388)

Clearly there are many costs and issues to work through for beginning teacher educators interested in consciously enacting a vision and practices for their work.

In addition to becoming active researchers, Murray and Male (2005) claimed that beginning teacher educators must also deal with the challenge of developing a distinct pedagogy for their university-based work. According to the authors, teacher education “demands new and different types of professional knowledge and understanding, including extended pedagogical skills, from those required of schoolteachers” (p. 136). Such demands may prompt teacher educators to begin what Russell (1997) describes as the ‘pedagogical turn.’ However, learning how to teach others to teach does not relieve teacher educators from the obligation to maintain and refine their knowledge and understandings as schoolteachers. Instead, at the same time as they are learning to teach pre-service teachers how to teach, teacher educators must also continue to refine their knowledge of their subject matter as well as their own personal understandings of how to teach it (Ball & Rundquist, 1993; Berry & Loughran, 2002; Heaton & Lampert, 1993). Unfortunately, similar to other new university professors (see, for example, Boice, 1991; Fink, 1984), the literature reveals little about how teacher educators establish or develop their teaching styles.
There is ample evidence that new university professors often do not receive specific training or support from their colleagues with regard to their teaching endeavors (Boice, 1991; Fink, 1984; Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Pinnegar, & Placier, 1995; Kremer-Hayon & Zuzovsky, 1995). This may be especially problematic for teacher educators due to the widespread perception that their prior public school teaching backgrounds properly prepared them for their university-based work. Murray and Male (2005) suggested:

The need to acquire the new and extended pedagogical skills of teacher education, together with individual and institutional assumptions that new teacher educators already possess pedagogical expertise, creates the unique position of expert become novice for teacher educators as an academic group. (p. 136, emphases in original)

In a study exploring the experience of “beginning” as a teacher educator, Pinnegar (1995) extended this idea, claiming, “Being a beginner brings with it certain feelings and emotions. Two of these are a pervading sense of vulnerability and an uncertainty about what things mean and how to make sense of them” (p. 80, emphases in original). Unfortunately, the task of confronting these feelings is usually left up to the individual teacher educator to negotiate with little to no guidance from others.

To further complicate the problem of little training or support for their new roles, while teacher educators are often proponents of reform in teaching, many “lack both the analytic and practical experience with the kind of teaching they advocate” (Heaton & Lampert, 1993, p. 44). Drawing attention to a challenge faced by reform-oriented teacher educators, Heaton and Lampert (1993) maintained:

Even though they are taught about new strategies for teaching and learning that derive from research and theory, teacher educators are not educated to teach in ways that are
different from how they were originally taught, nor are they educated to help others make such changes. (p. 44-45).

These findings suggest the need for a more fluid relationship between the world of teaching and teacher education. According to the authors, “understanding teaching and learning from multiple perspectives, as a teacher and scholar, allows one to move between the two worlds and understand the relationship between theory and practice in each world” (p. 77).

In addition to research and teaching, beginning teacher educators are usually expected to engage in some form of professional service. The amount of time individual professors devote to each of the three areas of professorial responsibility tends to vary according to their own preferences and commitments, as well as to the norms of the institutions where they are employed (Gideonse, 1989; Wisniewski, 1989). These variations suggest that teacher educators, as well as teacher education programs at-large, do not hold a common set of norms and values. Regardless, not a lot of research has examined how the norms and values held by new teacher educators shape their responses to new demands related to teaching, research, and service, nor has the field seen much inquiry into the ways that new demands influence pre-existing norms and values.

A final situational factor affecting the visions and practices of beginning teacher educators has to do with the federal and/or state legislation regulating teaching. Although this legislation primarily affects teachers, it also affects teacher educators who must decide on the best ways to prepare future teachers for both the present and the possible. For instance, Ritter (2007) found that his work with his student teachers, framed by his “teaching against the grain” commitments (Cochran-Smith, 1991), had to also be responsive to the pressures the student
teachers felt working in school climates increasingly fixated with standards, testing, and accountability.

Similarly, a move from Canada to the United States prompted Kosnik (2005) to recognize the implicit and explicit control exerted on her teacher education practice through the No Child Left Behind legislation and its focus on evidence-based research. According to Kosnik:

The challenge is to prepare teachers to meet the state standards and still support their growth as thoughtful, reflective, and skilled practitioners who are committed to goals beyond raising test scores. If I do not want to be left behind, I must be responsive to government expectations. (p. 215)

In this work, Kosnik reveals something of the interplay among her own commitments as a teacher educator, a new regulatory environment, and the needs of her pre-service teachers. She continued, “The challenge will be to remain true to my values while living and working in a highly politicized world. This will require a high level of ingenuity and the identification of strategies to achieve this balancing act” (p. 219).

Loughran (2006) extended this discussion about the complex factors of influence surrounding the work of new teacher educators. He summed up a basic dilemma and reported the most serious danger as follows:

Even though teacher education is by definition incomplete (Northfield & Gunstone, 1997), the perceived needs of others (e.g. schools, policy-makers, education systems) combined with these demands create expectations that are not necessarily able to be fully realized. Further to this, in trying to respond to such needs and demands, practices may be employed that actually detract from the very purpose and value of teacher education. (p. 163, emphases in original)
Like classroom teachers, teacher educators must also be able to successfully operate in the current system even as they seek to imagine new ways of doing teacher education. This requires being conscious of both the learning and political realms of teacher education (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

Altogether, the literature reviewed here reveals common challenges faced by those new to teaching in higher education settings, as most universities require their new faculty to perform various duties in three areas of professorial responsibility: research, teaching, and service. For a variety of reasons, it is not uncommon for new faculty to feel confused and overwhelmed as they confront these responsibilities. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of collaboration and/or support on both the departmental and institutional levels. Many colleges and universities value research over both teaching and service. As a special type of new faculty, beginning teacher educators are not exempt from these pressures as they make the transition to higher education, even though many do not enter higher education with research as their top priority. Furthermore, although most beginning teacher educators have at least some prior teaching experience, the kind of pedagogy required to teach about teaching is different from the pedagogy required to teach. To the extent that teacher education must prepare teachers to work in the existing climate of schools, the pedagogy of teacher educators is further constricted by federal and state legislation regulating teaching and education. All of these situational factors position beginning teacher educators, like other new university faculty, in strange and ambiguous environments. This positioning complicates questions of how they develop or enact their visions and practices.

Personal Factors Affecting Beginning Teacher Educators

A previous section dealing with the personal factors affecting new university professors highlighted that the typical university environment does not necessarily encourage professors to
teach in ways that focus on student learning. Thus, such a focus would probably not be a priority for new faculty members unless they had previously developed personal convictions regarding the importance of student engagement. The notion that personal conviction might play a hand in how committed and innovative new faculty are with regard to their teaching focuses attention back on beginning teacher educators.

Recall that most teacher educators possess significant teaching experience in the public school system prior to moving to the university (Ducharme & Kluender, 1990; Lanier & Little, 1986). Presumably, this means that many of these beginning teacher educators already have relatively well established conceptions of their teaching identities, visions regarding the purposes of their teaching, as well as a cache of successful practices as teachers. Arguably, this group of professors might possess stronger convictions regarding the importance of teaching in general than their cross-campus peers. The charge to not just teach subject matter, but also to teach others how to teach it, raises questions about how teacher educators adapt or change, if at all, as a result of their transitions to higher education.

In their collaborative self-study of professors from three fields of study, including education, business administration, and nursing, Louie et al. (2002) found that each of the professors was influenced by certain myth-based beliefs regardless of prior teaching experience. One of these myths centered on the notion that good teachers could control everything, especially student learning, in their classrooms. This myth often made professors reluctant to engage in more egalitarian modes of instruction for fear of losing control or diluting academic rigor. Both McNeil (1988a, 1988b) and Cornbleth (2001) have examined similar beliefs in their work and traced their origin to the contemporary model of school as a factory. Such an environment breeds academic climates in which teachers come to view themselves as factory
workers and subsequently engage in defensive teaching strategies (i.e. fragmentation, mystification, omission, and defensive simplification) designed to control students through control of content. These arguments may very well extend to teacher educators operating in higher education environments.

A related myth about teaching involved the idea that one could not teach well unless one was fully ready (Louie et al., 2002). This myth often translated into professors feeling pressure to demonstrate their roles as experts, or knowledge-holders. This desire to appear as an expert was apparent in the early teacher education work of Bullock (2007), Kitchen (2005a, 2005b), Nicol (1997), and Ritter (2007). Noting how this myth-based belief played out in his practice even against his own intentions, Kitchen (2005a) claimed, “I became increasingly aware that I often acted as an expert judging the practice of teachers using external criteria rather than as a collaborator celebrating experience and seeking to help teachers discover order in the flowing, changing process of life” (p. 18). Moreover, this pressure to demonstrate expertise often led new faculty to downplay the importance of inquiry in their classrooms by instead opting to fill their seminars primarily with content-based lectures (Louie et al., 2002).

Finally, Louie et al.’s (2002) study revealed that many professors embraced the myth that good teachers employed certain approaches or techniques. According to the authors, “the master-of-all teaching myth sets up unrealistic expectations for faculty members, and often ends in frustration and discouragement” (p. 201). As a whole, the beliefs that undergird these myths help to reveal why so many new faculty, including beginning teacher educators, ultimately engage in teaching methods that conform to traditional practices.

A small number of studies also have been conducted in which beginning teacher educators themselves have examined their own processes of becoming (see, for example,
Arizona Group, 1997; Guilfoyle, 1995; Guilfoyle et al., 1995; Hamilton, 1995; Knowles & Cole, 1994). All of these teacher educators were experienced classroom teachers and seemed to have strong visions for their teaching already in place. Although these studies are useful in illuminating some of the struggles that these teacher educators experienced while learning their new roles at the university, none of the authors addressed the issue of their own evolving visions or pedagogies.

Similarly, Knowles and Cole (1994) claimed to have mostly “entered the professoriate with fairly well-developed personal, professional, and practical knowledge of teaching, and had already made a commitment to the ongoing improvement of [their] practice” (p. 40). Subsequently these researchers did “not identify a need for assistance with teaching beyond the need for opportunities to enact [their] beliefs and take [their] preferred approach to classroom interaction” (p. 40). Their experiences “suggest needs that mainly call for enabling conditions and opportunities for professional growth and career advancement” (p. 40).

Finally, Finley’s (1998) study of the socialization process of three beginning teacher educators sheds light on how personal factors might interact with situational factors in the university environment. Although she did not explicitly focus on how her participants developed or implemented their particular visions and practices as teacher educators per se, her findings did suggest that individuals in such situations necessarily interweave their personal worldviews into existing organizational structures and cultures. The experiences of the three novice teacher educators in this study led Finley to conclude that the process of socialization was “…iterative and reflexive between individuals and organizations-each experiences some level of transformation during the process of assimilating new members into the professoriate” (p. 347).
This finding implies that the life history and experiences of individuals becoming teacher educators influence their understanding of their roles and, by extension, their visions and practices. Of course, this understanding shapes and is shaped by subsequent experiences with new organizational structures and cultures. For some beginning teacher educators this “iterative and reflexive” process might mean that the myths they carry with them into the university about teaching are sustained. For others it might mean constantly looking for ways to work within and around the system and its constraints. Much seems to depend on the point at which individuals are in their development, and whether or not they have taken their respective ‘content’ or ‘pedagogical’ turns.

*The Visions and Practices of Beginning Teacher Educators Enacted*

Few studies have documented how the situational and personal factors affecting beginning teacher educators have specifically influenced the ways in which they actually enacted their visions and practices. However, of those that do exist, it is clear that there are some differences between the experiences of new professors at large and those of beginning teacher educators. For example, an important finding from the Dinkelman et al. (2006a) study concerned the shifting role identification experienced by both of the beginning teacher educators. As was the case in previous studies (see, for example, Ducharme, 1993; Murray & Male, 2005), both of the participants initially identified with their classroom teacher identities and relied upon their experiences in the classroom to guide them in their early work as teacher educators. Invoking prior experience as a source of teaching expertise or identity may not be an option for many professors, especially for those in field outside of schools and colleges of education. In any case, in the study, increased time to reflect on their actions as well as actually doing the work of
supervising and teaching pre-service teachers eventually led both to see the two roles as distinct and difficult to compare.

For the participants, becoming teacher educators involved integrating their new understandings as teacher educators with their prior understandings as classroom teachers. Thus, their professional identities as teacher educators were not the same as their identities as classroom teachers, but they were not entirely separate either. Perhaps what is most important to consider here is that both of the participants openly began to identify more with the notion of being teacher educators. Unfortunately, while this study suggests some of the influences on the creation of these identities, it remains unclear what the new identities actually looked like and/or how they were significantly different from the participants’ classroom teacher identities.

The previously addressed feelings of uncertainty were clearly evident in some of the responses from the beginning teacher educators involved in Murray and Male’s (2005) study. The authors suggested that these feelings may have contributed to some of their participants emphasizing transmission oriented teaching methods during their first year as teacher educators. In any case, for reasons that are not clarified, the authors discovered that in their second or third years of becoming teacher educators, most of their participants moved away from transmission oriented teaching methods and started to focus their instruction more on questions of what to teach, how to teach, and when to teach it. In this sense, although it is clear that most of the beginning teachers did modify or change their pedagogies as teacher educators, the possible reasons for such shifts are not elaborated. There is also no discussion of whether or not the practices of the beginning teacher educators matched with their beliefs or purposes for their instruction.
Along these lines, Dinkelman et al. (2006b) attempted to address how the participants developed a knowledge base for their decision-making as teacher educators. Two of the sources of knowledge utilized by the participants have already been identified in the previous sections (e.g., prior experiences as classroom teachers, and information gleaned from certain university course work). The other source of knowledge identified in this study involved the participants’ biographies as learners. More specifically, it was suggested that, since each of the participants learned to teach by actually teaching, both of them approached their work in teacher education with this same notion of learning by doing. This stance apparently led them to engage in reflective teaching practices that further contributed to their development. But without knowing, or at least identifying, the participants’ specific beliefs about the role of teacher education, this study falls short of documenting whether the participants’ practices meshed with their developing rationales as teacher educators. There is also no mention of how, or possibly if, the beginning teacher educators held themselves accountable for the learning of their students or their students’ students.

In two self-studies focusing on his first five years as a teacher educator, Kitchen (2005a, 2005b) explained how he came to adopt a relational stance in his work with pre-service teachers. These studies are unique because of Kitchen’s efforts to identify and examine the factors that most contributed to the development of this vision and practices. He found that his experiences as a graduate student becoming a teacher educator were important in shaping his views concerning relational teacher development. In particular, he noted the following influences: (a) having a nurturing and supportive mentor; (b) taking courses that allowed him to personally experience how narrative and reflective methods were useful for negotiating individual and collective meanings; (c) collaborating with peers and reading the self-studies of other teacher
educators; and (d) being able to teach beginning teachers while engaging in self-study of his own teaching practices.

Kitchen also offered examples of how his teaching practices, designed to convey respect and empathy, were informed by his evolving understandings of effective teacher education. In the end, Kitchen’s story of becoming a teacher educator seems particularly important to consider if his claim can be trusted that “it was [his] relational stance towards preservice teachers, not [his] university degrees or [his] classroom experience, that proved [his] greatest strength a teacher educator” (p. 196).

In a similar vein, Bullock (2007) conducted a self-study of his own process of becoming a teacher educator and of coming to understand teaching as a relationship. With the help of a long-time critical friend and mentor, Bullock recognized that his challenge as a beginning teacher educator would be “to confront [his] default assumption that teaching should focus on transmission of curricular content while forming a pedagogy that [he] could claim as [his] own” (p. 78). Although he recognized that his pedagogy was still evolving, its development was facilitated through critical yet supportive friendships, as well as his decision to engage in action research and self-study of his own practice.

These same themes proved important in the development of visions and practices for other teacher educators as well (see, for example, Crowe & Berry, 2007; Kosnick, 2007). One important difference in their work, however, was that they felt it important to make their teaching a site of inquiry for their students as well as for themselves. This is one way to heed Loughran’s (2007a) call to develop an understanding of teacher education “not to be constrained by a teacher educator’s perspective but to actively seek to better understand the perspective of students of teaching” (p. 1).
In a different self-study of his own transition from a social studies classroom teacher to a teacher educator, Ritter (2007) reported experiencing unanticipated challenges with regard to establishing his professional identity as a teacher educator, navigating the ambiguous role of teacher educator as both an advocate and an evaluator, and dealing with external sources of resistance manifest in the belief systems of student teachers and the norms of the public school system. Although he initially invoked his classroom teacher identity as a source of support and expertise, Ritter’s work as a teacher educator eventually pushed him to establish a new professional identity. According to Ritter,

First, my observations and conferences with my student teachers led to cognitive dissonance and self-reflection regarding the efficacy of my prior work. Second, doctoral coursework and discussions with my peers challenged my larger belief systems and, subsequently, my views on the purpose of teaching social studies. (p. 13).

The new professional identity that emerged as a result of these factors was grounded in an inquiry stance, whereby teacher educators act “as co-constructors of knowledge with students through the joint interrogation of ideas” (p. 15).

Ritter’s (2007) practice was also affected by his evolving expectations as a teacher educator. There was a constant battle in his mind regarding when to offer support and when to offer critique to his student teachers. His decision-making was further hampered by the limited encounters and familiarity he shared with his students, as well as the climate of the public schools. Both made it difficult for him to uncover their belief systems or to get them to engage in genuine dialogue with him.

Another beginning teacher educator, Nicol (1997), noted how she struggled with choosing and using worthwhile pedagogical tasks. For her, the struggle involved how to structure
tasks to “help prospective teachers reinterpret their previous experiences while both building their confidence and competence” (p. 114). As she struggled with this challenge, she found that her credibility was sometimes undermined in the eyes of her students both because she was a graduate student and because she was researching her own teaching. These tensions make it clear why so many new faculty adopt teaching models in which they purport, at least implicitly, to be the experts of the material.

In studying her own transition as a teacher educator, Kessler (2007) effectively documented how her teaching style changed over time. Initially she relied heavily on the content and pedagogical styles already incorporated in the classes she was slated to teach by the more experienced tenured faculty. At the same time as she was working as a beginning teacher educator, Kessler was working on earning her National Board Certification. Engaging in this process required her to be a reflective writer. In turn, she began to recognize the importance of preparing prospective teachers for their teaching positions as reflective practitioners. In the end, Kessler claimed:

I changed the teaching process in my own courses because I had gone back to the classroom and actually tried to implement what I had been expecting my student teachers to do. I saw the need to explicitly model being a reflective practitioner so that my student teachers could see into this process and think about how to change and develop the way they might teach. (p. 135)

Again, this highlights the importance of teacher educators, even beginning teacher educators who might have just left the classroom, to continue learning about teaching while learning about teaching about teaching.
Although not beginning teacher educators, Hudson-Ross and Graham’s (2000) six year self-study detailing their collaborative efforts to model a constructivist approach in their teacher education practice showed how their “teaching [was] complicated-but also enhanced-by [their] role as researchers of [their] own practice” (p. 20). In their study, the teacher educators identified four roles that they typically assumed in their quest to model a constructivist approach. These roles included teacher researchers, reflective practitioners, members of a professional and collaborative learning community, and assessors in a constructivist classroom. Despite the stability of these roles across the six year span of the study, each year nonetheless offered new challenges that caused Hudson-Ross and Graham to refine their visions and modify their practices in their work with pre-service teachers.

The findings of these studies have serious implications for those interested in improving university-level teaching. In particular, they highlight the fact that more attention must be paid to how beginning college professors, including teacher educators, are inducted into their new roles. The understandings of teaching that these university professors bring with them to their new roles as well as the implicit and explicit messages they receive regarding its value must be identified and examined if university teaching is to improve. There is also reason to focus on the practices of teacher educators because they do not always fit with their espoused beliefs (Clandinin, 1995; Zeichner, 1995). According to Loughran (1997b):

> Despite what I thought was important about teaching, if I did not teach in ways that reflected my beliefs, my student-teachers’ ideas about what was important to learn and how to apply themselves to learning about teaching would be shaped more by my practice than my philosophy. (p. 57)
Conle (1999), Dinkelman (2003), Russell (2007), and Tidwell (2002) conducted studies that properly illustrated the complexity of these relationships. Recognizing that his practices were not always matching his philosophy or intentions, Dinkelman (2003) argued for the importance of self-study as both a means and ends tool for promoting reflective teaching.

In the end, when thinking about how beginning teacher educators compare with new university professors at large in terms of enacting their visions and practices in the university environment, it seems important to note one recurring theme. Both groups struggled to translate their beliefs into action when they attempted to move beyond traditional transmission-based approaches. While new professors seemed more likely to content themselves with just becoming comfortable presenting their content to their students, beginning teacher educators were more likely to actively look for ways to improve student learning by reflecting upon and studying their own practice and seeking support from mentors, colleagues, and coursework. It does not seem unreasonable to attribute this perseverance in the face of adversity to the idea that they may have taken Russell’s (1997) ‘content turn’ as classroom teachers and subsequently developed a stronger sense of vision for their teaching.

The Special Case of Becoming a Social Studies Teacher Educator

Russell’s (1997) two-step model, consisting of individuals taking a ‘content turn’ followed by a ‘pedagogical turn,’ has been put forward as one way to understand the professional development of teacher educators. Useful as this model may be, there are special considerations that must be identified and examined as this trajectory relates to becoming a social studies teacher educator. More specifically, the climate of public schools, with its focus on standards and accountability, can complicate the process of social studies teachers ever making the ‘content turn’ in such a way that student learning becomes a focal point of their understanding of teaching
because the perceived function of instruction within such a regulatory climate often rests on a simplified view of the content as a series of disconnected facts to be memorized by the students. In addition, Russell’s developmental model is made more ambiguous when one considers the ideological dimension of social studies. This ideological aspect of social studies influences the way in which teachers and teacher educators make the ‘content’ and ‘pedagogical turns,’ if indeed they ever do.

*The Climate of Public Schools and its Influence on Social Studies*

One way to frame the relationship between the climate of public schools and its influence on social studies teaching and learning is though a consideration of thoughtfulness, or the degree to which students are encouraged to think about the material being presented in their classes so that they might be better positioned to apply their knowledge to novel problems and situations in the future. This idea of thoughtfulness in social studies classrooms was at the heart of a research agenda pursued by Newmann and some of his colleagues in the early 1990s (see King, 1991; Ladwig, 1991; Newmann, 1990a, 1990b, 1991a, 1991b; Onosko, 1989, 1990, 1991; Stevenson, 1990).

Although surely not representative of all social studies instruction, Newmann (1990a) described the problem of thoughtfulness, or the lack thereof, in public school classrooms as follows: “At best, much classroom activity fails to challenge students to use their minds in any valuable ways; at worst, much classroom activity is nonsensical or mindless” (p. 44, emphasis in original). Essentially, Newmann argued that this situation was unacceptable precisely because it did little to guide students in how to apply knowledge, or how to be thoughtful, when faced with non-routine challenges. Onosko (1991) identified six of the most common barriers to the promotion of higher-order thinking in social studies classrooms: instruction as knowledge
transmission, a curriculum of coverage, teachers’ low expectations of students, large numbers of students, lack of planning time, and a culture of isolation. The presence of such barriers can facilitate classrooms that are devoid of thoughtfulness.

Some of the barriers identified by Onosko (1991) to the promotion of higher-order thought are exacerbated by the modern day push for standards, standardized testing, and accountability. These forces tend to impose upon teachers regardless of their personal ideological frames. In particular, the emphasis on standards and standardized testing tends to foster acceptance of the notion of instruction as knowledge transmission, while the emphasis on accountability tends to compel teachers to engage in broad superficial content coverage (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Both of these externally imposed understandings negatively impact the potential thoughtfulness in social studies classrooms, and can hamper classroom teachers from rethinking their subject matter (Segall, 2003, 2006).

Wineburg (1997) claimed that the present emphasis on standards and standardized, high-stakes testing is problematic because both are based on, or at least interpreted as being based on, a view of knowledge that has its roots in behaviorism. This view of knowledge rests on two increasingly controversial assumptions. The first, “‘decomposibility,’ views knowledge as an aggregation of independent units, or ‘bonds,’ between a stimulus and a response” (p. 256). This assumption bolsters support for “banking” models of learning, whereby knowledge can simply be deposited with students (see Freire, 1970/1993). The second behaviorist assumption regarding the nature of knowledge, “decontextualization,” centers on “the notion that the skill or knowledge one learns remains constant regardless of context” (Wineburg, p. 256). As such, once something is learned, it can supposedly be recalled and successfully employed in any other situation. Both of these behaviorist assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge encourage
teachers to think of instruction as the simple transmission of information. In this sense, an emphasis on standards and standardized testing can quickly and easily complicate the problem of facilitating thoughtfulness.

Similarly, the current emphasis on accountability also potentially detracts from both thoughtful students and thoughtful classrooms by coercing teachers to engage in broad superficial coverage of the content as opposed to deeper, more meaningful inquiries with their students. Some teachers might choose such an approach out of a sense of responsibility for their students’ achievement on standardized tests, or perhaps out of a fear for their own job security given the hopelessness of their situations. Speaking on behalf of one of her research participants, a teacher, Craig (2004) reported:

…the state’s accountability dragon is “very real” for those who encounter it—real, when educators’ professional identities are unwarrantedly questioned; real, when students’ life chances are unjustifiably cut off; and real, when people feel enormously victimized, rather than hugely enabled, by a humanly constructed, authorized, and enacted system.

(p. 1254)

The types of classroom climates resulting from these systems of accountability do not necessarily reflect thoughtfulness as their primary goal.

Different systems of accountability might foster different outcomes, but accountability as testing and standards has had a chilling effect on the prospects for thoughtful classrooms, especially those in schools attended by poor students and students of color (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Darling-Hammond (2004) argued, “Ultimately, accountability is not only about measuring student learning but actually improving it. Consequently, genuine accountability involves supporting changes in teaching and schooling that can heighten the probability that
students meet standards” (p. 1078). The current accountability system, based as it is on a student’s ability to pass a series of standardized tests, does not provide anything new in the way of support to actually facilitate or improve learning for students. In fact, it may actually lead to less learning as teachers opt for a broad superficial treatment of the content to make sure that everything has at least been covered.

According to McNeil (1988a), the external forces that have influenced the contemporary school climate are connected to a model of school as factory. Such a view of school as factory, and subsequently of students as products, has the potentially negative and dehumanizing effects of stressing standards and standardized testing, the routines of credentialing, and the control of student behavior instead of focusing on student learning. McNeil (1988b) found that such environments can lead teachers to view themselves as factory workers and subsequently to engage in defensive teaching strategies (i.e. fragmentation, mystification, omission, and defensive simplification) designed to control the students through control of the content. Such strategies effectively allow teachers to cover curriculum while simultaneously restricting opportunities for students to engage in potentially disruptive behaviors or discussions.

Cornbleth’s (2001) research complements McNeil’s by identifying the contextual con/restraints on meaningful teaching and learning in the schools. According to Cornbleth, meaningful teaching and learning is generally restricted by school climates based on law and order, conservatism, censorship, pathology and pessimism, and competition. Most, if not all, of these climates are bred by the external forces associated with the factory model of school. In the end, such external forces tend to push teachers to engage in traditional teaching practices regardless of their personal views.
Since the aforementioned forces can push teachers into unconscious modes of professional activity guided primarily by standards and accountability, one has to wonder if social studies classroom teachers naturally undergo the ‘content turn’ as Russell (1997) suggested in his developmental model for teacher educators. Given the climate of public schools, it seems likely that many social studies teachers view, or at least teach, social studies as a series of facts to be memorized. If (or when) this is true, such a conception of social studies instruction does not seem like it would cause most teachers to really reflect on their role in the classroom. Their role is obvious. It is to supply the facts. This situation also does not seem like it would necessarily compel teachers to fill in the gaps of their own understanding of the subject matter because their job is understood as being to simply teach the standards. Finally, this conception of social studies instruction does not seem as if it would cause teachers to reflect on the role or the learning of their students. Again, the student’s role seems obvious-- to memorize facts so that they might pass standardized tests.

If social studies teachers who leave the classroom for teacher education have experienced the current control-oriented climate of schools, then some beginning social studies teacher educators may start their work in higher education without ever having undergone the ‘content turn’ as described by Russell (1997). How this affects their work and development as teacher educators is unknown, but the implications seem significant.

*The Ideological Dimension of Social Studies*

Another important consideration in the development of social studies teacher educators has to do with the ideological nature of the field. According to Stanley and Longwell (2004), “The nature of social studies and social studies teacher education has been contested by both internal debates among social studies educators and the pressure of external forces seeking to
shape social studies curriculum and methods” (p. 189). This section addresses the internal debates of the field by providing a discussion of the ideological dimension of social studies as revealed through different approaches to citizenship education. It is argued that the development of both teachers and teacher educators can vary in significant ways based upon the ideological conception of teaching social studies they embrace.

As a starting point, it should be noted that social studies education has represented contested academic terrain since its inception as a school subject in the early part of the twentieth century (see Nelson, 2001; Saxe, 1991; Stanley, 2001; Vinson & Ross, 2001). This ongoing contentiousness can be understood as a corollary of ideological disagreements regarding what constitutes the good society, as well as the appropriate and potential role of education in maintaining or reforming society. The stance individuals embrace regarding these ideological questions plays out in how they understand both the nature and purpose of social studies instruction.

Despite the ongoing differences of opinion concerning the nature and purpose of the field, there has always been at least a general consensus that social studies should be about citizenship education. As Avery (2004) noted:

One of the primary ways in which young people acquire civic knowledge and skills is through social studies classes. Although the public school as an institution has as one of its primary purposes the development of citizens, traditionally, the major responsibility for providing explicit civics instruction and experiences rests with social studies. (p. 38)

Of course, acknowledging citizenship as the purpose of social studies education is meaningless unless one also specifies the kind of citizenship desired and the possible ways to facilitate it through classroom instruction.
Since these considerations are never completely detached from ideological perspectives on the good society and education’s function within it, the process of actually naming the “what” and the “how” of citizenship education marks a significant point of contention and subsequent divergence in the field. Vinson and Ross (2001) addressed this point when they claimed, “while nearly all in the field agree that the main purpose of social studies is citizenship education this should not, indeed cannot, be considered a sign of curricular uniformity” (p. 47, emphasis in original).

In the U.S. it is generally agreed that social studies education should facilitate democratic citizenship. However, even this somewhat narrowed focus does little to bring greater clarity or uniformity to social studies instruction because different individuals embrace varying conceptions of democracy. As Vinson and Ross (2001) noted, “Determining the boundaries of what is taught in social studies requires decisions about what social knowledge is most important, which skills and behaviors are most valuable, and what values are most significant” (p. 39). In the context of social studies education, each of these decisions is at least partly contingent on an individual’s conception of democracy and the extent to which he or she thinks it has been realized, or could be realized through education (see Ross & Marker, 2005; Stanley, 2005; Vinson & Ross, 2001).

At best the term “democracy” represents a “loosely defined genre of political and social community” (Parker, 1996b, p. 1). Obviously such a tenuous characterization obscures democracy’s function as the primary criterion of citizenship education. For this reason, it seems useful to consider how democracy is commonly understood and treated, at least implicitly, by educators engaged in civics instruction in social studies classrooms. This is much more than a rhetorical exercise because dissimilar perspectives of democratic citizenship education have very
different implications for both the curriculum and, presumably, society at-large. Parker (1996a, 2003) identified and described three conceptions of democratic citizenship education in the U.S.: “traditional,” “progressive,” and “advanced.” The first two conceptions represent approaches to teaching social studies that can be found relatively easily in the schools while the third conception represents something more of an ideal that has not been actualized in classroom practice.

The traditional conception of citizenship education meshes with the approach of teaching social studies commonly referred to as cultural or citizenship transmission (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977). Although not generally held in high regard in university settings, it is probably the most common approach to teaching social studies in actual classroom practice (Goodlad, 1984; Thornton, 1994). This approach “intends to impart traditional core knowledge, skills, and values to students. The emphasis is on teaching that content, sets of behaviors, and attitudes that reflect standard and socially accepted views” (Stanley & Nelson, 1994, p. 267). In the U.S., standard and socially accepted views typically derive from the canon of Western, particularly European-American, thought and culture (Vinson & Ross, 2001). Since this canon represents somewhat of an identifiable corpus of knowledge, skills, and values to be acquired by students, this approach “suggests a more teacher-centered classroom in which a premium is placed on the efficient transmission of information” (Thornton, p. 225).

Proponents of the traditional approach generally view democracy as an accomplishment (Parker, 2003). Their adherence to cultural or citizenship transmission suggests that they believe democracy has been accomplished in this country, at least to the degree that it is possible, and that their job as teachers is to protect that accomplishment by transmitting the core knowledge, skills, and values that contributed to the formation of society as it currently exists. An important
The objective of traditionalist instruction is to produce personally responsible citizens. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) described such citizens as those who act responsibly in their communities, work and pay taxes, obey laws, recycle, give blood, and volunteer to lend a hand in times of crisis. This conception of democratic citizenship values citizens who are honest, responsible, and law-abiding members of the community.

The second approach to social studies, rooted in the progressive conception of citizenship education, is consistent with the traditional conception regarding the importance of the aforementioned core values-knowledge-skills; however, it differs significantly in the degree of emphasis it places on civic participation in its various forms (see, for example, Engle, 1960/1996; Newmann, 1975; Oliver & Shaver, 1966). Essentially the progressives advocate for a more participatory and direct form of citizenship than what is implied by the traditionalist focus on personal responsibility. The progressive conception of citizenship “emphasizes the many ways people can behave in the citizen role other than by voting, campaigning for a representative, or running for elected office” (Parker, 2003, p. 19).

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) described such participatory citizens as those who are active members in community organizations and community improvement efforts. Additionally, they claimed participatory citizens understand how government agencies work and can employ strategies for accomplishing collective tasks within existing social structures. To demonstrate the importance of participation and collaboration, progressive instruction tends to be less mimetic than its traditional counterpart. Nonetheless, to the extent that progressives are only interested in facilitating citizens actively working together within existing social structures (as opposed to working together to possibly change them or maybe even to create new ones), similar to the traditionalists, they appear to mostly view democracy as an accomplishment that needs only to
be sustained through the inculcation of traditional values-knowledge-skills and practice in civic participation.

Ultimately Parker (2003) argued that both the traditional and the progressive conceptions of citizenship education are too narrow and ultimately detrimental to democracy because of the skewed way in which they attempt to negotiate the tension between unity and diversity. Both conceptions err on the side of unity by privileging commonalities as Americans and downplaying existing social and cultural differences amongst the citizenry. According to Parker, under both the traditional and the progressive conception of citizenship:

…diversity of the political kind is sanctioned to a greater extent than diversity of the social and cultural kind. For example, differences of opinion on matters of common concern (i.e., public policy questions) receive some attention while differences of religion, language, race, ethnicity, and gender are moved off to the sidelines in the name of an official policy of “color blindness” and neutrality. (p. 17, emphases in original)

Parker suggested that downplaying the social and cultural heterogeneity of the U.S. populace in this manner has several adverse consequences for citizenship education in a pluralistic democratic society, including facilitating a narrow outlook, an unwillingness to participate, and intolerance to difference.

In an attempt to more fully articulate a conception of democratic citizenship education that is responsive to social and cultural differences in the general populace, Parker (2003) suggested and discussed a couple of “advanced” democratic ideas that should be implicated in social studies educators’ efforts to rethink their approaches to teaching. First, Parker pointed to the importance of viewing democracy as a path or journey. This fits with Dewey’s (1916/2004)
notion of democracy as “more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (p. 83).

According to this view, democracy is not something that is already accomplished. Instead, democracy is an ongoing social process that “contains the possibility of continuous change and enlargement of ‘culture’…[and] the potential for its own transformation” (Beyer, Feinberg, Pagano, & Whitson, 1989, p. 12). Because change and transformation are not inevitable outcomes, Parker added the stipulation that, “The path requires that citizens pay some attention to what each other are doing” (p. 22). Of course, tensions will still arise as different individuals pursue varied goals. However, “democratic education makes a virtue out of the disagreements that inevitably flow from ethnic, religious, sexual, and intellectual diversity” (Gutmann, 1990, p. 19).

The other “advanced” democratic idea put forward by Parker (2003) concerns the pluralism/assimilation dilemma. Parker suggested:

Liberal democracy’s basic tenets of human dignity--individual liberty, equality, and popular sovereignty—need to be preserved but extended and deepened within a new sense of citizenship that is not subtly or overtly hostile to pluralism. This is a citizenship that embraces individual differences, multiple group identities, and a unifying political community all at once. That task ahead is to recognize individual and group differences and to unite them horizontally in democratic moral discourse. (p. 25, emphasis in original)

Thus, for a democracy to maintain its utility, if not its very essence, the advanced conception of citizenship maintains that all citizens must commit to engaging in an ongoing process of wide-ranging participatory and deliberative practices across public and private spheres.
Proponents of the advanced conception would likely agree with Nelson’s (2001) claim that “education in a democracy demands access to and examination of knowledge, freedom to explore ideas, and development of skills of critical study” (p. 30). Similarly, most would emphasize critical thinking “designed to promote a transformation of some kind in the learner” (Thornton, 1994, p. 233). In stark contrast to the traditional and progressive conceptions of citizenship education, Stanley and Nelson (1994) suggested that the emphasis here might be more on “teaching the content, behaviors, and attitudes that question and critique standard and socially accepted views” (p. 267).

Rather than treating citizenship as an entity to be acquired by students, the focus is on getting students to engage with their own interpretations of citizenship and to communicate their interpretations with others who have different backgrounds. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) described such justice-oriented citizens as those who critically assess social, political, and economic structures to see beyond surface causes, seek out and address areas of injustice, and know about democratic social movements and how to effect systemic change. Additionally, these citizens understand that they must question, debate, and change established structures when they reproduce patterns of injustice over time.

The preceding discussion of the three different conceptions of social studies education was meant to shed light on some of the internal debates within the field concerning the nature and purpose of social studies education. Obviously a social studies educator’s point of view on these issues is related to and shaped by how they respond to ideological questions concerning the good society, as well as the role of education in facilitating good citizenship. For social studies educators and teacher educators, these ideological questions are important to consider because they relate to Russell’s (1997) notion of taking both ‘content’ and ‘pedagogical turns.’
Indeed, the ‘content turn’ described by Russell (1997) might be more appropriately thought of as the ‘ideological turn’ in the case of social studies. After all, in theory, the place that one comes to occupy on the ideological spectrum between teaching social studies for transmission of the social order versus teaching social studies for transformation of the social order seems to most determine the ways in which individuals think about, and then potentially rethink, their roles as teachers, their views of the subject matter, and their understandings of what constitutes student learning. Only those social studies teachers who uncritically teach in the same ways in which they were taught, or those who do not actively center their purpose in their practice (thereby attempting to uncritically teach), never complete the first step of Russell’s developmental model.

Assuming most beginning teacher educators do, in fact, take the ‘content turn’ while classroom teaching, the ideological dimension of social studies nonetheless continues to exert influence as it relates to the ‘pedagogical turn.’ Recall that taking the ‘pedagogical turn’ signifies a point in which teacher educators recognize and acknowledge that it is not only what they teach that determines what is learned, but it is also how they teach that determines what is learned. This recognition seems of particular import in social studies with its widely recognized goal of democratic citizenship education. In essence, taking the ‘pedagogical turn’ in social studies means coming to terms with the view that how one teaches democratic citizenship contributes to what students learn about democratic citizenship. Likewise, how one teaches about teaching democratic citizenship contributes to what students learn about teaching democratic citizenship. Thus, taking the ‘pedagogical turn’ as a social studies teacher or teacher educator implies teaching in ways that are complimentary to the democratic understandings one wants to facilitate in his or her students.
Chapter Summary

The existing body of literature offers a useful but incomplete picture of what it means to become a social studies teacher educator. This literature review has shown that there are some commonalities shared across the experiences of most new faculty at the university level. For instance, with regard to teaching, many new professors found that they were essentially on their own to “sink or swim,” so to speak. There was little collaboration with or support from colleagues. Perhaps owing to these circumstances, many new professors instinctively taught in the same ways in which they had been taught. More often than not, this meant engaging in transmission-oriented methods whereby the teacher took on the role of the expert and the students were viewed as passive consumers. Regardless of the personal sense of purpose these professors brought with them to their teaching, most found it difficult, at least initially, to enact their visions in their practices.

Even when just focusing on the experiences of beginning teacher educators, many of these same trends held true. For example, former classroom teachers making the transition to teacher education found it particularly difficult to balance their focus on their teaching with the new expectations placed on them to conduct research and to engage in professional service. Many, though not all, also experienced difficulties developing pedagogies for their work in teacher education due to their unique instructional assignments—to teach teachers. This problem was often exacerbated because teacher educators were seen as expert teachers due to their prior experience in the classroom. However, unlike new professors at large, beginning teacher educators seemed more likely to actively look for ways to improve student learning by reflecting upon and studying their own practice and seeking support from mentors, colleagues, and coursework. This perseverance in the face of adversity may be related to the stronger sense of
purpose they bring with them to the university regarding their teaching, possibly achieved by
taking the ‘content turn’ as classroom teachers.

Finally, it was suggested that the development of social studies teacher educators
represents a unique case, even among other beginning teacher educators, because of the
circumstances surrounding how they potentially proceed through Russell’s (1997) two step
model of taking a ‘content turn’ followed by a ‘pedagogical turn.’ In particular, the current
climate of schools tends to advance simplistic notions of teaching and learning social studies that
could actually hinder individuals from taking the ‘content turn’ and rethinking their subject
matter in ways beneficial for student learning. Additionally, the ideological dimension of
teaching social studies for democratic citizenship was discussed as it relates to taking both the
‘content turn’ and the ‘pedagogical turn.’ The place one comes to occupy on the ideological
spectrum between teaching for transmission and teaching for transformation shapes the ways in
which social studies educators think about both their subject matter and what constitutes student
learning. Finally, the ‘pedagogical turn’ taken by some social studies educators was theoretically
bridged with teaching in ways that reflect particular conceptions of democracy and democratic
education.

In the end, if teacher educators possess unique skills, expertise, and knowledge and take
their responsibilities to their students and their students’ students seriously, then more should be
done to uncover how their understandings of teacher preparation develop and play out in their
practice. Doing so will require extended studies in which individuals more fully disclose their
biographies as learners and educators, as well as prolonged examinations of how their
biographies interact with their experiences in teacher education to form relationships between
their practices and beliefs. The mostly article-length studies reviewed in this section were largely
unable to provide this degree of insight or to document such changes over time. It is my hope that this longitudinal study of my own transition into teacher education serves to mitigate these common barriers to understanding.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Narrative represents an increasingly popular and promising approach for educational research. Much of the work done in this burgeoning line of inquiry builds upon Bruner’s (1986) assertion that narrative represents a mode of cognitive functioning, or way of knowing, in its own right. This claim was once (and in certain academic circles still is) considered controversial because it challenges the superiority of the traditional logical-scientific mode of thinking and knowing. The increasing interest in narrative is not meant to undervalue the importance of logical-scientific thinking. According to Bruner (1996), scientific inquiry has clear and demonstrated value in a highly technological culture. But relying exclusively on such thinking, with its “inhuman” and “uncaring” undertones, might be detrimental to the well-being of society at large because it can breed “alienation, defiance, and practical incompetence” (p. 43). So while the two cognitive modes are in some ways complimentary, they are in no way irreducible to one another, nor is either a replacement for the other.

Bruner (1996) suggested that further study into narrative thinking and knowing might be useful because “it is very likely the case that the most natural and the earliest way in which we organize our experience and our knowledge is in terms of the narrative form” (p. 121). Similarly, Riessman (1993) made the point that, “Individuals construct past events and actions in personal narratives to claim identities and construct lives” (p. 2). Essentially narrative thinking and knowing represent the cognitive modes that enable individuals to make meaning out of their experiences by facilitating the construction of their identities within and across their specific
cultural contexts. Thus, as Kramp (2004) suggested, “Narrative is a vital human activity that structures experience and gives it meaning” (p. 104).

Of course, recognizing the legitimacy and utility of narrative thinking does not render narrative thinking and knowing unproblematic. Bruner (1986) conjectured:

In contrast to our vast knowledge of how science and logical reasoning proceed, we know precious little in any formal sense about how to make good stories… Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that stories must construct two landscapes simultaneously. One is the landscape of action, where the constituents are the arguments of action: agent, intention or goal, situation, instrument, something corresponding to a ‘story grammar.’ The other landscape is the landscape of consciousness: what those involved in the action know, think, or feel, or do not know, think, or feel. (p. 14)

Given its inherent complexity, Bruner (1996) warned that “if narrative is to be made an instrument of mind on behalf of making meaning, it requires work on our part—reading it, making it, analyzing it, understanding its craft, sensing its uses, discussing it” (p. 41).

In an attempt to connect the theoretical underpinnings of narrative inquiry to educational research, Lyons and LaBoskey (2002) argued that narrative seems “especially useful to capture the situated complexities of teachers’ work and classroom practice, often messy, uncertain, and unpredictable” (p. 15). Bullough (1997) suggested that to create a story is “to engage in narrative reasoning, which plays a central role in a teacher’s effort to create a teaching self, a moral orientation to the world of which we testify when we teach” (p. 19). As such, I subscribed to the notion that much of what constitutes a teacher’s knowledge can be understood as narrative knowing (see Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002).
Essentially the complexity of narrative as a mode of thinking and knowing is exactly what made it a useful tool in examining my developing understandings as a teacher educator. As Bullough (1997) argued:

Story telling is a way of getting a handle on what we believe, on the models, metaphors and images that underpin action and enable meaning making, on our theories. Through story telling, personal theories become explicit, and in being made explicit they can be changed, where change is warranted, and a new or different story results; we behold differently. (p. 19)

In this sense, narrative allowed for the contextualization of my experiences against the backdrop of action and consciousness, subsequently capturing and highlighting some of the tensions and pivotal moments related to my development.

So, in the end, while Bruner’s attempt to expand ideas of what constitutes legitimate forms of thinking and knowing raises epistemological questions and concerns that problematize both what to study as well as how to approach such study, narrative opens for the selection and implementation of more varied research methods or methodologies better suited to address issues within particular contexts. This self-study is a case in point, as I attempted to examine how I negotiated the construction of my own vision and practices as a teacher educator by inquiring into the ways in which I wrote about my experiences through various field texts. Examining these narratives allowed me to more fully capture and portray the complexity of both teacher education and the process of becoming a teacher educator by considering my own evolving vision for social studies as well as the relationships that existed between my beliefs and practices as they were conveyed through storied form.
Theoretical Perspective

I identified with constructionism as my epistemological stance because I believe that “meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Crotty, 1998, p. 43). According to Esterberg (2002), constructionism maintains that “there is no social reality apart from how individuals construct it, and so the main research task is to interpret those constructions” (p. 16). This stance does not necessarily deny the existence of a single reality in actual fact. It merely suggests that different individuals can understand and experience their social realities in different ways. Constructionism was significant for this study because it encouraged me to consider how my developing understanding of my role might have been influenced by the interplay between my biography and the social contexts in which I operated as a beginning teacher educator.

To acknowledge the paramount role of interpretation in the construction of meaning does not imply that an uncritical sort of relativism must be adopted in order to explain social phenomena. In this respect, Crotty (1998) argued, “what constructionism drives home unambiguously is that there is no true or valid interpretation. There are useful interpretations, to be sure, and these stand over against interpretations that appear to serve no useful purpose” (p. 47, emphasis in original). In this study, I attempted to bring to the forefront examples of useful interpretations, as I perceived them, of the ways in which I understood and enacted my role as a beginning teacher educator through the various field texts I created. For this study, field texts are loosely defined as written interpretive accounts of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990).

Subsequently, my perceptions of what constituted useful interpretations within my data were influenced by my identification with symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework. According to Blumer (1969), this framework rests on the following basic assumptions:
that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them.

that the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows.

that these meanings are handled, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters. (p. 2)

Embracing such an interpretive framework allowed me to acknowledge and operate from the epistemological belief “that social realities are constructed by the participants in those social settings” (Glesne, 1999, p. 5).

In addition, symbolic interactionism was useful for this research because it recognizes the existence of “self” in so far as human beings can be the objects of their own actions. Blumer (1969) suggested that an individual “acts toward himself and guides himself in his actions toward others on the basis of the kind of object he is to himself” (p. 12). Blumer went on to claim, “Like other objects, the self-object emerges from the process of social interaction in which other people are defining a person to himself” (p. 12). Such a conceptual understanding of self as a social product provided me with an effective lens through which to consider the construction of my developing understanding of my role as a teacher educator through the various field texts I created.

More specifically, by embracing symbolic interactionism as my theoretical framework, I was obliged to recognize that the ways in which I understood and enacted my role as a teacher educator had to be examined as they related to the interplay between my biography and my shifting social contexts. Although I attempted to show how these relationships played out in my findings, I recognize I am not unequivocally capable of transcending the confines imposed on
my understanding of reality by my positioning in society. Therefore, I encourage the reader to scrutinize my interpretations and findings with a critical eye.

A Framework for Understanding Teacher Educator Development

For this research I embraced Russell’s (1997) notion that the development of teacher educators often consists of taking a ‘content turn’ followed by a ‘pedagogical turn.’ Russell suggested the ‘content turn’ takes place for most teacher educators prior to their university appointments while they are still teaching in the classroom “because preparing and presenting familiar material to those who find it unfamiliar seems to lead most people to ‘fill in the gaps’ in their own understanding of the topic” (p. 44). Making the ‘content turn’ essentially marks a developmental stage in which teachers begin to pay particular attention to what they teach. Because this usually takes place during classroom teaching, I turned toward models of teacher learning to inform my understanding of this stage.

Accordingly, Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald, and Zeichner (2005) offered a useful framework in which to consider teacher development. The authors argued that:

...new teachers learn to teach in a community that enables them to develop a vision for their practice; a set of understandings about teaching, learning, and children; dispositions about how to use this knowledge; practices that allow them to act on their intentions and beliefs; and tools that support their efforts. (emphases in original, p. 385)

This model places vision, or the teacher’s “need to have a sense of where they are going and how they are going to get students there” (p. 385), at the center of the process of learning to teach. This sense of what is possible informs the development of teachers’ understandings and dispositions, and guides their practices and use of various tools.
The notion that a teacher’s vision can drive his or her practice is rooted in current conceptions of the theorized relationship between beliefs and actions. As Richardson (1996) noted, in most current conceptions, “beliefs are thought to drive actions; however, experiences and reflection on action may lead to changes in and/or additions to beliefs” (p. 104). Viewing the relationship between beliefs and actions in this fashion encourages “understandings of the complexities of the contexts of teaching and of teachers’ thinking processes and actions within those contexts” (p. 104).

At the same time as the relationship between beliefs and action is interactive and influenced by context, thereby lending credence to Russell’s (1997) notion that the act of teaching can naturally cause classroom teacher to take the ‘content turn,’ it must also be acknowledged that individuals enter the profession already laden with a cache of beliefs about teaching. These beliefs are derived from their personal experience, experience with schooling and instruction, and experience with formal knowledge (Richardson, 1996). Thus, in order for classroom teachers to take the ‘content turn,’ the act of teaching must somehow force them to rethink their beliefs previously formed from these sources. As addressed in the literature review, a ‘content’ turn might be especially problematic for social studies educators due to the current climate of the public schools and the ideological dimension of the field.

Still, if vision drives the practice of classroom teachers, it stands to reason that vision also guides the practice of teacher educators. In Russell’s (1997) model, this vision is largely formed by classroom teachers as they undergo the ‘content turn,’ and then it is modified or refined as they become teacher educators and take the ‘pedagogical turn.’ This second stage of taking the ‘pedagogical turn’ represents the step in which teacher educators come to realize that “how [they] teach teachers may send much more influential messages than what [they] teach them” (p.
Vision is an important consideration in the development of teacher educators because the beliefs that support a teacher’s sense of vision influence their practice, and practice is at the center of Russell’s (1997) theory of how teacher educators develop. However, as Richardson (1996) noted, “Whereas many researchers separate beliefs and action for purposes of conducting research, they understand that these constructs operate together in praxis” (pp. 104-5). The narrative field texts created and examined for this study served the function of both capturing my stated beliefs as well as my attempts at praxis across the various contexts in which I worked. The dual function served by my field texts allowed me to more effectively consider my development in terms of Russell’s model.

Study Design and Methods

The objective of my research was to examine the development of my vision for teacher education as well as the evolving relationship between my practices and beliefs. For this purpose, self-study seemed like a natural choice because of its explicit focus on increasing understanding of “oneself; teaching; learning; and the development of knowledge about these” (Loughran, 2004, p. 9). Russell (2004) has suggested that self-study emerged from and built on the work done in fields such as reflective practice (e.g., Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1983, 1987), action research (e.g., Kemmis & McTaggart 1988, 2000), and practitioner research (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). These influences point to self-study as part of a larger “trend away from
modernism and its assumptions about legitimate knowledge and knowledge production toward broadening what counts as research” (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 13).

While there is some ambiguity surrounding the term, self-study is usually referenced in a manner consistent with the definition offered by Samaras (2002), as involving “critical examination of one’s actions and the context of those actions in order to achieve a more conscious mode of professional activity, in contrast to action based on habit, tradition, and impulse” (p. xxiv). In this sense, most researchers who utilize self-study agree with Berry & Loughran (2005) that:

…underlying issues associated with change and development in teaching about teaching may well go unnoticed and this is one reason why self-study of teacher education practices is important. Self-study, then, is an approach for those who choose to critically examine their own beliefs about teacher education through challenging their existing practice in meaningful ways. (p.178)

As a former classroom teacher undergoing the transition into my new role as a teacher educator, I recognized self-study as a promising way for me to both inform and to be informed by my situated practice in teacher education.

Although self-study is relatively new in educational research, LaBoskey (2004a) recently attempted to flesh out its methodology by outlining four aspects that she viewed as being integral to such work. First of all, she claimed that self-study is improvement-aimed and that it “looks for and requires evidence of the reframed thinking and transformed practice of the research, which are derived from an evaluation of the impact of those development efforts” (p. 859). Second, it demonstrates “interactions with our colleagues near and far, with our students, with the educational literature, and with our own previous work…to confirm or challenge our developing
understandings” (p. 859). Third, self-study “employs multiple, primarily qualitative methods…[to] provide us with opportunities to gain different, and thus more comprehensive, perspectives on the educational processes under investigation” (pp. 859-860; emphasis in original). Finally, the fourth aspect of self-study revolves around the need to “formalize our work and make it available to our professional community for deliberation, further testing, and judgment” (p. 860).

This conceptualization suggests that, although the specific methods used in self-study may vary, “The common element is the reflective, critical examination of the self’s involvement both in aspects of the study and in the phenomenon under study” (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, p. 240). For the purposes of this study, I sought to accomplish this objective by engaging in a collaborative process of “self-critical reflexivity,” described by Ham and Kane (2004) as an “iterative and consciously self-analytical reflection on, repetition of, and gathering data about, the purposeful actions that are the center of the study” (p. 129).

The first part of this reflexive process involved my production of field texts, or written interpretive accounts of my field experiences, over the course of the first three years of my experience as an individual making the transition from classroom teacher to teacher educator. My field texts included the following sources: (a) personal journal entries, (b) discussion board interactions written for peers, (c) discussion board interactions written for colleagues, (d) discussion board interactions written for students, (e) formal observation reports written for student teachers, (f) formal papers written for professors, and (g) conference papers written for the wider community of scholars.

An important part of the methodology here involved collaboration-sometimes considered retrospectively, sometimes achieved in the moment, and sometimes expected in the future. In this
sense, Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) claimed, “Self-study points to a simple truth, that to study practice is simultaneously to study self: a study of self-in-relation to other” (p. 14). The important point is that none of my sources were written or considered independently of others’ perspectives. The personal reflections were written retrospectively after interacting with student teachers in observation conferences, pre-service teachers in the courses I taught, peers in my teacher education classes, and colleagues in departmental meetings and social settings. The discussion board interactions were written in the moment in so far as they were part of extended on-line conversations with colleagues, peers, and students. The formal papers were written with an expectation that I would receive feedback from professors and other scholars regarding my ideas. Some of these papers were also based on studies that were undertaken and written collaboratively with colleagues and professors.

Importantly, self-study is not wholly synonymous with personal reflection. According to Loughran & Northfield (1998), “Reflection is a personal process of thinking, refining, reframing, and developing actions. Self-study takes these processes and makes them public, thus leading to another series of processes that need to reside outside of the individual” (p. 15). Louie, Drevdahl, Purdy, and Stackman (2003) suggested that this collaborative aspect of self-study has at least three benefits, including its ability to increase social support, to foster a culture of reflection that results in higher-level discourse and critique, and to help researchers avoid solipsism and increase the chances they will create transferable knowledge.

Essentially my production of field texts offered me venues to formally reflect on my experiences and engage in dialogue with myself and others whenever I was presented with situations that did not make sense. According to Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Pinnegar, and Placier (2004), such “dialogue can take the form of a dialectic between one’s beliefs and one’s practices
or between one’s values and the norms of the institution” (p. 1141). This stage of analysis served the purpose of capturing my initial attempts to make sense of uncertain situations with others as well as preserving them as sources of data to be revisited later. Furthermore, an advantage of such a large number of data sets is that each provided a different context for my writing. This offered multiple views of similar events, and sometimes, in fact, the exact same event, based upon my positioning as the author and the purpose of my writing.

The second part of the reflexive analytical process occurred when I formally revisited the data sources for the purposes of this dissertation, critically reflecting on and reevaluating them in relation to my research questions. Wilkes (1998) noted:

Brookfield (1995) suggests that reflection becomes critical when it has two distinctive purposes: the first is to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame, and distort educational processes and interactions. The second is to question assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our own best long-term interests, and I would add those of our students. (p. 206)

I attempted to achieve such critical reflection by reading and analyzing my narrative data sets according to the categorical content perspective as described by Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998).

The first step in this approach involved what the authors called selection of the subtext. According to Lieblich et al. (1998), “on the basis of research questions or hypothesis, all of the relevant sections of a text are marked and assembled to form a new file or subtext, which may be seen as the content universe of the area studied” (p. 112). For me, this meant pulling narratives from my entire collection of field texts that specifically addressed issues related to my development, praxis, and representations of myself as a beginning teacher educator. These
subtexts were initially grouped together under the appropriate or corresponding research question.

The next step in this process required me to define the content categories. Early on in the process, I made the decision to not break my narratives down into further parts because I wanted to maintain their coherence and preserve the context present in the data. As such, this stage of the process required me to essentially code the whole narratives according to typologies of the stories therein contained (see Appendix A). The only exception was with the first research question, where I first identified the source of the development, and then I identified the typologies of the associated narratives. In this way, the content categories were identified using an inductive approach in which I generated what appeared to be the most suitable themes for the narratives (Ezzy, 2002).

For me, the third step, sorting the material into categories, was closely linked to the step previously described. After defining the content categories in Microsoft Word, I literally grouped all of my similarly themed narratives together in categories under the research questions to which they corresponded by using the cut and paste function (see Appendix B). This process led me to collapse or refine some of my original codes as increased time and reflection led me to see important similarities and differences in some of the narratives. Although I did not formally break my narratives into smaller parts, the process of sorting them according to the data they contained was assisted by applying a framework created by Labov (1972, 1982; Labov & Waletzky, 1967) in which he suggested that narratives are comprised of discrete elements, including abstracts, orientations, complicating actions, evaluations, resolutions, and codas.

The final step of the analysis process required me to draw conclusions based on the results of how I coded and grouped my narratives. I decided to use “the contents collected in
each category…descriptively to formulate a picture of the content universe” (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 114). This was primarily accomplished by selecting whole narratives to present from my overall sample that I felt highlighted each theme, and then by offering my critique regarding their contents. In addition to the importance I place on retaining context, presenting the narratives in this fashion also seemed important for this self-study so that the reader might have an opportunity to assess the integrity of my analysis, or to engage in some analysis of his or her own. Although the findings I formulated came from themes that were inductively generated, my analysis included attempts to connect these descriptions back to the contents of the literature review while also applying my stated frameworks for understanding.

Ultimately, this process for analyzing my data fit nicely with Bruner’s (1990) suggestion that while “stories are many and varied; reason is governed by a compelling and single logic…[but] once one takes a narrative view, one can ask why one story rather than another” (p. 114). Similar to Richardson & St. Pierre (2005), I am convinced “that in the story (or stories) of becoming, we have a good chance of deconstructing the underlying academic ideology—that being a something (e.g., a successful professor, an awesome theorist, a disciplinarian maven, a covergirl feminist) is better than becoming” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, pp. 966-967, emphases in original).

Recognizing that there may not be a past tense, short of death, in the process of becoming a social studies teacher educator, it seems worthwhile to remember that employing self-study “for purposes of self understanding and professional development is essentially being thoughtful-in a Deweyan sense-about one’s work. It is reflective inquiry-similar to that widely advocated for teachers” (Cole & Knowles, 1998, p. 42). This realization led Dinkelman (2003) to subsequently
note how “self-study serves a dual purpose: as a means to promote reflective thinking and as a substantive end of teacher education in its own right” (p. 7).

As a conclusion to this chapter, below is an outline that lists the nature of my field texts as well as the time periods in which I created them. Taken as a whole, I had 845 single-spaced pages of data that were considered as part of this research. Of this total, roughly 10% was in the form of personal journal entries; 20% was in the form of discussion board interactions; 35% was in the form of formal observation reports written for student teachers; and 35% was in the form of formal papers written for professors and/or the wider community of scholars.

Academic year 2004-2005:

- Personal reflections
- Discussion board interactions with peers (as a student)
  - ESOC 9630 - class
  - ESOC 9000 - class
- Formal observation reports written for student teachers (as a field instructor)
  - 14 student teachers x 4 observation reports each = 56 TOTAL
- Formal papers written for professors (as a student)
  - 6-8 over the course of the year
- Formal papers/presentations for wider community of scholars

Academic year 2005-2006:

- Personal reflections
- Discussion board interactions with colleagues (as a field instructor)
- Discussion board interactions with peers (as a student)
  - EDEC 8140 - class
  - READ 8300 - class
  - ELAN 8045 – class
- Formal observation reports written for student teachers (as a field instructor)
  - 9 student teachers x 4 observations reports each = 36 TOTAL
- Formal papers written for professors (as a student)
  - 6-8 over the course of the year
- Formal papers/presentations for wider community of scholars

Academic year 2006-2007:

- Personal reflections
- Discussion board interactions with colleagues (as a field instructor)
• Discussion board interactions with students (as a teacher educator)
  o ESOC 5560 – class
  o ESOC 2450 - class
• Formal observation reports written for student teachers (as a field instructor)
  o 6 student teachers x 4 observations reports each = 24 TOTAL
• Formal papers written for professors (as a student)
  o 1 paper
• Formal papers/presentations for wider community of scholars
CHAPTER 4: CONTEXT OF MY DEVELOPMENT

The previous chapter presented a framework for understanding the development of teacher educators. For this research, I embraced Russell’s (1997) notion that the development of teacher educators consists of taking a ‘content turn,’ in which classroom teachers begin to rethink what they teach, followed by a ‘pedagogical turn,’ in which former classroom teachers making the transition to teacher education also begin to rethink how they teach. This framework, also suggested that vision, or a teacher’s sense of what is possible, is fundamental to the developmental process because beliefs can drive practice (see Hammerness et al., 2005).

Because the development of teacher educators occurs in two distinct steps, it was argued that this framework rests on an understanding of the “relationship between beliefs and actions [as] interactive. Beliefs are thought to drive actions; however, experiences and reflection on action may lead to changes in and/or additions to beliefs” (Richardson, 1996, p. 104). Here, this understanding of the relationship between beliefs and actions highlights the importance of the beliefs new teacher educators bring with them to their new roles, the context in which they find themselves working, and the degree to which this environment supports or challenges their previously held beliefs.

Consequently, in this section, I disclose certain background information germane to how I understood my own teaching and learning prior to my experiences as a beginning teacher educator. I also describe the nature and structure of the social studies program in which I worked as a beginning teacher educator, as well as the various public school contexts where I engaged in field-based teacher education with student teachers.
Personal Background Information

I am an individual who was raised and educated primarily in white middle-class environments. Both my personal and public life as a child were dominated by same-group interactions. For the most part, my personal life as a child consisted of my interactions with my immediate family. Although all four of my grandparents were either immigrants to this country or first generation citizens, they pushed their respective children, including my father and mother, to “Americanize.” Presumably they took this stance so as to increase their children’s chances for success. Their attitude coincided with the larger push toward assimilation that dominated public schools during this same time period (Glazer, 1994).

By embracing a new way of life, and I suspect by not looking too different from the majority population, my family was readily assimilated into the popular culture. This process unfolded so quickly that, as a second generation U.S. citizen, I feel as if I have already lost cultural ties that I might have once shared with my ancestral homelands - Germany, Austria, Slovakia, and Russia. Nonetheless, my grandparents’ desires for their children to be successful were realized when both my father and mother became the first in their families to attend and graduate from college. Armed with their advanced degrees, my parents secured a middle-class lifestyle for themselves and their five children. This lifestyle allowed them to live in predominantly white middle-class neighborhoods and to send their children to predominantly white middle-class schools.

Subsequently, my public life as a child was also dominated by same-group interactions rooted in white middle-class values. From my earliest days as a student in a Catholic school in the suburbs of Philadelphia to my later years as a student in a couple of public schools in the suburbs of Atlanta, I shared classrooms almost exclusively with other white middle-class
students. Throughout most of that time period I made excellent grades. However, I now have serious reservations about how much I actually learned, especially with regard to how to conscientiously participate in a culturally diverse democratic society.

Though the schools I attended were mono-cultural institutions that offered few opportunities for me to interact with children who were noticeably different from me, I also feel that I was, for the most part, only presented with forms of mainstream academic knowledge. While such knowledge often masquerades as being unbiased in its nature, Banks (1993) argued that, “In reality, mainstream academic knowledge, while appearing neutral and objective, often presents propositions, concepts, and findings that reinforce dominant group hegemony and perpetuates racism, sexism, and classism” (p. 61).

While only being presented with forms of mainstream academic knowledge in culturally homogenous environments seems debilitating in its own right, I also feel that my education suffered in that I was offered precious few opportunities to actively participate in my own learning. Most of my teachers embraced a banking model of education whereby they understood their sole responsibility to deposit acceptable information into my mind, with my only function being that of absorption. I was never once convinced that there was a pressing need for me to critically examine society while I was a young person. My education led me to believe that the way things were in the world was just fine.

These beliefs stayed with me even after successfully completing a teacher education program and earning a degree in social studies education. Upon graduation, I was readily hired to work as a tenth and eleventh grade social studies teacher in a rural Middle Georgia county high school. The school was about sixty percent Caucasian and forty percent African American. Over two-thirds of the students qualified for free and reduced meals. Student attendance was sporadic
at best and the drop-out rate was extraordinarily high. Unlike my own experience in school, the students that I encountered were generally not interested in “playing the game of school” as most did not even entertain the notion of going to college.

Perhaps feeling at a loss as to what else to do, for the most part, I uncritically modeled my professional identity and practices as a classroom teacher after what I had experienced as a student. I had essentially internalized banking models of education as the way schooling was supposed to be done and I did not know how to break from this mold. There was little that I remembered or could use from my own teacher education program to assist me with my predicament. As such, if it was good enough for me, it must be good enough for them too I rationalized. So I delivered information to my students. I tried to do so in a lighthearted and easygoing manner. I tried to do so while expressing to them that I cared about them and I wanted them to succeed. But I still mostly just delivered information that even I knew was quickly forgotten after tests were taken.

During my three years of teaching high school social studies, I recognized that I at least enjoyed working with my students enough that I wanted classroom teaching to remain my profession for the foreseeable future. Therefore, when I first returned to graduate school to pursue an advanced degree in social studies education, I did so with the notion that I would return to the classroom immediately thereafter. I viewed earning another degree as a way to make teaching more lucrative. I did not return to graduate school because I genuinely believed it would improve my teaching. My successful experience as a student had already taught me that schooling was more about endurance than meaningful learning. I thought that I knew who I was as a teacher, and I aligned myself strongly with that identity.
The Nature of the Social Studies Program in Which I Worked

Shortly after returning to the university on a full-time basis as a graduate student and teaching assistant, I found myself immersed in the work of teacher education (see Appendix C). I was assigned as a field instructor, or university supervisor, for fourteen student teachers during my first year and charged with the responsibility of guiding them through their student teaching experiences. My responsibilities expanded the next year as I worked with more than fifteen student teachers while also serving as a teaching assistant in four sections of a Teaching Elementary Social Studies Methods course. Finally, during my third and fourth years, I was given responsibility as an instructor of record for teaching three different undergraduate secondary social studies courses, including Introduction to Social Studies Education, Social Studies Methods, and Student Teaching Seminar. My duties as a field instructor also continued during this time.

Although I was never provided any specific training for my teacher education work before I started doing it, I did immediately find myself surrounded by a handful of fellow graduate students charged with similar tasks and responsibilities as my own due to the large size of our social studies program. Under the guidance of a dedicated professor, our cohort met about once a month during each academic year to discuss problems of practice. We never discussed teacher education as some sort of a technical-rational pursuit of the truth (see Schön, 1983), nor were we ever told how to run our classes or conduct our conferences with student teachers. Instead, we usually spoke of the complexity of teacher education. It was not uncommon for us to collaboratively identify issues that seemed significant in the growth of our pre-service teachers, and then to generate possible courses of action to deal with those issues. We followed up on these issues in later meetings by revisiting and refining our previous efforts.
It was through our discussions in these field instructor meetings coupled with my more general enculturation into my role as a teacher educator that I came to identify and label what I consider to be the nature of the program in which I worked, at least at the time in which I worked there and among those doing the work of undergraduate teacher education. Although not identified as such in any official document, I learned the key players in the social studies program viewed teacher education as a “learning problem” and a “political problem” (see Cochran-Smith, 2004), and desired to facilitate similar understandings in pre-service teachers with regard to their own classroom teaching.

According to Cochran-Smith (2004), this conceptualization is based on the fundamental premise that “teaching itself is an intellectual, cultural, and contextually local activity rather than one that is primarily technical, neutral in terms of values and perspectives, and universal in terms of causes and effects” (p. 2). Thinking about teacher education as both a learning problem and a political problem allows for the consideration and nurturance of aspects of a teacher’s pedagogy that resist assimilation to a technical model. Such vital aspects of a teacher’s pedagogy, largely ignored by technical approaches to teacher preparation, are exemplified in Shulman’s (1987) work on “pedagogical content knowledge,” Clandinin’s (1985) work on teacher “images” and “personal practical knowledge,” and Schön’s (1983, 1987) work on “reflective practitioners,” among others.

More specifically, Cochran-Smith (2004) argued that teacher education as a learning problem rests on the following three main ideas:

...teacher education occurs in the context of inquiry communities wherein everybody is a learner and a researcher; inquiry is an intellectual and political stance rather than a project
or time-bounded activity; and, as part of an inquiry stance, teacher research is a way to generate local knowledge of practice that is contextualized, cultural, and critical. (p. 12)

This view of teacher education meshes with the fundamental principles for teacher education programs and practices suggested by Korthagen, Loughran, and Russell (2006). Understood in this light, there is not necessarily a single right way to teach that will always lead to desirable outcomes. Instead, educators must decide and act upon their pedagogical decisions within a matrix of competing and constantly changing tensions.

One of the central goals of teacher education in this program was to prepare pre-service teachers to find beneficial and defensible ways to negotiate unstable conditions with and for their students. The irony here for teacher educators is that they are immersed in the same messy process they are teaching pre-service teachers about. As Dinkelman (2004) noted in a reflection of his own work as a teacher educator, “Framed in this way, the challenges of helping new teachers develop their rationales are as much my own learning problems as theirs” (p. 15). Such a view of teacher education defies convention in its call for more fluid understandings of what it means to be a teacher educator and of what it means to do teacher education. It also assumes that the role of teacher educator is more of a process of becoming that must regularly be negotiated than a final stage of professional growth achieved as soon as one enters graduate school.

The second part of Cochran-Smith’s (2004) conceptualization, acknowledging teacher education as a political problem, revolves around the following three main ideas:

…teaching and teacher education are political and collective enterprises, rather than neutral and individual efforts; all teacher education policies, whether local or federal, whether governing practice in one program or influencing a much larger constituency are driven by values and are, at least in part, ideological; and teaching and teacher
preparation for social justice are vital elements of an educational system in and for a
democratic society. (p. 18)

To appreciate teacher education as a political problem implies recognizing and interrogating the
ideology that undergirds common practices associated with teaching and teacher preparation.

Teacher education as a political problem also suggests that an important part of teacher
preparation consists of exploring the broader social conditions of schooling with intent to reveal
the “politics of policies” from the “lenses of social justice, race, diversity, and equity” (p. 20).
Such an emphasis seems to provide an indispensable way to help pre-service teachers better
negotiate the matrix of competing and constantly changing tensions that comprise their milieu
for pedagogical decision-making. As Ginsburg and Lindsay (1995) noted, “The political
dimension of teacher education operates in the daily practices (curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation,
and formal and informal rewards and sanctions) as well as in the policy-making arena” (p. 8).

Although Cochran-Smith’s (2004) conceptualization of teacher education as a learning
problem and a political problem may be an accurate representation of the nature of the social
studies program in which I worked, the reader should not take this to mean that all of the
stakeholders in the program held the exact same ideas regarding teaching and teacher education.
Instead Cochran-Smith’s ideas effectively describe the stance that the corps of graduate student
teaching assistants and involved faculty attempted to take in our work together. Although we met
together and discussed our problems of practice, the insights gleaned as a result of our meetings
were still largely left to individual interpretation. As will be discussed in the findings section, my
own ideas regarding what this stance required and how it related to my thinking and practice of
teaching and teacher education only evolved over time.
The Structure of the Social Studies Program in Which I Worked

Following the description of general nature of the social studies program, I now turn to a discussion of its structure. I examine some of the ways I believe the program was designed to address tensions arising from its conceptualization of teacher education. As stated previously, I never felt that any of the instructors, including myself, were ever necessarily told what or how to teach. However, a significant component of the social studies teacher education program did involve pre-service teachers developing a rationale for their teaching that centered on the question of purpose, or what they wanted to teach social studies for. The idea was that the process of developing a rationale would encourage pre-service teachers to wrestle with questions of what was worth knowing and how to best teach that knowledge or those skills and values. In this sense, the rationale was pitched as a foundation for teacher decision-making, albeit with the understanding that it would always be evolving.

Rationale development was considered in relation to five “core themes” that received concentrated attention each semester of the program. As listed on the program’s website, pre-service social studies teachers were expected to:

…create an equitable and culturally responsive classroom; organize classroom experiences to promote active student engagement; articulate clear and defensible rationales for curricular and instructional decision-making; systematically reflect on their own practice to improve teaching and learning; and engage in collaborative inquiry.

(Social Studies Education Program, 2008)

These core themes indicate an interest in facilitating reflective teaching. According to Zeichner and Liston (1996), reflective practice “involves a recognition that teachers should be active in formulating the purposes and ends of their work, that they examine their own values and
assumptions, and that they need to play leadership roles in curriculum development and school reform” (p. 5). In these ways, reflective practitioners assume responsibility for their own professional development, and continuously seek methods to improve the learning experiences of all of their students.

Owing largely to their previous experiences as students, the concept of reflective practice did not always immediately mesh with the expectations pre-service teachers brought with them to their formal preparation for classroom teaching. Many of them expected to simply be told how to teach. Consequently, some found the core themes unsatisfying in the absence of more concrete and explicit knowledge about teaching. Thus, instructors in the social studies program were challenged to find ways to disrupt their students’ conceptions of what it meant to become a teacher while simultaneously seeking to empower them to begin the process of becoming teachers by actively considering and attempting to live the core themes.

Students first developed their rationales as part of the requirements for a course called ESOC 2450. This course, along with a connected sixty hour field experience (ESOC 2450L), represented the initial experience students had with the social studies program. During my time as a graduate teaching assistant, most instructors treated this course as an introduction to the foundations and/or philosophy of social studies education. The connected field experience was primarily used as an opportunity to get students to consider what they were observing in social studies classrooms through the various lenses they discussed in class. The capstone assignment for this class required students to develop rationales for their own teaching, drawing from their own experiences, their observations in the schools, and the readings and discussions addressed in class.
After completing ESOC 2450, students who wished to apply for admission to the social studies program submitted their rationales to be scored by program faculty and, in a few occasions, by graduate teaching assistants as well. The scores assigned to these rationales, coupled with a student’s grade point average in content-area courses, determined who would be admitted. Using the rationale as part of the admissions formula was not unproblematic. Many instructors recognized such high-stakes use complicated the degree to which they could feel confident that students were expressing their genuine thoughts. Nonetheless, this approach was favored on the hope that a student’s rationale offered members of the program an opportunity to consider the connections pre-service teachers were making between their thinking about their future practice and the notion of teaching social studies as an ethical, moral, and political activity.

Following their formal admission into the program, students went on to take a methods/curriculum/practicum block of courses that honed in on what might be called the praxis of social studies education. The goal here was to examine ways to blend theory and practice into concerted and purposeful action in the classroom. Unlike ESOC 2450, there was nothing built into these courses that demanded attention to the rationale. Nonetheless, many instructors, myself included, seized upon this opportunity to try to get students to revisit their rationales now that the pressure to gain admission into the program was no longer present. I believe this block of courses offered a unique opportunity to get students to begin making specific connections between their rationales and what they might actually do as classroom teachers.

Students entered the final phase of their formal undergraduate preparation as social studies teachers in the student teaching semester, following their successful completion of the methods/curriculum/practicum block of courses. During this final semester, students engaged in
a 12-week student teaching experience in local schools while also taking part in a 15-week accompanying student teaching seminar. The student teaching experience represented the first real opportunity for students to apply their rationales in actual public school teaching contexts. Each student teacher was observed by a university-based field instructor at least four times throughout the course of the semester. These observation visits consisted of three phases: a thirty minute pre-observation conference, an observation of the student teacher teaching an entire class period, and an hour long post-observation conference. Field instructors were generally committed to encouraging student teachers to implement rationale-based practices responsive to the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching social studies in varying contexts.

Additionally, in an attempt to maintain connections with the university, student teachers were also required to attend weekly seminar meetings. These seminar meetings gave student teachers the opportunity to share their experiences with one another while attempting to link their thinking to standards of effective practice adopted by the state in which the social studies program is located. The capstone assignment for this course, as well as for the entire social studies program, required students to create electronic portfolios. The electronic portfolio assignment asked student teachers to describe their rationales for teaching as well as how their ideas about teaching informed their perspectives and practices in meeting the state’s standards. At the conclusion of the semester, students formally presented and discussed their e-portfolios with their peers, graduate teaching assistants, members of the social studies program, and interested area social studies teachers.

Within this structure, over the course of the four years I spent as a teaching assistant, I had the opportunity to actively participate in each of the phases or components described. I taught the introductory course, the methods course, and the student teaching seminar. I also
routinely worked with student teachers in the field. This involvement provided me with a good understanding of how the program was structured and what each component might achieve. Necessarily, this also influenced how I came to develop as a social studies teacher educator.

The Context of the Public Schools in Which I Worked with Student Teachers

One final aspect of the developmental context is the public schools in which I worked with student teachers as a field instructor. A large part of my responsibilities as a graduate teaching assistant included field-based teacher education. In total, I worked with more than forty student teachers who held teaching placements in a variety of elementary, middle, and high school classrooms.

Due to the location of the university where I conducted my graduate studies, I saw a good amount of diversity across my observations. This diversity was present in terms of the demographics of the students I observed as well as the social conditions of the communities in which the schools were located. My observations sent me to schools easily classified as rural and suburban. Some were also located in smaller urban environments. With these differences, I found myself immersed in teaching environments comprised of students representing a variety of different races and hailing from dramatically different socio-economic backgrounds.

For all of this diversity, one common thread ran through my experiences as a field instructor in the local public schools. All of the classroom teachers and student teachers I worked with seemed to be feeling the pressures associated with accountability, and responding by placing greater emphasis on covering the standards and preparing students for tests. In the younger grades, the testing and accountability structures of the state often meant social studies was squeezed out of the curriculum to make room for tested subjects. In the secondary grades, often the result was broad superficial coverage of social studies content at the expense of more
meaningful examinations. These issues were connected to the factory model of schooling and described in more depth in the literature review of this dissertation.

The public school contexts challenged my developing vision and practices in a number of ways. As I came to identify more closely with the notion of “teaching against the grain” in my own practice (see Cochran-Smith, 1991, 2004), I was forced to acknowledge the difficulty of such an approach in an unwelcoming standards-driven environment with an overbearing emphasis on accountability. Many of the student teachers with whom I worked, perhaps overwhelmed by the realities of the classroom as viewed from their new perspectives as teachers (see Cole & Knowles, 1993), failed to see the rationales they developed in the social studies program as a viable way to deal with their perceived problems. These student teachers were often hesitant to use the goals stated in their rationales to develop answers to their own problems of practice, and consequently reverted to uncritically teaching in the same ways in which they were taught. My challenge as a beginning teacher educator was to somehow find a balance between these tensions, and to guide or assist student teachers in their attempts to engage in conscious modes of professional activity.

Chapter Summary

The beliefs that comprise a teacher educator’s sense of vision influence practice and change. Thus beliefs are important features in the development of teacher educators. Since teachers’ beliefs are derived from their personal experience, experience with schooling and instruction, and experience with formal knowledge (Richardson, 1996), I began this chapter by providing a description of how I understood teaching and learning as both a student and teacher. Yet the interactive nature of beliefs and action means that “…experiences and reflection on action may lead to changes in and/or additions to beliefs” (p. 104). This perspective highlights
the importance of social context in further refining and developing beliefs. For this reason, I also provided a description of the contexts in which I developed and carried out my work as a beginning teacher educator.

These descriptions effectively revealed a number of critical tensions experienced as I moved from classroom teacher to teacher educator. For instance, in many ways, the knowledge of teaching I brought with me to my work in teacher education was at odds with the vision the social studies program seemed to be advancing. This lack of congruity prompted reflection on my part – reflection that was enriched by having the opportunity to explore mutual problems of practice with fellow graduate teaching assistants. Then, as my vision for teacher education became clearer, I felt a tension between what I wanted to accomplish as a teacher educator and what the climate of the public schools seemed to expect of pre-service and classroom teachers. Again, this tension prompted additional reflection and a rethinking of my views. Although its difficult to understand these fluid relationships, I believe the interplay between my biography and the shifting social contexts in which I found myself set the stage for me to learn about the issues uncovered through this research. These issues are explored in greater depth in the following findings chapters.
CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

The entire process of how one becomes a teacher educator remains a relatively unexamined question (see Korthagen et al., 2005; Russell & Korthagen, 1995; Zeichner, 2005). It is known that most teacher educators were classroom teachers prior to their university appointments (Ducharme & Kluender, 1990; Lanier & Little, 1986). However, since classroom teachers and teacher educators operate in different institutional and instructional contexts, the same knowledge, values, and skills useful in one environment may not simply be transferred unadulterated to the other. Despite similarities between the two roles, there are also important differences.

Research shows that teacher educators understand their roles as consisting of the ability to perform various tasks in certain competency areas, including content competencies, communicative and reflective competencies, organizational competencies, and pedagogical competencies (Koster et al., 2005). However, existing literature is unclear on how or why teacher educators acquire these competencies deemed necessary for their work. One way to develop understanding of the intimate relationships between beliefs and action (see Hammerness et al., 2005; Richardson, 1996) is by examining the development of vision in beginning teacher educators. The purpose of this chapter is to address the findings of this study related to the first research question: How has my vision for social studies teacher education developed?

I identified four primary sources responsible for contributing to the development of my vision. These sources include completing coursework relevant to teacher education, engaging in the work of teacher education, interacting or collaborating with peers, and studying my practice
as it developed and unfolded. Given the scarcity of research that actually describes how or why certain sources are influential in the development of teacher educators, I tried to pay particular attention to these questions in the discussion that follows.

The Influence of Completing Graduate Coursework

The coursework I undertook as a graduate student (see Appendix D) influenced the development of my vision for social studies teacher education in a couple of distinct ways. First, many of the class meetings and assignments for my graduate courses encouraged me to consider questions of purpose in relation to the history and nature of the educational system, as well as the broader social conditions of schooling. Additionally, my coursework prompted me to reflect on the personal experiences and understandings of teaching and learning that I brought with me to my graduate studies, and to reconsider and reevaluate them in light of my developing ideas regarding teacher education. Coursework challenged some of my existing beliefs as I developed a new vision of social studies education that was more cognizant of the broader educational landscape.

The specific ways in which completing my coursework contributed to my vision of social studies teacher education are addressed in the following sections. Coursework (a) pushed me to consider the history and purpose of education, (b) challenged my views on the nature and purpose of the educational system, (c) encouraged me to consider the broader social conditions of schooling, (d) prompted reflection on my background and experiences as a student, and (e) sparked reflection on my experiences as a teacher.

The History and Purpose of Education

One significant way in which my coursework contributed to the development of my vision of social studies teacher education was by pushing me to consider the purpose of
education historically. The understandings generated through this process prompted me to make connections to the present, and to begin questioning what ought to be happening in schools today. This was a necessary step in interrupting the uncritical thought patterns that had guided my thinking about teaching and learning as both a student and as a teacher.

As an example, consider the following realization from a discussion board post I wrote early in my graduate studies:

Compulsory education for the masses seems to have been more a product of wealthy citizens not wanting poor children roaming their neighborhoods than anything altruistic. These children were supposed to be educated to respect authority and their stations in life. Lately, I have been questioning the real purpose of school, both historically and in the present. (discussion board post, 09-06-04)

The admission at this end of this post makes it clear that the question of what function schools should play in society had largely eluded my active and serious consideration as both a student and classroom teacher. It was not until I reframed the issue historically as part of my graduate coursework that I began to question my previously formed assumptions.

In a related journal entry, I came to explicitly question the purpose of education in the present by comparing it to what I determined to be its purpose in the common schools of the nineteenth century:

Emphasis in common schools was always on character - not intellect. I wonder how much this goal has changed. Schools still seem to lack a great emphasis on intellectual development. Most activities in classrooms seem geared towards building certain character traits, such as certain organizational skills or perseverance. (personal reflection, 09-27-04)
This journal entry effectively highlights the beginning of what would become my arduous journey to find some meaning for k-12 education above and beyond controlling the student populace or merely giving them something to do until they could enter the real world as workers and citizens.

Eventually, my examinations of the history of education in the U.S. also left me with more nuanced understandings of how the educational system has traditionally operated and whose interests it has primarily served. In the example below, I acknowledge how commonly stated goals such as “creating good citizens” and “preserving the American way of life” may be associated with certain cultural antecedents detrimental to a pluralistic society:

I have found that folks often talk about the purpose of schooling to be to create good citizens or to preserve the American way of life. Perhaps these types of goals are pleasing on some kind of a superficial level, but what do they really mean? It seems to me that a good citizen has always been defined as a person who embraces the values, and behaves according to the norms, of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture. Similarly, since being American is often equated with being a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, preserving the American way of life seems to be referring to a very specific thing that is not at all inclusive of the various groups of people who actually make up America. Suddenly these types of goals don’t seem so pleasing anymore, not even superficially. At the very least, they raise a ton of questions. (discussion board post, 09-05-05)

This discussion board post shows how my examinations of the history of education as part of my coursework allowed me to begin understanding purpose as both historically situated and socially constructed.
This fluid understanding of the purpose of education led to the realization that the way things were in the past does not have to be the way things are in the present. I came to recognize that the past does not necessarily hold any kind of special privilege in determining the way things ought to be. These fresh understandings regarding the history and purpose of education in the U.S. contributed to my development of a vision of social studies teacher education by leaving me with a desire to work towards changes for the good of all students, even as I struggled to articulate what such changes might actually include or look like.

The Nature and Purpose of the Educational System

As I started searching for a more meaningful purpose for education than what had been understood and employed throughout history, my coursework also prompted thinking about the nature of the educational system. I came to recognize some of the inherent tensions involved in challenging the norms of life in schools. Consider the following excerpt from one of my course assignments:

Will it ever be possible to put an end to teachers and students “playing the game” so to speak? The deal seems too good for both sides. Students get to enjoy simplified content that is easy to master with minimal effort, while teachers get to enjoy an orderly classroom and don’t have to put much time into their planning. Worse yet, administrators reward or remain ignorant of these behaviors. (coursework, 10-13-04)

For all of the damaging aspects of such school climates, I also realized that the benefits some enjoy explain resistance to change. That many have an interest in the status quo of schooling was an important realization for me, even as I realized that other dynamics were at play to explain why the education system works as it does.
My coursework helped me to better understand how standards and the culture of accountability influence the nature and purpose of education. The following is a critique I offered up in one of the papers I wrote during my first semester back in graduate school:

Behaviorist assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge make it possible to think about and teach history as a series of unchanging and disconnected pieces of information. Consequently, a history teacher who succumbs to the pressure of standards-based instruction, even if unwillingly, ultimately tends to simplify historical content knowledge to such an extent that it literally becomes just a series of “facts” that are checked-off of an endless list of objectives after they have been “covered.” In this scenario, precious little time is devoted to uncovering and exploring the relevance of the material by delving into the nuance and context that serve to provide deeper meaning. (coursework, 04-30-05)

In this example drawn from my reflections in a course my second semester, both teaching and learning are essentially predefined according to the accountability system in place. I came to realize the system provides few compelling reasons for teachers to move beyond covering the standard content or for the students to do anything beyond simply acquiring it long enough to pass standardized tests.

My coursework also prompted me to consider that the standards and accountability movement had corrupted, or perhaps simply further clouded, discourse on the purpose of schools. For example, I wrote the following in one of my assignments for a graduate level class:

There exists a general consensus in the United States that students should acquire historical content knowledge as part of their formal schooling experience. Ironically, the state and local standards that have been generated to facilitate this expectation actually serve to detract from the potential educative value of history instruction because they
evade fundamental questions of purpose. These standards basically assert what is important to know without taking into consideration why it is important to know it. (coursework, 04-30-05)

The realization that the standardized curriculum is not necessarily significant for its own sake led me to question the idea of purpose, and what might actually constitute worthwhile learning in social studies.

Closely related to questions of purpose, my coursework prompted me to more closely interrogate the nature of knowledge and its potential uses. The following reflection effectively captured my thinking as I wrestled with some of these questions:

This class is causing me to think more deeply about the concept of “knowledge.” Is there fixed knowledge? Or is knowledge better thought of as the tools a person uses to cope with various situations? As a compromise, I currently find myself thinking that both types, provided they exist, can properly be identified as knowledge. In any case, I need to spend some more time reflecting about this. (personal reflection, 02-07-05)

Aside from highlighting my epistemological ruminations concerning the nature of knowledge, this quotation also shows my growing awareness that what is primarily taught in schools does not, or should not, necessarily hold a preeminent place over other forms of knowledge. Again, this realization was a necessary step in interrupting the uncritical assumptions that had guided my thinking about teaching and learning as both a student and as a teacher.

The questions raised through my examinations of the history and nature of the educational system caused me to think more deeply about what function schools ought to play in society, and what sorts of understandings or skills might constitute worthwhile learning. For the development of my vision of social studies teacher education, perhaps more important than the
particular beliefs I formed on these issues was the realization that I desired for my students to seriously consider their own purpose for teaching in relation to the history and nature of the educational system. This seemed important as they imagined their future roles as teachers.

*The Broader Social Conditions of Schooling*

As I came to better understand the value of teachers examining the purposes served by a standardized social studies curriculum, I also came to recognize the importance of paying attention to the broader social conditions of schooling. Much of the impetus for this recognition can be found in the earlier understandings I gleaned from examining the history and nature of the educational system. More specifically, I began to understand that there was little about the way content was typically understood or treated that helped students who struggled, for whatever reason, with rote memorization. Even for students who performed well in schools, it was becoming increasingly difficult for me to understand how traditional social studies teaching methods facilitated worthwhile learning.

My coursework encouraged me to question how students who were not of the mainstream culture might experience their schooling, and what role teachers might play to shape these experiences. In one of my classes, I posted the following on a discussion board:

I think that part of our collective failure as educators is the direct result of our deliberate attempts to Americanize our students by literally trying to impose our own white middle-class norms and values on them. Seems kind of ridiculous in a pluralistic society, doesn’t it? In any case, it seems clear that the widespread practice of equating Americanism with Protestantism represents an impossible situation for ethnic-minority American citizens. In one sense, they belong as they are technically American. In another sense, they never
quite fit in as they are generally recognized as their own ethnicity first, and then as an American. (discussion board post, 10-27-05)

This field text helps to illustrate my nascent understanding of some of the issues surrounding ethnic-minority students in the k-12 educational system. In particular, I began to see the contradictions of a social studies curriculum, presumably aimed at facilitating democratic citizenship, which expected all students to learn uniform, monolithic, and culturally-biased knowledge.

I also started to understand how these contradictory expectations might be reinforced through the stances teachers assumed in presenting curriculum. In a different post, I elaborated on my evolving understandings of the potential influence of teachers in working with students who might hold different social perspectives rooted in their specific backgrounds or world views:

From what I read, I gathered that context is integral to understanding. In this regard, it makes sense to me that context is probably also usually responsible for misunderstanding.

So what happens when individuals read the same events in different ways? Are such misunderstandings always decided in the end based upon which party has the most social capital, or who has the most power? If so, where is such power derived from? On what grounds? Can it be changed? One thing is for sure - in the classroom, the teacher has the most power. What do the answers to these questions mean for the practice of educators? (discussion board post, 09-26-05)

As this discussion board post demonstrates, taking into account how teachers dealt with issues of power and privilege in their classrooms through the presentation of content became an important focal point as I formulated my own approach as a social studies teacher educator. The questions I posed in this post show that I was at least starting to think of the broader social conditions of
schooling as an important piece of the puzzle for my own practice, and the type of practice I wanted to facilitate in pre-service teachers. In particular, I came to see the value of inquiring into issues of diversity, democracy, and social justice (see Cochran-Smith, 2003, 2004; Michelli & Keiser, 2005) in educational settings for myself and the students with whom I worked.

My Background and Experiences as a Student

Completing my graduate coursework also played a vital role in the development of my vision of social studies education by encouraging me to reflect on my own background and experiences as a student. Coming to recognize that my background necessarily influenced my understandings of the world was important for me in order to begin purposefully challenging some of the beliefs I embraced prior to my work in teacher education. The insight that emerged as a result of my reflections was tied to my evolving conception of the purpose of social studies instruction as it was revealed and refined through my explorations of the history and nature of education, as well as my considerations of the broader social conditions of schooling.

As an example, consider the following self-reflective excerpt from one of my papers written for a graduate level course:

From my earliest days as a student in a Catholic school in the suburbs of Philadelphia to my later years as a student in a public high school in the suburbs of Atlanta, most of my education consisted of me “playing the game of school” along with other white middle class students so that we could all eventually get into a good college. While I did get into a good college (full of other white middle class students), I am embarrassed to admit that in my time there I was never once convinced that there was any pressing need for me to critically examine society as a whole. The way things were seemed just fine to me.

(coursework, 05-23-05)
This example illustrates some of the ways in which I was beginning to understand how my own background, coupled with a fairly traditional education emphasizing the acquisition of mainstream academic knowledge, left me wholly uncritical and unaware of why anyone might question the status quo.

The critiques I offered concerning my own background and experiences in school grew more pointed as I continued my graduate studies. For example, the following excerpt from another self-reflective essay reveals my newfound appreciation of the importance of diversity in a democracy, as well as my developing understandings of how privilege and power can play out in society:

Obviously being raised in a white middle-class environment comes with many advantages; however, meaningful exposure and interaction with diversity is not typically one of them. I now recognize that this is problematic for a democratic society because, without meaningful exposure to and interactions with diversity, middle-class whites tend to develop a privileged kind of tunnel-vision that is based on a false reality. This tunnel-vision distorts their perception of society and prevents them from fully appreciating the plight of less advantaged groups. (coursework, 05-11-06)

This field text shows how formally reflecting on my background in my coursework allowed me to interrogate and better understand my social positioning in ways that did not result exclusively in unconstructive feelings of guilt or helplessness.

Through these reflections on my background and experiences as a student, I also began to make connections between my evolving sense of purpose and my work as a teacher and as a teacher educator. As an example, consider the following quotation:
I believe that the experiences that I had as a young person failed to adequately prepare me for conscientious participation in a culturally diverse democratic society. Despite this deficiency in my background, I was allowed to become a social studies teacher. I believe that the ways in which I taught as a classroom teacher failed to adequately prepare my students for conscientious participation in a culturally diverse democratic society. Despite this shortcoming in my practice, I was allowed to become a teacher educator. Of course, rather predictably, I am now at a point in my professional career where I am questioning whether or not the ways in which I currently teach my pre-service teachers about how to teach their students will do anything to significantly alter the insidious pattern of miseducation that has plagued my own educational background. (coursework, 05-11-06)

This reflection highlights the emergence of a goal for my practice - preparing students for conscientious participation in a culturally diverse democratic society - that only surfaced as I came to recognize specific ways in which my own educational experience might have been richer and more worthwhile. This particular reflection also shows how I was beginning to understand teaching and teacher education as a process.

My Experiences as a Teacher

Similar to the previous section, coursework played a vital role in the development of my vision for social studies teacher education by encouraging me to reflect on my experiences as a teacher in light of all of the other considerations revealed to me through my coursework. Many of these reflections focused on my own efficacy, or the lack thereof, in working with students who were different from me. The following represents such an example:

I easily graduated with a degree in education and was readily hired to work as a tenth and eleventh grade social studies teacher at a rural high school in middle Georgia. I did not
know anything about the school and only took the job because I wanted to live in the country. It probably goes without saying that my hitherto sheltered existence was in for a shock. The school was about 60% Caucasian and 40% African American. Over two-thirds of the students qualified for free and reduced meals. Student attendance was sporadic at best and the drop-out rate was extraordinarily high. The students that I encountered were generally not interested in “playing the game of school” as most did not plan to go to college. I quickly realized that the type of education that I received was not going to work with most of these students. I felt unprepared. (coursework, 05-23-05)

Though I was aware that the cultural differences I encountered as a teacher mattered, only through the opportunity presented in graduate school to formally reflect on my experiences did I begin to make some sense of the situations I previously encountered.

In a discussion board post from a course taken my third year in the program, I probed my experiences as a classroom teacher and continued to question the efficacy of my actions with my students:

While I was still in the classroom, I had many students who did not graduate despite the fact that they attended classes until the end of their senior years. They just couldn’t pass the graduation tests. I now wonder how much my fear as a teacher and my inability or unwillingness to seize certain teachable moments might have contributed to their failures. (discussion board post, 08-26-06)

This post seems to hint at my growing awareness that I might have done my students a disservice by primarily embracing traditional and safe teaching practices unresponsive to the broader social conditions of schooling. Obviously such a realization led me to want to encourage pre-service
teachers to enact more engaging strategies with their own students that would facilitate meaningful learning for all.

In a related excerpt from another course, I continued to lament what my classroom teaching might have actually accomplished, even after I acquired more practical experience:

Over the next couple of years, I successfully formed relationships with most of my students and tried to prepare them for whatever standardized tests came along. This was my only solace as other serious issues like low attendance, high drop-out rates, and segregated classes remained the norm. While my teaching did help those with the most amount of determination to graduate from school, I never really felt that it was serving any greater purpose. (coursework, 05-23-05)

By focusing attention on my struggle to develop a plan of action for working with my students, this quotation illustrates my developing belief that embracing some sense of purpose for my teaching might have at least provided me with a basis regarding how to define worthwhile learning, and subsequently how to approach my decision-making as a classroom teacher.

In the end, the field texts revealed my classroom teaching experience was mostly useful for the development of my vision for social studies teacher education as a source of reflection about schools as social institutions—their history, nature, purpose; who wins and loses in them; the broader social conditions framing them— but not as a source of expertise about teacher education in its own right. However, the courses I took did occasion significant shifts in my thinking about what schools, and social studies in particular, might do to promote a more just and democratic society. When these shifts were considered in light of my experiences as a teacher, I found myself hungry to formulate my own vision of social studies teacher education.
Summary of the Influence of Completing Graduate Coursework

In this section, I examined how completing my doctoral coursework contributed to the development of my vision for social studies education in a number of distinct ways. First, the uncritical assumptions that guided my thinking as a student and teacher were challenged as I was pushed to consider the history and nature of the educational system. These examinations allowed me to begin to understand how contemporary schooling rests on practices that seem detrimental in a pluralistic society and that diminish the possibility of meaningful learning by students. Subsequently, completing my coursework helped me to recognize the importance of developing a sense of purpose for one’s teaching that considers and is responsive to the broader social conditions of schooling. Finally, formally reflecting on my background and experiences as a student and teacher in light of my developing understandings regarding these issues encouraged me to purposefully challenge some of the beliefs I held prior to my move to teacher education. Ultimately these considerations all worked together to contribute to the development of my vision for social studies teacher education.

The Influence of Engaging in the Work of Teacher Education

Another valuable activity that informed the development of my vision for social studies teacher education was actually engaging in the work of teacher education. Sometimes this activity cast me in a passive role such as when I would observe student teachers teaching lessons. My attempts to make sense of these observations allowed me to refine my conception and understanding of good teaching while making distinctions relevant for my own practice as a teacher educator. Other times this activity cast me in a more active role, such as when I would conference with student teachers after lessons or when I was the instructor of record charged with teaching a variety of university-based social studies teacher education classes. This function
of actually doing the work of teacher education provided me with an arena to make connections between practice and theory.

The influence of engaging in the work of teacher education on my developing vision of social studies teacher education is addressed in the following sections. Specifically, engaging in the work of teacher education (a) provided a window to reflect on my prior practice, (b) provided opportunities to critique the practice of others, (c) allowed me to better understand the culture of schools, (d) pushed me to think more deeply about the concept of learning, (e) compelled me to make conceptual distinctions relevant for my own practice, and (f) offered multiple practice-based opportunities to make connections between practice and theory.

My Prior Practice

A significant part of engaging in the work of teacher education for me included observing student teachers. One way in which these observations of student taught lessons contributed to the development of my vision of social studies teacher education was by providing me with a window to reflect on my prior practice as a classroom teacher. This process of reflection allowed me to refine my ideas regarding what might constitute good teaching in relation to my own previous teaching. As an example, consider the following reflection from my first semester as a teacher educator:

I saw a very good activity today that simulated life in a dictatorship. While there were weaknesses in the lesson, the overall positive impression that I left with served to show me the value in experiential learning. I now wonder why I did not put myself out there more often and try some of these activities. (personal reflection, 11-04-04)

By observing a student teacher effectively using simulation as an approach to teach his students social studies content, I was reminded of the value of certain methods that had been neglected in
my own teaching. Similar realizations resulting from subsequent observations set off a crucial process in which I began to refine my conception of good teaching by inquiring into other possible shortcomings that may have hindered my former vision and practice as a classroom teacher.

Similarly, reflecting on my prior practice as a social studies classroom teacher also gave me a point of comparison to think about what I should do differently as a teacher educator so as to not replicate my own uncritical process of becoming with my student teachers. Importantly, my understandings in this regard were influenced by my enculturation in a social studies program that valued rationale-based practice. In the following reflection from my third semester as a field instructor, I pondered the apparent lack of purpose in the lesson I observed:

The biggest issue that I identified was that this student teacher’s lesson did little to help her achieve the goals of her rationale. While part of this can be attributed to the fact that many of these student teachers do not really believe their own rationales, I also think that part of the problem is that they just don’t consider (or maybe know) how to design lessons that explicitly meet their stated goals. In retrospect, I wonder if I could have done this while I was teaching. In my efforts to teach how to teach, I think that I am becoming much more reflective and critical than I was previously. Is this the key to figuring out how to teach powerful lessons? (personal reflection, 09-22-05)

This example highlights the importance I started to place on taking reflective and critical stances while planning for how to secure student engagement in meaningful and purposeful learning. Ironically, this was not something that I can honestly claim permeated my actual practice as a classroom teacher. I only came to recognize its importance after taking on the challenge of
teaching others how to teach. In this way, my developing understandings were shaped by the context of my work and my attempts to facilitate program aims.

*The Practice of Others*

Observing student teachers also contributed to the development of my vision of social studies teacher education by providing me with a window to critique the practice of others in relation to program goals. Essentially my role as an observer allowed me to gain insight that is oftentimes overlooked or simply ignored in action. In this respect, many of my critiques centered on the simple, but powerful, observation that the students I saw in the classes taught by student teachers did not appear engaged in the material – or to put it another way, many of the students did not seem to be using their minds for any specific or particularly meaningful purposes.

This perceived lack of engagement on the part of the students caused me to question what they were actually learning as a result of the lessons they endured. In my first semester as a field instructor, I wrote:

> Probably the biggest thing that struck me about this visit was the total lack of engagement on the part of the students while the student teacher was giving a lecture-type, teacher-centered review. Why the hell bother to talk if nobody is listening? Looking back at my own practice as a teacher, I could have asked myself the same question numerous times. It just doesn’t make sense. (personal reflection, 09-30-04)

While such a personal realization may have made me sympathetic to the plight of the student teachers I worked with, it also reinforced for me the importance the social studies program placed on planning for engagement and not taking the easy way out by employing traditional teaching practices without considering the likely student response.
Furthermore, my developing understanding of student engagement as a necessary feature for meaningful learning to occur led me to focus on its assessment, as evidenced in the following reflection written after an observation:

This was a pretty good observation, but I am still amazed that these student teachers claim that their students are actively engaged based purely on appearance. I ask how they know the students know. They claim they saw them participate. The idea of any kind of an assessment to check for understanding never seems to enter their minds. I think I might be getting through by at least getting them to acknowledge that they don’t really know. (personal reflection, 09-14-04)

This quotation makes it clear that my observations prompted me to recognize that what students actually learn as a result of a lesson has to be considered on equal terms with what a teacher planned for them to learn when judging the relative success or failure of a lesson. In this way, critiquing the practices of others through my observations led me to think more deeply about issues, such as how to plan for and assess student engagement, that were simultaneously relevant to my own practice and developing vision as a social studies teacher educator.

*The Culture of the Schools*

As I refined my ideas of good teaching by reflecting on my prior practice and critiquing the practice of others, I gained a better understanding of how the culture of schools can tempt pre-service teachers to teach in uncritical ways. As an example, consider the following reflection written after one of my observations during my first semester:

I am quite concerned about this one. He told me that he taught his last unit almost entirely using methods that the university frowns upon because he was very unfamiliar with the content. More troubling than this is that he told me the student test scores went up on the
unit that he taught more traditionally. Obviously there are many reasons why this might have happened. I think that he is trying to rationalize his way into taking the easy way out. It seemed that the best course of action was simply to talk to him a little about what he was teaching for. Traditional methods of instruction rarely lend themselves to enthusiastic goals. (personal reflection, 11-11-04)

This example illustrates how teaching without purpose can seduce teachers. Presenting social studies material in a simplified manner obviously represents one way for student teachers to deal with their perceived lack of content knowledge and ambiguous teaching situations. Moreover, this style of teaching can deceptively be viewed as effective when traditional assessments based on recall are the only ones incorporated.

In a related field text one semester later, my critique grew more pointed when I observed a student teacher presenting content to his students without paying heed to what they might actually be learning:

As soon as this student teacher succumbed to the pressure of covering content, everything that we push in our program disappeared. For example, his lesson today lacked student engagement, higher order thought, and critical thought. Perhaps even worse, his lesson today did not serve to engage the students in worthwhile learning, even according to his own understanding. With that said, what was the point? What good did it do to disregard the program goals in order to cover content? (personal reflection, 03-17-05)

Although I could no longer reconcile myself with the style of teaching I observed, I did come to recognize how the expectations of the school environment can differ from the expectations advanced in the university environment.
Even when I felt somewhat successful in my immediate work with student teachers, I knew there were additional considerations related to the culture of schools that I had to somehow address in my practice as a beginning teacher educator. In the second half of my first year, I wrote:

This student teacher actually seems to be trying to implement some of the practices that I encourage. Overall, I think that it is helping him. Now I am just questioning if he will continue to think about his practice so critically when he is released into the real world and doesn’t have the support and/or the expectations associated with the university. Given the culture of the schools, it just seems so easy to become comfortable. (personal reflection, 03-07-05)

These instances of engaging in the work of teacher education contributed to my developing vision for social studies teacher education by encouraging me to keep in mind the sometimes conflicting expectations between the school and university environments. Indeed, one of the more challenging aspects of my work as a teacher educator involved helping student teachers navigate these circumstances for themselves, with an emphasis on what they actually wanted to accomplish as teachers.

*The Concept of Learning*

As I attempted to get student teachers to think more deeply about their practice and to enact their visions of powerful social studies even in the face of inhospitable school climates, I was compelled to think more deeply for myself about what it means, or what it takes, for students to learn something. My thinking about a concept of learning took some time to unfold. For instance, an excerpt from one of my earliest observation reports:
This student teacher naturally exhibits many of the characteristics of a good teacher. The mere fact that we spent our entire post-observation conference discussing the complex realm of pedagogical choices proves that he has developed an advanced understanding of teaching over the course of this semester. I suppose that my only concern, based solely on today’s lesson, revolves around the fact that a teacher should think very carefully about what material to just cover and how to accomplish that objective. There is a fine line to consider – when does just covering become just not worthwhile? (observation report, 11-11-04)

This observation report field text shows my evolving understanding that simply presenting material to students does not translate into student learning. There are other considerations that teachers must address in planning for, and securing, student learning.

In particular, it occurred to me that the teacher has a responsibility to make sure the students are engaged or thinking about the material. The following reflection highlights this belief as I was coming to understand it:

You absolutely must engage students for learning to occur. Although I do believe that most individuals can choose to learn whenever they want by forcing themselves to be engaged, I do not think that it is fair for k-12 public school teachers to just present material in a traditional manner and then say that it is the student’s responsibility to learn it. (personal reflection, 01-27-05)

While not absolving students of their responsibility for their own learning, I was beginning to understand that teachers should not shirk their responsibility either. They must be able to identify what they want their students to know or be able to do as a result of a lesson, and they must plan for ways to facilitate such learning.
Observing student teachers also prompted me to realize that students do not necessarily learn simply by participating in an activity or being entertained. After witnessing a lively and entertaining simulation, I wrote the following:

I saw a reenactment of the Battle of Antietam today. I must admit that I missed the point. Do not get me wrong. I give this student teacher all the credit in the world for trying something like that. However, what the activity seemed to be missing was a purpose. In the end, I was left questioning what the students gained as a result of participating in this activity. (personal reflection, 10-20-05)

Even after actively participating in the reenactment, I had my doubts about what the students might have learned. I realized part of the issue here was that there did not appear to be any kind of overriding objective or purpose for the reenactment. After only one year as a teacher educator, I saw lessons differently. Previously, a lesson that secured so much attention and participation from students may have struck me as an outstanding achievement. To be clear, student attention, enthusiasm, and participation are certainly achievements of sorts. Now, however, my teacher educator eyes looked for learning as much as they looked for students who merely enjoyed time spent in social studies classrooms.

The notion of teaching lessons with a purpose, as well as considering ways in which to realize this purpose, continued to dominate my thinking regarding my work with student teachers throughout the rest of my time in graduate school. The following excerpt from an observation report illustrates one example of how I tried to get student teachers to think about these ideas for themselves:

For all of the positive things that I noticed, I still had my doubts as to whether or not the students had really “learned the fundamental and immediate causes of the Civil War.” To
me, it seemed more like the students might be able to recognize the causes of the war, as opposed to actually understanding them in any kind of a sophisticated manner. I tried to explain my distinction in terms of active student engagement. Basically, the two activities left me unsure as to whether or not most of the students had interacted with the material in their own minds. In other words, the activities did not necessarily require the students to do anything with the material once it was delivered to them. The students didn’t have to apply their knowledge. The absence of this step in today’s lesson bothered me because I do not believe that students will retain information if it is taught without some kind of a larger context. (observation report, 03-07-05)

Here, part of my attempt to address purpose had to do with getting the students to actually think about or apply the historical content of the lesson. Although I did not explicitly name it in this report, another important focus of my instruction involved getting the student teacher to think about the ends to which she wanted her students to apply the information. Why did it matter? Aside from a deeper understanding of the content, how did she want her students to be different as a result of engaging in this lesson?

**Conceptual Distinctions Relevant for my Own Practice**

Attempting to teach about teaching social studies also caused me to learn about teaching social studies. There were many times while working with student teachers that I found myself rethinking and refining my ideas about teaching as result of the observation or our conversations. Related to the previous section, some of the distinctions I made concerned issues of active student engagement, or what it takes for a student to learn something. One such moment occurred my first semester when a student teacher told me that she hoped her lesson would
facilitate critical thinking. From my perspective, it did not seem that she did anything to really try to secure such thought from her students. In a personal reflection, I wrote:

I was glad to see this student teacher try something a little more untraditional today.

Well, actually all that she did was seek out student opinion on issues that they were studying, but that beat where she was at. One thing that alarmed me was that she expected the activity to accomplish the goal of getting the students to think critically. The activity increased participation, but it only required students to state their opinion. Nothing was done with the opinions once they were out there. I’m still not sure if this student teacher understands what she is teaching for. (personal reflection, 09-30-04)

In this instance, I began to refine my ideas concerning what it might mean for students to think critically, or maybe even for them just to think. At the very least I had developed an understanding that students sharing opinions may have been a precursor to critical thinking, but was not critical thinking by itself.

In a similar example taken from an observation report that same semester, I was forced to refine my understanding of critical thinking even further:

In our post-observation conference, the student teacher initially indicated that she thought her lesson successfully promoted critical thinking. After I inquired further, she stated that she thought the letter she had them write to the President met this goal as it required them to do something with the information that they had learned about. I suggested that the letter could probably best be thought about as an example of an activity requiring some form of higher-order thinking, but not critical thinking. We then discussed critical thinking as actually challenging the way students thought about things, not just challenging them to think more carefully about things. In any case, I encouraged the
student teacher to continue to incorporate higher-order thinking activities into her lessons and to also strive to engage her students in critical thinking. (observation report, 10-26-04)

The idea that critical thinking may involve challenging students’ views and ways of thinking was one that had never occurred to me prior to this observation. In the end, I was able to apply the conceptual distinctions made during these teaching episodes with my student teachers to my own developing vision as a social studies teacher educator.

**Connections Between Practice and Theory**

Finally, engaging in the work of teacher education provided me with an arena to make connections between practice and theory. I was provided a chance to formulate, apply, and test my developing vision of social studies in actual teaching and teacher education settings. Sometimes I learned about the relationship between practice and theory from simply observing the lessons taught by student teachers. For instance, I already addressed the tensions student teachers feel between the expectations of the school environment and those of the university. One example of how my observations provided me with some insight on ways to deal with the problem by making connections between practice and theory is drawn from a personal reflection my second year:

This student teacher has impressed me the most this semester. It seems that everyone agrees that “active student engagement in worthwhile learning” is a good thing. So what is different about this student teacher? She stopped making excuses. She doesn’t blame her cooperating teacher, the standards, or anything else. Rather, she has found ways to balance all of these competing interests. With today’s lesson, she easily taught numerous standards-based concepts; however, she did it by incorporating them into a provocative
court case. This allowed the students to see the relevance of the government in their lives.

The real life context also made them eager to think more deeply about the concepts.

(personal reflection, 03-23-05)

Although this example does not offer many specific details, it is clear that I appreciated how this student teacher was able to infuse meaning and purpose into her lesson as she prepared her students to pass standardized tests.

Drawing from such experiences, I also eventually found some measure of success in helping other student teachers bridge the divide between theory and practice in their own teaching. For instance, in my third year, a student teacher made it clear to me that one of our earlier conversations helped him to think about how to approach his task as a teacher. I reflected:

This was a strange observation because the student teacher was just administering the test he had created over the previous unit. He told me that he really liked and identified with something I said in the first observation; namely, in the standardized system that we live in, one way that he can try to function is to use the standards as a vehicle to accomplish his personal objectives as a teacher. He said that this made sense to him and he tried to design his test to both test the ability of his students to recall factual content information as well as to push higher order and/or critical thinking through a couple of short essay questions. Of course, from my perspective, too much of the test was testing factual content and the higher-order type questions seemed to lack purpose. I suppose I will probably almost always have such criticisms. In any case, what stuck out to me was how he identified with the idea of “using the standards as a vehicle.” Is this a viable and worthwhile way to move our discussion from how the standards constrain teaching into the realm of “but what are you teaching for?” (personal reflection, 02-22-06)
Although I was unsure if I agreed exactly with the way in which the student teacher interpreted and then applied my suggestion of using the standards as a vehicle to accomplish other purposes, this example makes it clear that I was at least attempting to direct my teacher education efforts toward facilitating purposeful practice by bridging theory and practice.

As my journey continued and I began actually teaching university-based teacher education courses, many other examples surfaced through the years of how engaging in such work provided me with an arena to bridge theory and practice. These are discussed in greater depth in the following two chapters, which explore how the relationship between my beliefs and practices evolved, and describe the representations of my development offered through my approach to this research.

Summary of the Influence of Engaging in the Work of Teacher Education

Engaging in the work of teacher education contributed to the development of my vision of social studies teacher education in a number of ways. As a starting point, my observations and critiques of student teachers in relation to program aims prompted me to reflect on my prior practice in ways that encouraged me to refine my understandings of good teaching. These understandings were further enhanced as I came to better understand the culture of schools and to contemplate ways to work both within and around the system. Additionally, engaging in the work of teacher education pushed me to think more deeply about the concept of learning and to make conceptual distinctions relevant for my own vision and practice as a teacher educator. These understandings were applied and tested as I carried out my work with pre-service teachers and sought ways to bridge theory and practice. Of course, it must again be noted that none of these contributing factors to my vision existed or operated in isolation. Instead, they worked in unison to thrust me into an ongoing developmental cycle of reflection and action.
The Influence of Interacting or Collaborating with Peers

As addressed in the context chapter, due in part to the large size of the social studies program, I immediately found myself surrounded by a handful of fellow graduate students and teaching assistants in similar situations, and charged with similar responsibilities, as my own. This is the group to whom I primarily refer in this section in discussing the influence of peer interaction and collaboration on the development of my vision for social studies teacher education.

Over the course of our work together, the interactions and collaboration I enjoyed with this group of beginning teacher educators contributed to my developing vision by providing a critical, but supportive, venue for me to consider and formulate my beliefs. Interacting or collaborating with peers (a) offered me a source of support and encouragement, (b) allowed for communal inquiry centered on educational matters of mutual concern, (c) pushed me to rethink my assumptions about education, and (d) helped me to make connections to my work in teacher education.

Support and Encouragement

As a starting point, my peers contributed to the development of my vision of social studies teacher education by offering me a source of support and encouragement. As an example, during my first month back in graduate school, I wrote:

I am excited about the work that is going on here. The mere fact that all of us field instructors are pushing the concepts of “active student engagement” and “worthwhile learning” seems to elevate the program to a much higher level than even when I went through it in 2001. No one ever asked me what I wanted to teach for, though it would have been worthwhile if they did. (personal reflection, 09-24-04)
Although specific understandings of teacher education only developed over time, it was obvious from the start that I was drawn to my new environment and responsibilities as a teacher educator. More specifically, I appreciated the camaraderie shared among my peers and the commitment we shared to making teacher preparation a more meaningful enterprise than what I had personally experienced as a pre-service teacher.

A couple of months into my first semester, after one of our many field instructor meetings, the support and encouragement I felt in my new role as a teacher educator became even clearer:

I will reiterate my earlier sentiments that I like the work that is going on up here. We are acting as a cohesive unit for the most part. Today we discussed our reflections about the first semester. Additionally, we talked about ways in which we might be able to improve the program. Most of our reforms were rationale-based. I suggested that we could all probably be more effective if we required the student teachers to give us a copy of their rationales before the semester even started. This would provide a base upon which to influence and evaluate. (personal reflection, 11-12-04)

This reflection shows how the interactions and collaboration I had with my peers was focused on our work together in social studies teacher education. Specifically, our joint inquiries usually revolved around the “core themes” of the larger social studies program in which we all worked. Given my willingness to participate and offer suggestions during the field instructor meeting, this reflection also suggests that I was feeling supported and encouraged as a valuable member of the group.
As one final example of how I felt supported and encouraged as a result of my interactions or collaboration with peers, consider the following example extracted from one of my course assignments in the summer after my first year back in graduate school:

It has been most beneficial to engage in discourse with peers who share my same interests in education and who ponder similar questions. This type of communal inquiry and debate was uncommon in the school environment while I was still teaching.

(coursework, 05-23-05)

In addition to acknowledging the importance of engaging in communal inquiry with my peers in a supportive environment, this excerpt also shows that I was beginning to make connections between my developing understandings and my prior experience. As helpful as collaboration was as a source of support and encouragement, the value of collaboration seeped into my views about what I hoped to accomplish as a teacher educator. My experiences as a graduate assistant prompted me to consider the importance of providing pre-service teachers with similar opportunities for professional growth.

Communal Inquiry Around Shared Concerns

Similar to the previous outcome of providing support and encouragement, interacting or collaborating with my peers also allowed for communal inquiry centered on educational matters of mutual concern. Since my peer group consisted of other beginning social studies teacher educators, this communal inquiry contributed to the development of my vision by pushing me to refine my ideas regarding social studies teaching and teacher education. This refinement occurred as I openly shared my ideas, and as I listened to the perspectives of others. Below is an example from one of my discussion board posts that illustrates this reciprocal relationship:
Although I don't have any answers of my own, I have to be a jerk again and mention that a rationale-based answer to the question of what is the purpose of social studies does little to change the current state of affairs (i.e. folks teaching whatever and however they want). I think that it is great to have a rationale and I get the sense that many teachers do not. By the same token, even when a teacher does have a rationale, don't you think it can be argued that some rationales are just better than others? (discussion board post, 10-26-04)

This example shows my willingness to question with others the efficacy of rationale-based practice - a core theme of our social studies program. Moreover, the vibrant interaction around the question I posed in this instance indicates that we welcomed the perspectives we brought to shared problems of practice as beginning teacher educators.

In another instance, the value I was beginning to place on receiving peer input or feedback when faced with my own problems of practice became even more evident. In my third year, I posted an invitation to others in the program to help me think through my work in teaching the student teaching seminar:

For selfish reasons, I would like to encourage all of you to read my most recent reflection in the "Instructor reflections" section of Livetext for the student teaching seminar. Needless to say, tonight's class was interesting. I think my reflection speaks to some of the issues that we have identified together. What I am unsure of is how well I handled these issues. Obviously I already have my own ideas, but I am interested in what all of you think. (discussion board post, 11-16-06)

My plea for collaboration in this post is unmistakable, and I think it speaks volumes about the degree to which my peers influenced the development of my vision for social studies teacher
education (even if I was unable to capture exactly how). I actively turned to them to help me think through some of the issues I was confronted with as I attempted to teach the seminar course for student teachers in our program. The data I collected provided examples in each of the eight semesters I worked in the program.

In this last example, my interactions with my peers prompted me to explicitly lay out my developing views regarding the importance I was beginning to place on the notion of inquiring together into educational matters of mutual concern. I wrote:

I think the purpose of our time together is to generate new meanings and/or understandings that are personally useful out of old problems. You do not have to anticipate my needs and I do not have to anticipate yours. But we do need to be willing to engage in open and honest conversation with each other about ourselves and our practice. There is no need, in my mind, to reach consensus. But should we not be continuing the conversations? If you truly believe that you can always learn from each other, I think the answer has to be yes. (discussion board post, 03-27-07)

This example makes it clear that I found engaging in communal inquiry with my peers to be an invaluable activity as I struggled to develop my vision and practices as a beginning teacher educator.

Rethinking Assumptions

Although it has been discussed how interacting or collaborating with my peers offered me a supportive and encouraging venue in which to inquire into educational matters of mutual concern, this should not be mistaken to mean that our work together was uncritical or that it lacked intellectual rigor. In fact, I found the opposite to be true. Interacting or collaborating with
peers contributed to the development of my vision for social studies teacher education by pushing me to rethink some of my assumptions about social studies education.

An example of how collaboration with peers helped me rethink assumptions I had made about teaching comes from a class discussion board in my first social studies doctoral seminar, a seminar in which nearly all of my teaching assistant cohort was enrolled. The seminar discussion the night before caused me to begin questioning my notion of what might constitute important outcomes for social studies classes:

In class, I mentioned that I always felt that I had to pump my students full of information about a given topic before I could challenge them to think critically about it. While I am not entirely backing out of that stance, I wonder if incorporating the critical thinking approach right from the start could instill the content without wasting the time I usually save for my self-righteous approach of straight knowledge transmission. I also wonder which is more important - acquiring critical thinking skills or acquiring knowledge of the content? I think it really does depend on how you define both, and I have not gotten that far yet. (discussion board post, 09-02-04)

Not only did the conversation from class prompt my thinking about the relationship between content knowledge and critical thinking, but it also encouraged me to publicly extend my thoughts on a discussion board and seek additional feedback from my peers.

In another instance, after the same social studies doctoral seminar a month later, my colleagues and I discussed a particularly controversial piece of literature (Bigelow, 1990). Later that night, I wrote:

The most striking comment of the night was made by one of my fellow field instructors.

As most of us were questioning the value of exposing students to such injustices in their
own lives that they actually get pissed enough to throw a chair in the classroom, he asked, “What’s better? Anger or apathy.” Our instructor suggested that we already know what happens with apathetic students – Nothing. This argument makes sense to me. (personal reflection, 10-06-04)

Up until this point in my development, I had never even considered anger as something that might be more desirable from students than complacency. This entry illustrates how the free and open exchange of ideas with my peers in certain graduate classes facilitated new ways of thinking.

Although it is not the intent of this section to detail all of the ways in which my views on education changed as a result of my interactions or collaboration with peers, a reflection I wrote my first year is particularly revealing of the new insights I developed through peer engagement. I wrote:

The problems facing education reform as we have been discussing it seem profound. It would almost require a “rage against the machine” mentality to up heave the current system. Emphasizing thinking as a form of education versus indoctrination as a form of education requires teachers to give up their “expert” status. Abandoning this long-standing status raises many questions, not the least of which are teacher authority, interactions with students, and pedagogical methods employed. (personal reflection, 10-20-04)

In the end, these kinds of insights, facilitated through peer interactions and collaboration, contributed to the development of my vision for social studies teacher education by pushing me to rethink my assumptions about education.
Connections to my Work in Teacher Education

One final way in which interacting and collaborating with my peers contributed to the development of my vision for social studies was by helping me to make connections to my work in teacher education. One such example is provided in the following reflection, which I wrote after a field instructor meeting during my first year in graduate school:

I do not see the point in wasting time in my four meetings with each student teacher talking about the practical concerns of the classroom. If I am specifically asked a question about such concerns, I will make suggestions. However, I don’t know the context of their situations and I think they are more heavily influenced by their cooperating teacher anyway. My time seems better spent on the theoretical and abstract. I want to inquire about student teachers reasons for teaching and I want to challenge their understandings. Ultimately, I think that education will be better served by posing these types of questions to student teachers and letting them deliberate about the possible answers. I think that this process necessarily encourages reflection which is a much better tool to equip a teacher with than my advice on classroom management. (personal reflection, 01-28-05)

These ideas were formed after a semester of interacting and collaborating with my fellow field instructors. Many of our discussions during that time period centered on what function we should play given the limited amount of time we actually have to work with student teachers.

In a different example, I honed in on a purpose for my teacher education work after considering a conversation I had with some of my peers:

Our conversation centered on how to understand difference and/or what it means to be different. It seems to me like everything boils down to being self-aware. Difference can
not be defined unless an individual is first aware of where they are coming from. I think that my biggest goal as a teacher educator is to make student teachers more self-aware.

(personal reflection, 09-07-05)

By considering how becoming more self-aware was critical to my own development as well as those with whom I was conversing, I came to subsequently name this as an important goal for my work with pre-service teachers.

Peer interaction or collaboration also caused me to think more deeply about what a pedagogy for teacher education might actually look like. After participating in an extended online discussion with a fellow field instructor, I made connections between openness or transparency and what students might be able to learn as a result of their teacher education courses. On our group discussion board, I wrote:

I guess this is an example of what I was getting at in the last part of my post. In my mind, and from my perspective as a teacher educator, it is okay if a discussion fails, as long as the students clearly knew the rationale for the activity, what the objective was, and then are given time to discuss what went "wrong." The insights gained through such a process seem just as powerful as whatever might have been gained in the discussion itself. I guess that I am arguing that transparency opens the door for students to learn from failure just as much as from success. Does that make more sense? (discussion board post, 02-25-06)

These, and other, realizations were facilitated through conversations between me and my peers in which we were compelled to make connections between our ideas and our work in teacher education.
Summary of the Influence of Interacting or Collaborating with Peers

This section discusses how interacting or collaborating with my peers contributed to the development of my vision for social studies teacher education by providing me with a collaborative space in which to formulate my ideas. This space was both supportive and critical. In other words, at the same time as I felt encouraged as a result of interacting and collaborating with my peers, I was also regularly pushed to rethink my assumptions regarding education and to make connections between my evolving ideas and my work as a beginning teacher educator. In this respect, although I came to recognize that there might not be correct answers in an absolute sense to my questions about teacher education, I also realized that there were potentially better or more thoughtful approaches than what I was already bringing to my work in this new field. The key to unlocking these new understandings rested in my attempts to interact or collaborate with peers who possessed divergent views.

The Influence of Studying my Practice

One final activity that contributed to the development of my vision of social studies teacher education involved studying my own practice as it developed and unfolded. As described in the methodology chapter, the entire study itself was an ongoing and active process, described by Ham and Kane (2004) as a kind of “self-critical reflexivity,” in which I sought understandings relevant to my work, applied those understandings, and then initiated the entire process over again after various evaluative stages. In this respect, rather than simply keeping a record of what I thought and did as a beginning teacher educator, the continuous self-study of my practice represented an attempt on my part to “better align [my] teaching intents with [my] teaching actions” (Loughran, 2007b, p.12).
Thus the method of my study encouraged me to regularly reflect on the purpose or rationale for my teaching, as well as to consider how my pedagogy might have worked for or against my stated intentions in certain situations at given moments in time. For my larger vision of social studies teacher education, studying my practice as it developed and unfolded preserved data for further reflection and encouraged me to become an active producer of knowledge by developing informed ways to deal with my situated problems of practice.

Data for Further Reflection

In order to study my practice as it developed and unfolded, I regularly created and preserved data as I made the transition from classroom teacher to teacher educator. For this study, I had 845 single-spaced pages of data in the form of field texts created over my first three years as a graduate teaching assistant that were considered as part of this research. The creation of these field texts offered me venues to formally reflect on my experiences and engage in dialogue with myself and others whenever I was presented with situations that did not make sense. The process served the function of capturing my initial attempts to make sense of uncertain situations with others as well as preserving them as sources of data to be revisited later.

New understandings and insight may emerge each and every time data sources are revisited. I found the theoretical perspectives and questions I brought to my reexamination of data were crucial in helping me shape my sense teacher educator identity. This study is a comprehensive attempt to describe my development as a social studies teacher educator, and subsets of the data I collected have already been used to reveal the primary challenges I faced as a beginning teacher educator (Ritter, 2007), to collaboratively examine the efficacy of certain teacher education approaches in facilitating rationale-based practice (Ritter et al., 2007), and to investigate the influence of culture in enhancing or constraining advanced conceptions of
democratic citizenship in written feedback provided to student teachers (Ritter, Powell, & Hawley, 2008). I expect that further examinations of these data will continue to help me refine the ideas that comprise my vision of social studies teacher education.

Producer of Knowledge

In addition to preserving data for further reflection in the future, studying my own practice as it developed and unfolded contributed to the development of my vision of social studies teacher education in a more immediate sense by encouraging me to become an active producer of knowledge. In the process of collecting and periodically analyzing my data, I came to identify troubling issues within my practice and began to seek out different approaches to deal with them. Although I might have informally engaged in this process as a classroom teacher, the formal and systematic approach I undertook as a teacher educator allowed me to recognize what I was doing as research that could be used to inform my practice with student teachers.

As an example of how studying my practice informed the development of my vision for social studies teacher education, I produced a personal reflection field text toward the end of my second semester. I wrote:

This student teacher reverted back to teacher her cooperating teacher’s lesson plans because the semester is almost over and the standardized tests are coming up. As such, I asked the student teacher to critique the lesson plan as it related to her emerging rationale for teaching. Of course, she tore the lesson apart on the basis that it did not facilitate any of the concepts that we talk about in our conferences. While I took this critical assessment as a success, there are still lingering questions. Am I causing these student teachers to think in new ways, or have they merely figured out what I want to hear? Do I,
in fact, want to hear certain things? If so, how does this help/hinder my work with the student teachers? (personal reflection, 03-30-05)

The questions raised in this reflection led me to spearhead a collaborative research project with fellow graduate students the following year in which we explored the challenges of facilitating rationale-based practice with student teachers by questioning the efficacy of our own teacher education practices.

Participating in this joint research project caused me to think more deeply about my practice and to develop specific measures to meet the problems I encountered. An example is an excerpt taken from the data I produced as part of the project. In a personal reflection, I wrote:

I always find the second round of observations interesting because it offers you the chance to see what kinds of things stuck from the first round of observations. I am always amazed by two things in particular. First of all, the student teachers, especially those preoccupied with how they are going to be evaluated, always seem to hone in on a couple of things discussed in the first conference and explicitly set about trying to improve them…but then leave the rest of their practice relatively unchanged. So rather than facilitating real reflection, I usually discover that I have only pushed the student teachers to make their practice seem more coherent and well thought-out by looking nicer. The other thing that always amazes me about observation two concerns what the student teachers latched on to from the first conference and how they interpreted those things. It is true that people hear what they want to hear. So, the overriding question for me from the second round is - how can we restructure or strengthen the relationship between field instructors and student teachers to foster more open and honest communication that is both supportive and evaluative? If such a restructuring is not possible, what are some
In response to the issues raised in this reflection, I ultimately came to adopt an approach with my student teachers in which I essentially “came clean” with them early in the semester regarding how I viewed our working relationship.

I began to tell student teachers during the first observation visit that I viewed my role as primarily being one of support as opposed to evaluation. This approach was described in the “official” description of field instruction provided by the program. The program website addressed the role of the field instructor, “Their role is not to merely ‘check-in’ on student teachers, but to provide careful, responsible, and productive support to both cooperating and student teachers” (Social Studies Education Program, 2008). Yet I came to fully understand my role as a support provider, and how to communicate my role to student teachers, only after careful and systematic inquiry into my practice. With limited observations of their practice, I let them know that the only way they would likely fail would be if their cooperating teachers determined they were unfit for the profession. This tactic might have strained the relationship between the student teachers and their cooperating teachers, but I hoped it allowed me to quickly move past their concerns with evaluation so that we might begin to discuss what they actually wanted to accomplish as teachers. As with so much of the pedagogical work of teacher education, it was not always clear if my hopes were confirmed.

However, perhaps more significant than the specific tactics I devised to deal with my problems of practice were the developing principles of practice that framed them. After all, the specific tactics tended to vary according to the particular situations in which I found myself. The larger and developing principles of practice represented more stable and permanent features of
my teacher education practice. In the example provided, more than anything else, I came to understand that teaching is relational. In this sense, I realized that how my students perceive of me and my intentions is an important factor in influencing what they will actually learn as a result of our interactions together. This understanding, formed as a result of actively studying my developing practice, came to represent one of the core beliefs of my vision for social studies teacher education. Similarly, the emergence of other core beliefs pertinent to my developing vision of social studies was facilitated through my commitment to studying my practice as it developed and unfolded.

Summary of the Influence of Studying my Practice

In this section, studying my practices as they developed and unfolded was shown to have an influence on the development of my vision for social studies teacher education by preserving data for further reflection and by encouraging me to produce knowledge to inform how I dealt with my situated problems of practice. The understandings generated through these active and purposeful examinations led to the formation of general beliefs about teaching and teacher education as well as specific ideas on how to best carry out my work in light of these beliefs. As beneficial as the emergence of these general beliefs and specific ideas was to my vision of social studies teacher education, an equally powerful understanding was that self-study of my practice as a teacher educator offered an unparalleled opportunity for me to continue to grow in ways advantageous for myself and my students.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the development of my vision of social studies teacher education. In particular, it was suggested that four primary sources were responsible for contributing to my development. These sources included completing coursework relevant to teacher education,
engaging in the work of teacher education, interacting or collaborating with peers, and studying my practices as they developed and unfolded. Given the scarcity of research that has actually described how or why certain sources are influential in the development of teacher educators, I attempted to pay particular attention to these frequently neglected questions in the preceding discussion.

I found that completing my coursework relevant to teacher education pushed me to reconsider the notion of purpose in light of the history and nature of the educational system as well as the broader social conditions of schooling. In addition, completing my coursework encouraged me to form personal meanings about teaching and teacher education by prompting me to reflect on my evolving understandings in relation to my own background and experiences as a student and teacher.

Engaging in the work of teacher education as a field instructor contributed to the development of my vision of social studies teacher education by providing me with a window to reflect on my prior practice, and to critique the practice of others. These activities allowed me to refine my ideas regarding what might constitute good teaching, and to consider how to accomplish such teaching given the culture of the public schools. Additionally, engaging in the work of teacher education pushed me to think more deeply about the concept of learning and to make conceptual distinctions relevant for my own vision and practices as a teacher educator. I applied and tested these understandings as I carried out my work with pre-service teachers and sought ways to bridge theory and practice.

The third source affecting the development of my vision for social studies teacher education, interacting or collaborating with peers, was important for a couple of reasons. First, these interactions offered me a source of support and encouragement by allowing for communal
inquiry centered on educational matters of mutual concern. Furthermore, my interactions or collaboration with my peers pushed me to rethink my assumptions about education, and helped me to make connections to my work in teacher education.

Finally, it was argued that studying my practice as it developed and unfolded was influential in the development of my vision for social studies teacher education because it preserved data for further reflection and encouraged me to become an active producer of knowledge by developing informed ways to deal with my situated problems of practice. As should be clear, there was some overlap between each of these sources and the ways in which they influenced my development. In the end, it would seem that the understandings gleaned through each source complimented or complicated each other in such ways that I ultimately left with a more nuanced vision of social studies teaching and teacher education.
CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

As described in previous chapters, this study makes use of a framework for understanding the development of teacher educators that centers on practice. Russell (1997) proposed that the development of teacher educators consists of taking a ‘content turn,’ in which classroom teachers begin to rethink \textit{what} they teach, followed by a ‘pedagogical turn,’ in which former classroom teachers making the transition to teacher education also begin to rethink \textit{how} they teach. Within this framework, vision, or an individual’s sense of what is possible, is fundamental to the developmental process because the beliefs that comprise one’s vision can influence his or her practice (see Hammerness et al., 2005; Richardson, 1996). The previous chapter examined how my vision for social studies teacher education developed.

To more fully understand the development of beginning teacher educators requires more than just identifying the visions they embrace for their teaching. Given its two distinct steps, Russell’s (1997) model rests on the idea that the ‘relationship between beliefs and actions’ is interactive. Beliefs are thought to drive actions; however, experiences and reflection on action may lead to changes in and/or additions to beliefs” (Richardson, 1996, p. 104). Thus, an examination of the development of teacher educators needs to examine how their visions are enacted in their teaching practices over time. Also important is how closely intention aligns with actions. Both of these concerns have been largely ignored in the teacher education research literature to date. This chapter addresses my second research question: How has the relationship between my practices as a teacher educator and my beliefs evolved?
My work over the course of my first three years as a graduate teaching assistant offered abundant opportunities to examine the relationships between my evolving beliefs about teacher education and my evolving practices. The relationships are traced and described according to the following developmental themes: (a) starting from default assumptions about teaching, (b) invoking my classroom teaching experience as a source of expertise, (c) resisting changing my views on teaching, (d) beginning to focus on program objectives, (e) taking the content turn in my work as a teacher educator, and (f) taking the pedagogical turn in my work as a teacher educator.

Starting from Default Assumptions about Teaching

This dissertation actually began as part of a smaller study I conducted for a collaborative teacher-research seminar I participated in during the 2004-2005 academic year called Teacher Support Specialist in Social Studies (TS4). The purpose of this seminar was to discuss the effective mentoring of beginning teachers and problems of practice associated with such work. TS4 consisted of ten participants, including a university-based teacher educator, four experienced classroom teachers, and five graduate teaching assistants/novice teacher educators. I considered myself as a graduate teaching assistant, although I was somewhat in limbo as someone who just left a position as a classroom teacher of three years at a rural high school in middle Georgia and not yet officially started work at the university.

TS4 consisted of a five day summer session followed by monthly meetings and regular contact through an electronic message board for the remainder of the academic year. The initial summer session was used as a time for the participants to discuss the effective mentoring of beginning teachers and to plan action research projects on some aspect of our mentoring practice in the coming school year. My study benefited from this prolonged collaboration as my
colleagues helped me to frame my research by pushing my thinking on different aspects of the research process such as delimiting the scope of inquiry, engaging in a literature review, identifying sources of data, and distilling the information through analysis (Stringer, 2004).

However, my action research project was distinguished from the rest of those in the seminar in that it was the only self-study. Not knowing what to expect as I took on my new role and responsibilities at the university, I decided to examine how I would perceive my transition from classroom teacher to teacher educator. As a developmental marker, I recorded a statement of my beliefs regarding the nature and purpose of social studies teaching and learning at the outset of the study. This statement, found below, highlights the thinking that guided my practice as a classroom teacher:

I believe that the purpose of social studies centers on informed decision-making. I believe that informed decision-making consists of two distinct aspects. I believe that a body of knowledge exists that every person should know. I believe that the first part of being an informed decision maker involves being informed in this body of knowledge. I believe that the second part of being an informed decision maker involves being informed in the art of decision-making. I believe that history offers the best context in which to both acquire the necessary body of knowledge and in which to practice making decisions. I believe that there is a danger in teaching action without responsibility. I believe that the teacher plays a dual role in the classroom. I believe that the teacher must be both an authority figure and a guide. I believe that a teacher must instill in students necessary knowledge and a sense of responsibility. I believe that a teacher must also guide students through the decision-making process. I believe that students have a responsibility to acquire both knowledge and skills. I believe that students who knowingly and routinely
disrupt the learning process for their peers should be removed from the mainstream classroom in the interest of the common good. (personal reflection, 09-01-04)

Although there are many beliefs listed in this statement that I now understand differently, I believe this creed represents an honest account of how I was thinking about social studies teaching and learning immediately upon leaving the classroom and beginning my work in teacher education.

Taken as a whole, the beliefs I brought with me to my work in teacher education highlight the degree to which I had internalized banking models of education (see Freire, 1970/1993) as the way schooling was supposed to be done. There was nothing about my upbringing that really encouraged me to question the status quo, including my preservice teacher education program. As Richert (1997) suggested, “Rather than confronting the issue of necessary change, it is more likely that teachers who teach in schools as we know them teach as they were taught” (p. 74). This claim certainly held true for me as I uncritically modeled my professional identity and practice after what I had experienced as a student.

My default assumptions about teaching revolved around the ideas that effective classroom teachers were individuals who knew their content areas, who found ways to deposit appropriate information into their students’ minds, and who produced students who were able to pass standardized tests. I understand now that my reference to “informed decision-making” as the overriding purpose of social studies instruction is somewhat misleading, as the reality of my teaching revealed I was more concerned with “informed” than “decision-making.” Little that I did as a teacher demonstrated much commitment to decision-making. My statement of beliefs indicated that I still felt the need to retain my status as the expert over my students whether
acting as an authority figure or as a guide. The pressures associated with this traditional model of teaching and learning can have a number of negative effects.

As an example, the following excerpt from one of my course assignments highlights one of the more dire consequences flowing from my default assumptions about education:

Even though I recognized that I did not have as much content knowledge as I would have liked, I also knew that my students had even less knowledge of history than me. This led me to believe that lecturing about material I knew at least slightly better than my students was one acceptable way to address the nagging concerns of what and/or how to teach.

Moreover, to make this arrangement more acceptable to my students, I often infused humor and time for student conversation into my primarily lecture-based teaching methods. In turn, my students generally played along because the content was at least a little more “interesting.” (coursework, 03-16-06)

As this field text makes clear, instead of seeking out ways to make my social studies teaching more meaningful, my devotion to the banking model of education, with its emphasis on the teacher playing the role of expert, often compelled me to enter into implicit deals with my students—what McNeil (1986) described as “defensive teaching.” Although these deals allowed me to keep the appearance of a typical social studies classroom, the quality of my instruction suffered as a result.

In terms of Russell’s (1997) developmental model, there is little evidence that I ever took the ‘content turn’ as a classroom teacher. I never came to see the need for me to significantly rethink my subject matter, perhaps because my upbringing and experiences as a student did not push me to engage with the ideological dimension of social studies. For me, social studies represented a way to maintain the status quo by giving students basic information concerning the
grand history of our nation and the inner workings of our political system. Moreover, the accountability system present in the current climate of schools seemed to favor such rote memorization of discrete facts. For these reasons, I initially and quite naturally carried my default assumptions about teaching with me into my work as a beginning social studies teacher educator. I never knew there was any other way.

**Invoking my Classroom Teaching Experience as a Source of Expertise**

I began observing student teachers in early September of my first semester as a doctoral student. From this moment, I was doing teacher education. What else can we call it? I was attempting to teach others how to teach. Given my limited formal training regarding how to conduct such work, I was plagued by a deep sense of inadequacy and uncertainty as I carried out my earliest observations. This sudden immersion into the unknown initially led me to invoke my classroom teaching experience as a source of expertise in my new role as teacher educator. I yearned for the security that comes with a well-defined role to play. In this regard, I naturally came to assume that I was supposed to be the expert over my student teachers, and that it was my responsibility to deposit appropriate information into their minds with regard to effective social studies teaching.

My conception of effective teaching suggested an approach to working with student teachers emphasizing methods that could be used to strengthen what amounted to standards-driven lessons. As an example, I draw from a personal reflection written after my first student teacher observation:

I picked up on all of the weak parts of his lesson and I led him to reach these conclusions for himself by asking questions. He seemed to respond to my advice well. Primarily, we discussed increasing the level of Bloom’s taxonomy that he was asking his students to
perform at, incorporating transitions, and summarizing after activities. (personal reflection, 09-07-04)

Although I claimed that I was able to get this student teacher to reach his own conclusions about his teaching, elsewhere in this reflection it is clear that I provided him with explicit advice. This seems to fit nicely with the notion that I embraced as a classroom teacher - appropriate knowledge exists and it is my responsibility to deposit that information into the minds of my students. In this case, appropriate knowledge included understanding that transitions and summaries were necessary to teach effectively.

I continued to rely on my “expertise” as a former classroom teacher as I conducted the remainder of my earliest observations. For example, after finishing my first six observations, I wrote the following reflection:

This was the last of my first round of student teacher observations. Overall, I found that I kept giving the same advice: start a lesson with some kind of a “hook” to generate interest, pay attention to transitions, summarize as often as possible, and think of ways in which you could assess student performance. (personal reflection, 09-15-04)

The advice that I gave during these early conferences only concerned matters upon which I considered myself more skilled because I had taught and the student teachers had not. This kind of a focus during my early conferences meshed well with my classroom teacher identity and allowed me to retain my authority over my student teachers as I provided them with what I thought was appropriate information for their absorption.

Furthermore, the importance I personally placed on controlling my teaching situations as the expert also explicitly surfaced in the feedback I provided to the student teachers with whom I worked. In this regard, my default assumptions about education represented the sort of practice
for which I initially mentored new teachers. As an example, I wrote in an observation report later that same semester:

Throughout this lesson the student teacher exhibited good classroom management techniques. She redirected off-task behavior and tried to keep all of the students engaged in the class. Although the student teacher performed well in this regard, she also recognized that she probably would not have had as many issues if she had shortened the amount of time that she spent reviewing the test or figured out a different way to revisit that material. (observation report, 10-18-04)

This excerpt makes it clear that I was more concerned with how well the student teacher kept the behavior of her students under control than I was with the larger question of why reviewing answers from a test was important in the first place. My emphasis here suggests a view of the standardized content as important in its own right. In light of this understanding, what seemed most important was how well teachers maintained order so that they might give their students equal opportunities to memorize the material.

Similarly, the feedback I provided in a number of other observation reports may have led my student teachers toward narrow understandings of social studies teaching by casting controlling behaviors as strengths. For example, I wrote the following in an observation report from my first year:

For the most part, I think that today’s lesson went just fine. The student teacher effectively monitored the classroom, kept the students on-task, and provided assistance as it was necessary. Furthermore, most of the students seemed interested in the material and there were no discipline issues. (observation report, 03-31-05)
Although classroom management is an important issue for teachers to consider, this excerpt reveals the ways in which I treated it in a straightforward manner that conformed to my default assumptions about education.

This section discussed how I initially invoked my classroom teaching experience as a source of expertise in my teacher education work. This reliance brought with it my default assumptions about education; namely, that effective classroom teachers were individuals who knew their content areas, who found ways to deposit appropriate information into their students’ minds, and who produced students who were able to pass standardized tests. These understandings primarily manifested themselves in my work through the emphasis I placed on the procedural elements of a lesson, as well as the importance of controlling the classroom. In the end, there was little in my earliest attempts at teacher education to indicate that I was rethinking either the content or pedagogy of social studies instruction. This was true of my own practice, as well as the sort of practice I was pushing my student teachers to engage in for themselves.

Exhibiting Resistance to Changing my Views on Teaching

Despite my initial reliance on my prior teaching experience as a source of expertise for my work in teacher education, the belief system that supported my work as a classroom teacher nonetheless began to erode shortly after entering graduate school. The banking model of education that served me so well was rapidly called into question as I was simultaneously fascinated by, and resistant to, what I was learning. While invoking my classroom teacher identity initially provided me with the support that I needed in order to conduct my university-based work, such an affiliation also fed my resistance to changing my pedagogical beliefs. I resisted changing the pedagogical beliefs that I embraced as a classroom teacher because I was
afraid of discrediting my former work in the classroom and because I was afraid of “selling-out” to higher education.

My fear of discrediting my former work seems natural enough. Who wants to admit to shortcomings in their work, especially work that they care about? A meeting of a doctoral seminar in social studies education I took my first semester in the program prompted me to write:

This class is helping me to situate myself within the more formal, academic world of social studies that never seems to get any attention until one pursues this level of understanding. This almost makes me wonder – what is the purpose? I think that I was functioning well as a teacher before I was exposed to all of these new theorists and their writings. (personal reflection, 09-08-04)

Perhaps like many teachers, I thought that I was doing a good job before I ever immersed myself in the world of educational theory. Nonetheless, the feeling of resistance that permeates this reflection suggests my graduate coursework was revealing questions about how I understood good teaching and leading to a reexamination of what I did and did not accomplish in my not-so-distant past as a classroom social studies teacher.

Coupled with my fear of not wanting to discredit my work as a classroom teacher, I resisted changing my pedagogical beliefs because I did not want to “sell-out” to higher education. I expressed this fear early in my journaling when I wrote, “Why do I always feel the need to defend traditional teaching practices and beliefs? It feels almost like I’d be selling out if I embraced some of these new ideas whole-heartedly” (personal reflection, 09-15-04). I believe this view stems from the common perception of higher education held by many practicing teachers (including myself); namely, the ideas it puts forth are too idealistic and impractical for use in the classroom. I still remember the request that some of my colleagues made when they
discovered that I was returning to graduate school to work on my doctorate – “Just don’t turn into one of them.”

For a time, I actively tried not to turn into one of “them.” As an example, I wrote a personal reflection after my first month as a graduate student:

I still find myself clinging to my conservative traditional beliefs. My attitude seems to be: why change? I know that this attitude is unproductive in many ways, yet I wonder about the benefits of fully embracing all of these new things that I am reading… I would rather be brought kicking and screaming to the truth than just readily accept it without some serious convincing. Is this being too stubborn? (personal reflection, 09-22-04)

I now realize that my steadfast views were probably rooted more in my privileged upbringing and contentment with the status quo than they were in any kind of a serious and thoughtful critique of higher education. Regardless, over the course of my first year of doctoral studies, I was brought “kicking and screaming” to some new understandings. These developing understandings were first demonstrated in my teacher education work as I began to focus on certain program objectives.

Beginning to Focus on Program Objectives

As addressed in chapter four, one of the core themes of the social studies teacher education program in which I worked was rationale-based practice. The rationale was pitched as a foundation for decision-making that teachers could use to guide their practice in ways that would help them achieve their own conceptions of powerful social studies. Another core theme was a working definition of good teaching - as “active student engagement in worthwhile learning” - that was frequently invoked while interacting with student teachers as a way to encourage them to think about and engage in rationale-based practice. This definition was
thought to be broad enough to allow student teachers to retain their particular purposes for

teaching social studies, but specific enough to hold them accountable for explaining how they
planned for students to learn the material, as well as why they thought that information was
valuable or worth learning in the first place.

As was made clear in the previous chapter outlining the development of my vision for
social studies teacher education, there was no sudden transformation in my thinking about
teaching that could be traced to a single magical moment. Instead, my thinking was influenced
over time and from a variety of sources. With that written, the first instances in my practice as a
beginning teacher educator that suggested movement away from my default assumptions about
education emerged as I started to more closely identify myself with program goals and to
explicitly reference our definition of good teaching, as active student engagement in worthwhile
learning, in my conferences and observation reports with student teachers.

Along these lines, I first identified with the “active student engagement” part of the
program’s definition of good teaching. As articulated in the following discussion board post, I
expressly began to understand the importance of active student engagement as it relates to
student learning:

I tend to think engagement necessarily leads to new understanding, or at least the
possibility of new understanding. Restating information that is already known only
constitutes recall. While that might be a good indicator of participation in a lesson, I have
my doubts as to whether or not it represents engagement. This is an important distinction
for me because I think engagement is necessary for learning. Participation obviously is as
well, but I don’t think it is not enough by itself. (discussion board post, 09-14-04)
The view I quickly embraced concerning active student engagement was that students had to be using their minds and somehow applying information for it to be learned, so to speak. This represented a break from my primary focus as a classroom teacher on securing student learning through rote memorization.

The aforementioned realization that active student engagement represents a necessary feature for genuine student learning to occur caused me to begin focusing on this concept in my observation visits and conferences with student teachers. In particular, I made it a point to ask student teachers how they planned for engagement, and how they knew it had been successfully secured from their students. The following excerpt from an observation report highlights this early focus:

Despite all of the aforementioned strengths, this student teacher and I agreed that there were aspects of her lesson that could have been improved. Most of our discussion revolved around the issue of active student engagement. Despite her good intentions, the student teacher never really took the time to assess what the students may or may not have learned as she went from activity to activity. We both also agreed that her entire lesson would have been strengthened if she would have found a way to grab the attention of the students in her introduction, transition between her activities, and periodically assess, or at least provide opportunities for students to summarize, the information that was covered. The student teacher missed a great opportunity to check for student understanding when she ended the final activity early and then simply allowed the class to be over even though the bell did not ring. (observation report, 09-15-04)
In this example, I concentrated on the idea of active student engagement by discussing with the student teacher what she thought her students actually learned, and how she facilitated that learning, in each of the parts of her lesson.

Gradually, as my own understanding of active student engagement became clearer and more refined, I began to expose more of my own thinking on the concept, and to explicitly offer advice to the student teachers with whom I was working as to how they might go about securing it. The following excerpt from an observation represents one such example:

In our post-observation conference, the student teacher and I spent most of our time discussing active student engagement. This discussion evolved out of one of his comments to me. He told me that he felt that it was important for his students to be responsible for their own learning. While I did not disagree, I did make the point that the teacher has a responsibility in cultivating student responsibility. With regard to his lesson today, I asked him to think about ways in which he could have secured more active student engagement. Although he did not formally assess the students, we both agreed that there were times in the activities when he did not have everyone engaged. I suggested that his responsibility for securing student engagement could be thought about in terms of the structure and nature of his activities. While the nature of his activities was fairly conducive to accomplishing his goals, we agreed that there were probably alternate ways in which he could have structured them to maximize engagement; for example, by assigning roles, varying the number of students included in a group, etc. (observation report, 10-27-04)
In this report, my developing understanding of active student engagement prompted me to ask the student teacher to consider both the nature of the content and the structure of his activities when planning his lessons.

One final example of an excerpt from an observation report should illustrate how my evolving understanding of the term active student engagement led to changes in my approach to working with student teachers that contrasted with the default assumptions about teaching I brought with me to my work. Along these lines, consider the following:

As far as engagement, the student teacher and I first discussed what the term meant. We talked about it as being the way to describe what is happening when students are mentally interacting with material in their minds and thinking in new ways. In this regard, we talked about engagement as being absolutely essential if a student is to “learn” anything. With this common understanding, the student teacher and I reviewed what he did in class today. It now seemed clear to both of us that the students might not have been engaged while they were reading their textbooks and filling-in their worksheets. Maybe they were - but the problem was that we didn’t have any real way to know. The same sorts of problems plagued his lecture. The students generally looked like they were paying attention, but were they really thinking about the material? I asked the student teacher to consider things that he could have done differently to be surer that his students were engaged in what he was doing. One of the things that he came up with was that he could do more activities where his students would be required to apply what they were learning (like when he had them write their speeches during today’s lesson). I said that sounded like an excellent idea to me. We decided that the students probably had to think more deeply when they were writing their speeches than at any other time during the period.
And if any of them did not take the assignment seriously, at least he would know it because the speeches could also be used as an assessment measure. (observation report, 09-07-05)

This excerpt makes it clear that I began to directly address what I perceived to be the importance of active student engagement in no uncertain terms as I became more comfortable with its possible meaning and function in the classroom.

Although focusing on the importance of active student engagement became a centerpiece of my practice as a teacher educator relatively quickly, the other half of the program’s definition of good teaching, “in worthwhile learning,” proved more difficult for me to grasp. In the examples provided thus far, I stressed the importance of engaging students in the material in order for it to be learned; however, the purposes to which such learning was to be directed or designed to achieve seemed to evade my active consideration. I recognized that worthwhile learning was important and should probably be derived from the student teachers’ rationales for teaching social studies, but I still struggled with how to address it.

Along these lines, I often simply gave a nod to the importance of worthwhile learning by indicating that it represented a topic the student teachers and I should talk about it in future conferences. As one example, consider the following excerpt from an observation report:

I told the student teacher that we will continue to focus on the idea of active student engagement and that I would ask her to consider how she planned for it in each of her activities during our future conferences. I also asked her to revisit her rationale and to think about what she considers worthwhile knowledge. This is a topic that I would like to broach during our next observation. (observation report, 09-06-05)
Whether or not I ever returned to the concept of worthwhile learning in my earliest observations is unclear. Most of the observation reports I wrote during this time period simply concluded with a stated intention to address the topic in more depth during subsequent conferences. It seems likely that some of my difficulty in addressing worthwhile knowledge with my students was tied to the fact that I had not taken the ‘content turn’ (Russell, 1997) for myself as a social studies classroom teacher and subsequently had a rationale for my own teaching that was in a considerable state of upheaval.

Summarily, in this section it has been shown how my default assumptions about teaching were challenged as I began to identity myself more closely with the social studies program’s definition of good teaching - as active student engagement in worthwhile learning. Basically, in the process of attempting to use this framework in my work with student teachers, I was compelled to think more deeply about the nature and function of student learning for myself. Along these lines, I came to realize that students had to actively engage with material in order for them to learn it. At the same time as I recognized the importance of student engagement in the learning process, I struggled to identify any particular knowledge, values, or skills that might represent worthwhile learning. Similarly, I also struggled with how to help my student teachers to think about this concept. In terms of my development as a beginning teacher educator, the end result of this situation was that while I regularly stressed the importance of student understanding or learning, I often fell short of helping student teachers to consider the specific purposes that were supposed to be served as a result of such student understanding or learning.

Taking the Content Turn in my Work as a Teacher Educator

As was discussed in the literature review, teachers’ conceptions of what might constitute worthwhile learning in social studies are necessarily related to their views of the good society, as
well as their understandings of how their instruction might foster democratic citizenship. The stances individuals take regarding these questions influence how they approach social studies content or subject matter. Along these lines, in terms of Russell’s (1997) developmental model, it stands to reason that social studies educators can only take the ‘content turn’ in their work after they actively wrestle with the ideological dimension of social studies and consciously decide where they want to stand on the spectrum between teaching for transmission of the existing social order versus teaching for transformation of the existing social order (see, for example, Stanley, 2005).

Failing to seriously consider the ideological dimension of social studies most often represents an implicit choice in favor of teaching for the transmission of the existing social order, as that represents the style of teaching most learn through their “apprenticeships of observation” as students (Lortie, 1975). Such uncritical acceptance of a vision and set of practices for social studies does not constitute taking the ‘content turn’ as it does not involve rethinking what to teach. Unfortunately, this is essentially where I stood in my professional development up until this point in my work as an educator. For the most part, there was nothing about my upbringing or my experiences as a student or teacher that made me really question the nature of social studies content. I mostly treated the content as a series of important facts to be memorized by students. Moreover, the climate of the public schools, with its emphasis on standards and accountability, only reinforced these understandings. In this regard, it seems that part of my initial difficulty in helping student teachers to think about worthwhile learning was related to the fact that I never took the ‘content turn’ for myself as a classroom teacher.
However, there is some evidence that I began to take the ‘content turn’ for myself after about a year into my graduate studies. As an example, consider the following post I made on a discussion board for one of my classes:

If it is not already clear from my earlier posts, I am very much against schools being used as political instruments whose primary purpose seems to be to reify the status quo. I feel this way partially because I am discontent with the status quo. At the very least, I do not feel that we as a society are doing as well as we should in taking care of each other. One way that I think schools can improve this situation is by transforming themselves into practice sites, so to speak, for democratic living in a pluralistic society. In part, this could be accomplished by harnessing the resources already present in schools (to a certain extent anyway) and engaging diverse groups of students in deliberation and decision-making exercises. (discussion board post, 09-24-05)

This post makes it clear how my conception of social studies content shifted, in conjunction with my ideological views, over the course of my first year as a beginning teacher educator. Instead of thinking of the standardized content as being important because it is the standardized content, I began to think of it as primarily being important for its ability to get diverse groups of students to deliberate with each other and practice decision-making in ways potentially useful for their lives as democratic citizens in a pluralistic society.

In a different excerpt from one of my course assignments my second semester, I offered additional evidence that I was undergoing the ‘content turn’ as I elaborated on the possible role of the teacher in light of my evolving conception of the nature and purpose social studies. I wrote:
It can be argued that the best way for a social studies educator to meet the needs of a culturally diverse democratic society would be to systematically challenge his or her students’ preconceptions and to expose them to alternate visions of what could be. It is this somewhat more advanced understanding of the relationship between democracy and diversity that has guided much of my work with student teachers this semester. I want my student teachers to think about these concepts in more depth and I want them to see the connections that bind one to the other. (coursework, 05-23-05)

Clearly, I was beginning to recognize the importance of social studies teachers presenting their subject matter in ways that would challenge their students’ worldviews. Coupled with the previous example, it seems clear that a new vision for teaching social studies was emerging. This vision consisted of students deliberating with each other over challenging and meaningful issues in such ways that they felt encouraged and empowered to imagine a better future for society at large.

Unfortunately, taking the ‘content turn’ in my own understanding of social studies did not immediately or directly translate into more skilled decision-making as a teacher educator on my part. I struggled to get my students to wrestle with ideological questions relevant for their own practice. Perhaps this should have been expected since many of the students with whom I worked came from similar backgrounds as my own. In any case, my struggle to address worthwhile learning and the ideological dimension of social studies played out in two distinct venues, including my field-based attempts at teacher education with student teachers and my university-based attempts at teacher education with pre-service teachers.

In my field-based work, I found that many student teachers did not have well articulated conceptions of worthwhile learning. I reflected:
What I haven’t figured out so far is how I am going to get after what are the most worthwhile forms of worthwhile learning. In other words, so far students have been speaking so broadly that their words mean almost nothing. I need to get them to refine their ideas first, and then start evaluating the relative value of different conceptions.

(personal reflection, 01-25-07)

Although I did not always know how to accomplish my objective, this example illustrates my growing recognition that I needed to somehow use my conferences with student teachers as opportunities to help them flesh out more specific purposes for their teaching.

Perhaps owing to the lack of specific purpose in the lessons I observed, I also noted inconsistencies between what the student teachers said they wanted to accomplish and what they actually did accomplish. As an example, early in my second semester, I wrote about my initial observation visit with a new student teacher:

I found myself mostly talking to this student teacher about the idea behind and purpose of a rationale. Much of our discussion focused on the inconsistencies between what she said she wanted to accomplish and what her practice would actually most likely accomplish. It seems that most of the student teachers do not grasp the purpose of the rationale. Necessarily, their practice tends to be inconsistent, unreflective, and lacking direction in general. (personal reflection, 01-28-05)

Similar to the previous example, while I was able to identify issues in the lesson such as lack of consistency and/or direction, I did not always know how to deal with these issues. In a general sense, I attempted to continue conversations with my student teachers that I hoped had been started while they were still taking their teacher education classes. However, my limited contact
with them and my lack of knowledge about whom they were as beginning teachers ultimately limited what we achieved in our work together.

I also struggled to get student teachers to engage with the ideological dimension of social studies or to enact their purpose in their practice due to the climate of the schools. I summed up the basic tension in a personal reflection written my second semester:

It seems that one of the biggest challenges that student teachers face is trying to reconcile teaching what they know is important with teaching the standards. It is amazing to me how quickly the culture of the school makes them discard things that they know are important in favor of teaching the standards. (personal reflection, 02-24-05)

This reflection makes it clear that taking the ‘content turn’ in my own work allowed me to better understand how the culture of schools can compel individuals to teach in certain ways over others. This realization prompted me to look for concrete ways to help student teachers enact some kind of purpose in their practice, even as they felt constrained by their teaching contexts.

I eventually came to embrace a general strategy for working with student teachers that I hoped would help them reconcile the tension between the worthwhile learning promoted by the program and the content knowledge emphasized in school settings. At the start of my second year, I worked to help student teachers see that the standards might be a vehicle for meaningful instruction. In an observation report, I wrote:

Although our post-observation conference was cut a little bit short today due to a fire alarm, the student teacher and I did broach the subject of worthwhile knowledge. Her main question was whether worthwhile knowledge was what she considered worthwhile or whether it was what would be worthwhile for the students. I responded that ideally it would be both. In thinking about worthwhile knowledge, I asked her to consider what she
wanted her students to look like and what she wanted her students to know and be able to do after they left her classroom. By the same token, I also acknowledged that she would probably have to cover some material (thanks to the standards) that she did not necessarily think was all that worthwhile when taken by itself. In these situations, we talked about how she could still make her lessons align with her rationale through the ways in which she chose to present it – sort of like using the standardized content as a vehicle to accomplish the goals of her rationale. Anyway, we have much left to discuss, but I think that the student teacher is doing a fine job and developing rather nicely.

(observation report, 09-22-05)

Using the standards as a vehicle to accomplish other purposes became a regular feature of my field-based practice as I attempted to get student teachers to think of ways to implement their rationales in their specific teaching contexts.

Yet the notion of using the standards as a vehicle to accomplish other purposes was not always satisfying to me in light of my developing ideas regarding what social studies education ought to be. My frustration is clear in the following reflection:

Today I saw another student teacher who is struggling with what to teach. It has gotten to a point where I just challenge them to accomplish their goals while using the standards as a vehicle. It is probably too much to hope or expect for a student teacher to dismiss some of the standards to just teach what they feel is important. Nonetheless, maybe that is what I should be advocating. I am sure that the student teachers and their students would be happier. (personal reflection, 02-28-05)
I struggled with the realization that the constraints present in the current climate of schools mean that student teachers have to consider ways to work both within and around the system. The same proved true of my work as a beginning teacher educator.

In addition to my field-based work, I was named the instructor of record for two social studies classes, ESOC 5560 and 2450, during my third year as a graduate teaching assistant. My experiences with field-based teacher education and the evolving understandings related to my ‘content turn’ worked together to shape my approach my university-based teaching. In particular, I focused on ideology and purpose with the pre-service teachers in my classes. This approach seemed like one way to get students to rethink social studies content and to more fully develop their rationales for teaching prior to actually teaching.

In the role of seminar instructor, I made a discussion board post that effectively captures an early attempt to question the pre-service teachers about a prominent theme in my developing thinking about social studies. The attention I attempted to draw to rationale-building is an example of my beliefs informing my practices as a teacher educator:

Your post made me think of an interesting question related to the purpose of schooling. Specifically, is school, especially secondary school, only useful for those who are considering college, or does it (could it) serve some other purposes? What does everyone think? What are the implications of your views? To me, these are the kinds of questions that must be interrogated and wrestled with while developing your personal rationales for teaching and learning. Think about how your answers might change your expectations and practices as a teacher. (discussion board post, 08-22-06)

It is clear in this example that I was attempting to challenge what I assumed to be my students’ preconceptions regarding the purpose of education. My experience had taught me that this is an
important step in getting individuals to rethink subject matter and to develop a sense of purpose for their teaching that is responsive to the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching.

A similar post provides yet another example of the interplay of developing beliefs about social studies and my practice as a teacher educator. I wrote:

What happens if we assume that students do not want to learn, that teachers do not necessarily have something worthwhile to impart to students, or that school does not adequately prepare anyone for anything? How might that change our teaching and our daily patterns? I do not bring this up because I want to insert my value judgments concerning the proper assumptions of schooling. Frankly, I have no greater claim to truth than any of you. Instead, I want you all to actively examine and evaluate your own assumptions by considering how they shape your practice, in both potentially positive and negative ways. I guess that I think an important part of teaching is humility.

(discussion board post, 08-30-06)

Again, my purpose in posing these kinds of questions was to get the pre-service teachers in my class to trouble what they thought they knew about teaching as gleaned from their respective “apprenticeships of observation” (see Lortie, 1975), much as I had done after returning to the university for my graduate program.

In addition to asking questions, I also attempted to develop other strategies and methods to get the pre-service teachers in my classes to more fully consider ideology and their own purposes for teaching social studies. A personal reflection, written during my first semester as seminar instructor, reflected these attempts:

Basically, I set-up class tonight so that each of the students would read something from one of three camps in the social studies. I then questioned them on the arguments being
put forward by the different camps as well as whether or not what was being advocated for constituted indoctrination. Based on their concerns about teaching for social justice, I wanted to trouble the notion of ideology, indoctrination, and if it is ever possible in teaching to not in some way, shape, or form indoctrinate students with your ideology.

(personal reflection, 10-12-06)

Since many pre-service teachers desire to be impartial so that they do not force their beliefs on their students, the idea with this activity was to get them to consider the biases they necessarily bring to their teaching. Only by recognizing the existence of this bias can individuals begin to engage in conscious modes of professional activity.

In another activity, I attempted to get the pre-service teachers in my class to more fully consider what might constitute worthwhile learning:

With today’s lesson, I started by having the students take a pop-quiz. The quiz was kind of crazy in so far as it asked them to identify various dates and names for important events in history. In giving the quiz, I hoped students would begin to question of what worth the information was. All of them failed. But to my surprise most tried to look for the “silver-lining” in the material. Instead of claiming the material maybe wasn’t so important since they couldn’t even remember it, they searched for ways to make it relevant to their lives. What the hell is the reason for that? It seems tied to their need to make sense of and validate their schooling experience. I am not sure. But how can I handle it in my own instruction? (personal reflection, 01-24-07)

Although this activity did not go as planned, it did raise important questions for me to consider as I moved forward with my work as a teacher educator. In particular, it pushed me to
contemplate the importance of somehow demonstrating examples of powerful social studies so that students might have a point of comparison to their own backgrounds.

To conclude, taking the ‘content turn’ in my own work as a teacher educator led me to better understand its importance in my work with student and pre-service teachers. In this way, a more nuanced vision of social studies teacher education emerged. The following excerpt from an assignment for one of my courses effectively captured my thinking on this topic:

Since I recognize I can not force my pre-service teachers to think in certain ways, I believe that the only way I can possibly help them to expand their worldviews is to get them to inquire into issues for themselves and to formulate their own understandings. With that said, given my views on the relationship between diversity and democracy, I also want to create situations where these inquiries will facilitate them calling their mainstream values and understandings of the world into question. (coursework, 05-11-06)

In short, I came to recognize that pre-service teachers had to wrestle with questions of ideology for themselves if they were to ever consciously implement their purposes for teaching social studies in their practice. My primary job as a teacher educator was to create situations that facilitated such reflection and thought.

Taking the Pedagogical Turn in my Work as a Teacher Educator

Following the ‘content turn,’ Russell (1997) suggested that some, though not all, teacher educators also take a ‘pedagogical turn’ in which they begin to focus on how they teach. This second stage of his developmental model represents the point at which teacher educators come to realize that “how [they] teach teachers may send much more influential messages than what [they] teach them” (p. 44). In contrast to what is known about taking the ‘content turn,’ Russell
claimed, “The conditions for entering into and surviving the pedagogical turn are far less clear. Little is written about it, few people seem to talk about it, and many teacher educators seem not to recognize its significance” (p. 44).

Although the degree to which I have actually taken the ‘pedagogical turn’ in my own development as a teacher educator remains an open question, I first began to notice how actions can influence student understanding more so than the content of a teacher’s words as a result of observing student teachers. An example is provided by an observation report written during my second year as a field instructor:

With regard to classroom management, I told the student teacher that it is difficult for me to provide advice as I am essentially an outsider who is more or less unaware of the context of his situation. In this regard, I suggested that he might try to talk more to his cooperating teacher about such concerns. Nonetheless, from what I observed during the lesson, I was able to point out to the student teacher a couple of things related to management. For example, I suggested that part of his trouble seemed to be that he kept saying things like “be quiet” and then he would allow talking. We talked about how that sent the wrong message. I suggested that he had to be sure that his actions matched his words. There had to be consistency. (observation report, 09-07-05)

As this example makes clear on a fairly simple level, I was beginning to understand that students learn more from their time spent in schools than just what the teacher chooses to formally present to them as content.

My understanding of the relationship between teacher actions and student understanding continued to evolve in later observation visits. Another reflection, written after a subsequent observation with a student teacher, highlights this evolution:
After giving the students case studies of court cases dealing with the freedom of religion, this student teacher felt the need to preach at them about why respect for one another was more important than tolerance. While I could appreciate his sentiment, I have to question what he actually accomplished. His students read cases…saw that others were different from them…and then heard the teacher insert his views. In this respect, if the student teacher’s views didn’t resonate with his students, then their examinations of the cases might have only served to reinforce their stereotypes. In other words, they saw that others were different from them, thought that’s weird, and then went back to life as usual. For my part, I pointed this inconsistency out to the student teacher and we talked about it. But I have to wonder if I had any more impact on his views than he did on his students.

(personal reflection, 08-30-06)

In this reflection, I began to ponder the degree to which certain concepts, especially those rooted in values, could be taught through methods like teacher lecture. Students had to actively make connections for themselves about these kinds of concepts. Teachers could structure experiences to facilitate learning, but they could not necessarily force understandings on their students.

As luck would have it, this observation also prompted me to recognize that my own preferred approach of talking with – or more often lecturing to – my student teachers about the concerns I harbored regarding their teaching might not have had any greater of an effect on their learning than their lecturing had on the students in their classes. After all, taking the ‘content turn’ had already pushed me to more fully understand how individuals’ conceptions of social studies were related to their ideological views of the good society, as well as their understandings of how their instruction might foster democratic citizenship. In this respect, I came to realize that if I wanted to get the student teachers with whom I worked to rethink their social studies
practice, I could not do so by simply telling them my views. Instead, I had to somehow get them to interact with their own interpretations of the nature and purpose of social studies. In my later field conferences I reshaped my methods by moving more toward a joint interrogation of ideas with the student teachers.

As I began teaching university-based teacher education classes, I immediately attempted to apply the understandings gleaned through my observations of student teachers in the field to my developing practice. Many of these understandings reflected the importance I was beginning to place on certain aspects of the ‘pedagogical turn.’ An example is a discussion board post made during the first week of my first class as the instructor of record for a social studies teacher education class:

As an instructor, I believe that it is extremely important for me to practice what I preach. For this seminar, such a commitment requires me to do my best to embody the core themes of the class by modeling them in my own practice. Remember that our themes focus on rationale-based practice, reflective teaching, securing active student engagement in worthwhile learning, and collaborative inquiry. In any case, it occurred to me that one way for me to accomplish my objective of modeling these themes in my own practice might be to more intimately involve you all in the process. As such, I have decided to write reflections after each of our seminars in an attempt to more deliberately and explicitly reveal the rationale for my decision-making as well as my perceptions of how everything played out. As with the discussion board, I encourage you to use this space to raise your own questions, to make comments, and to offer different perspectives.

(discussion board post, 08-17-06)
Aside from indicating the importance of practicing what I preach as a social studies teacher educator, this post also makes it clear that one of the main ways in which I attempted to address the ‘pedagogical turn’ in my own practice was to publicly reveal my pedagogical planning and decision-making to my students. In this way, even if the pre-service teachers disagreed for some reason with the content of some of my classes, at least they could still judge how well my intentions seemed to be matching up with my practice. I viewed this as an invaluable learning opportunity for all, myself included.

In addition to attempting to model the core themes of the class by publicly revealing my pedagogical thinking and decision-making, I also began to structure specific activities with an eye toward the process as well as the content of how I taught. A risky pedagogical move made during an ESOC 2450 class meeting stands as an illustration. In a personal reflection field text, I wrote:

To end the class, I did something a little strange. Under the rationale that I want the students to start honestly interacting with each other, I wrote four questions up on the board and told them to answer them by filling in responses. The unusual part was that I decided to leave the room without giving any extra directions. Even though I was interested in the content of the questions - What has school ever done for you? Why are you interested in being a social studies teacher? Why do you think students should study social studies? What are your expectations for this class? - I was more interested in discussing their process. In other words, I wanted to use the experience as a way to talk about collaborative inquiry in a concrete manner. I asked questions like - How did you all decide what to write on the board? Was everyone’s voice heard? Did some people not speak? Then I asked the group to rank how well they achieved collaborative inquiry on a
scale of one to ten. Basically, just as I expected, it came out that the students more or less just called out responses and someone wrote them down, without any kind of discussion or argument. I think this provided us with a good opportunity to discuss what collaborative inquiry might be and what it is not. (personal reflection, 01-10-07)

As revealed in this example, I attempted to teach the pre-service teachers in my class about collaborative inquiry by providing them with a common experience upon which to draw from in order to make connections to their own developing understandings. I did not ever tell them what collaborative inquiry was in some kind of an absolute sense. Such a pedagogical tactic no longer meshed with how I thought students learned, or with the messages I wanted to send through my actions as a teacher educator.

Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the evolving relationship between my practices and my beliefs as a beginning social studies teacher educator. I brought certain default assumptions about education with me to my work in teacher education. In particular, I understood effective classroom teachers as individuals who knew their content areas, who found ways to deposit appropriate information into their students’ minds, and who produced students who were able to pass standardized tests. These assumptions surfaced in my early practices with student teachers as I mostly focused my attention on emphasizing certain controlling behaviors and procedural elements to strengthen what amounted to standards-driven lessons.

The focus of my teacher education practices gradually shifted as I came to more closely align myself with several of the social studies program’s core themes, including the definition of good teaching as “active student engagement in worthwhile learning,” rationale-based practice, and collaborative inquiry. In the process of wrestling with these themes, I came to take the
‘content turn’ by recognizing relationships among the ideological dimensions of social studies, the views individuals embraced regarding the good society, and approaches to instruction. This recognition was further complemented in my work as I took the ‘pedagogical turn’ and began to recognize that how individuals teach can also deliver important messages to students.

The description of my development offered in this chapter supports Russell’s (1997) two-step model of the professional development of teacher educators. However, while Russell suggested that many teacher educators naturally take the ‘content turn’ while still classroom teaching, my experience differed in that I was not compelled to rethink the subject matter of social studies until I was already immersed in my work as a teacher educator. This delay in my development seems related to the beliefs I brought with me to my work, beliefs primarily derived from own background as well as my formal experiences with social studies as both a student and a teacher.

As one final note, although this chapter presented my development as a beginning teacher educator in a relatively straightforward manner, in reality there were many tensions experienced and setbacks endured as I came to understand my role in increasingly nuanced ways, and as I sought to more closely align my teaching intents with my teaching actions. These issues are discussed in more depth in the following chapter. In chapter seven, I address the different representations of my development offered through my methodology.
CHAPTER SEVEN: RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

Although the previous chapter effectively described my development as a beginning teacher educator in relation to Russell’s (1997) two-step model of taking a ‘content turn’ followed by a ‘pedagogical turn,’ it would be disingenuous to pretend this was a simple or straightforward progression that culminated when I recognized that both what and how I teach as a teacher educator hold potential significance in the development of pre-service teachers. Instead, what I discovered was that becoming a social studies teacher educator represents an ongoing process fraught with competing and constantly changing tensions. There is not necessarily a single right way to do teacher education. I found that my personal development hinged on the purpose I embraced for social studies. As this purpose evolved and changed, I struggled to find ways to close the gap between my vision and my practices as a teacher educator. Whitehead (1993) suggested that this relationship between ideals and action represents a “living contradiction” always in search of a resolution.

Given the tensions associated with the “living contradiction” between ideals and action, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the various representations of my development as a beginning teacher educator that were offered through my methodology of self-study through narrative inquiry. As such, this chapter addresses the third research and final research question: What representations of my development as a teacher educator does self-study through narrative inquiry yield? The representations are discussed in the following sections as they relate to certain ongoing, seemingly paradoxical, themes evident in my practice. In this respect, as I progressed through the stages of Russell’s (1997) developmental model for teacher educators, I
simultaneously: (a) exhibited fear of regression in my work as a teacher educator, (b) displayed apathy or exhaustion in my work as a teacher educator, (c) exhibited frustration and restlessness in my work as a teacher educator, and (d) struggled to navigate interpersonal relationships with my students.

Fear of Regression

Although I came to embrace a clearer sense of vision or purpose for my work as a teacher educator as a result of taking the ‘content’ and ‘pedagogical turns’ (Russell, 1997), my misgivings as a novice attempting to teach others how to teach did not simply evaporate. Instead, the vision I came to embrace as a teacher educator heightened the sense of importance and responsibility I placed on my teaching. Under the pressure of a more established sense of mission for my work, I often found myself gripped by fear that I might regress to some of the less favorable vestiges of my former teaching self.

As one example, in my second year, I wrote a personal reflection after an observation I conducted of a student teacher in an early childhood classroom. That semester was my one opportunity over the three years to practice my new craft outside of the social studies program. I wrote:

This was my first early childhood observation ever. The student teacher had me come in to observe a math lesson. I must admit that I came into the observation today without a conscious agenda. I just sort of intended to see how it would go. The lesson went fine. During the post-observation conference, I focused on such practical concerns as the parts of a lesson and the importance of assessment. It was as if I reverted back to the teacher educator I was more than a year ago when I went on my first social studies observations. What caused this regression? Why did I abandon interrogating the student teacher as to
what she was teaching for? It is kind of hard to articulate. I mentally came up with a list of reasons (many of which sounded similar to things I had been told by student teachers in the past): this is their first experience in the field; it is important for younger children to get the facts before they can move on to higher order thinking; a teacher must not indoctrinate young children, etc. Thinking about these excuses now, I can say that they are all bullshit (or at the very least debatable). I am afraid that the biggest reason I regressed in my questioning of this student teacher was because it was the easy thing to do and I was in a fairly new and uncomfortable situation. What does this say about me? How can I overcome this situation? Is there anything I can learn from my own experience that might be applicable to my work with all of my student teachers? Only time will tell I suppose. (personal reflection, 09-29-05)

This example highlights the disappointment I felt after conferencing with this student teacher. In my mind, it did not seem like I accomplished my developing goals as a teacher educator because I did not question her with regard to the purpose of her teaching. Due to the unfamiliar grade level and subject, I feared that my defensive approach entailed simply reverting back to being less critical by focusing on more general aspects of teaching.

This same fear of invoking some of the less favorable vestiges of my former teaching self dominated my thinking as I began teaching university-based social studies classes. Even in my third year (the second year I had responsibilities for instructing a university-based class), I questioned the approach I chose to take in presenting fundamental tensions of the field:

I began class today by reviewing the three traditions of teaching social studies and trying to relate them to democratic citizenship education and the debate over teaching for transmission or transformation of the existing social order. I am not sure why I chose to
review the material by putting myself in the position of “expert.” Nonetheless, I did run
this portion of the class by lecturing at my students and occasionally soliciting them for
feedback. I suppose my actions were driven by my desire to make sure my students “got”
the material – kind of a “cover-my-ass” mentality. But did they really get the material? I
am not sure my lecture today did much to increase understanding. In the throws of
desperation (knowing how valuable time is), I reverted to teaching in ways that probably
don’t fit with my beliefs regarding how individuals actually learn. Why? What sense does
that make? (personal reflection, 02-07-07)

In this example, some of the same kinds of tensions that affect classroom teachers surfaced in my
own thinking and pedagogy as a teacher educator. After giving in to these tensions and teaching
in a manner inconsistent with how I was coming to believe students learned, I questioned what I
actually accomplished during the lesson.

Even as the fear of regression in my development pushed me to recognize some of the
contradictions in my practice, such recognition did not always translate into easily-identifiable
solutions. For instance, in a personal reflection written about a week after the previous example,
it is clear that I continued to struggle with the degree of control I should exert in my practice:

Class went well I think. I put the students in small groups and had them use a discussion
protocol to address their own questions regarding the possibility of teaching history
and/or social studies for democratic citizenship. I liked the activity in so far as it
compelled everyone to take turns talking and listening. With that written, it was hard for
me to be on the “outside” of their discussions. I floated back and forth between the
groups while I was keeping time. They seemed to be having incredible conversations. But
I still wished I would have been able to steer the direction their conversations might take
if I so chose. I wonder what this says about me as a teacher. There are so many conflicting issues here. (personal reflection, 02-14-07)

Although I yielded the floor, so to speak, to uninterrupted student discussions, this example illustrates my discomfort with my decision. For me, even after acquiring insights related to taking Russell’s (1997) ‘content’ and ‘pedagogical turns,’ it still did not always feel like teaching if I was not talking. Even though I acknowledged that the students were having wonderfully productive conversations about teaching history and/or social studies for democratic citizenship, I found it difficult to not be the one actively steering their conversations.

Indeed, I found it so difficult to not be in control that I occasionally reverted back to simply assuming it. Not even the fear I harbored of regressing in my work as a teacher educator was powerful enough to squelch some of my seemingly instinctual teaching behaviors once and for all. In my third year, as instructor of an ESOC 2450 class, I reflected:

This is the first time I have kind of let down by this class. Of course, I have no one to blame but myself. I just got so hung-up on clarifying multiculturalism and making connections to democratic citizenship education that I exercised much more control over class than usual. I monopolized both time and thought, and I am unsure to what degree students actually entertained the ideas I was presenting. At the very least, I know that they were not given the opportunity to share their ideas with one another. When will I ever learn? (personal reflection, 03-28-07)

By this point in my development, I was fully aware that the actions I took in class probably would not yield the effects I desired. Apparently, I just did not know how else to approach the situation in the moment.
Obviously the fear of regression exhibited across all of the examples in this section could have had both positive and negative ramifications in my development as a teacher educator. On the one hand, this fear represented a way for me to stay vigilant and cautious as I attempted to resolve the contradictions of my practice. On the other hand, I realized the risk of overcompensating. That is, the fear of regression in my work could have been detrimental in so far as it might have predisposed me to look with disdain upon certain methods that I dubbed traditional. My fears raised questions about how teacher educators handle the “burden” of a view of teacher education that sets such high standards, that runs counter to what many pre-service teachers may expect of teacher education. Is it possible that some visions of teacher education place too much responsibility on beginning teacher educators? What is the risk that the vision of teacher education I had claimed could actually prompt retreat from the sorts of teaching I now advocated?

Apathy or Exhaustion

In the previous section, I discussed how the vision I came to embrace as a teacher educator heightened the sense of importance and responsibility I placed on my teaching. This heightened sense of purpose sometimes led to fear that I might regress in my work by uncritically invoking some of the less favorable vestiges of my former teaching self. I do not believe this fear ever became too overwhelming. Yet there were times when I seriously questioned what I accomplished with my student and pre-service teachers as a result of all of my hard work. As I struggled with these questions, I occasionally displayed signs of apathy and/or exhaustion in my thinking and practices as a teacher educator.

An example of such apathy or exhaustion is found in a personal reflection I wrote after two observations of student teachers conducted back-to-back. I wrote:
Well, what stands out the most to me about these two observations is the fact that I made up a doctor’s appointment just so that I wouldn’t have to talk my way through the post-observation conferences with them. I still wrote all of my feedback/critique into the observation report - but I did not stay to actually engage in dialogue with them. I think that I am starting to burn out. At the very least, I know that I am most frustrated with my work this semester. I don’t seem to be making any headway. I am quite sure that the student teaching experience will have an impact on the developing rationales of the student teachers. I am just not sure how I fit into the process, if at all. (personal reflection, 11-01-05)

This example represents an interesting case in so far as it is not clear what exactly led me to shirk my duties with these student teachers. In this case, I avoided the lengthy conferences with these two student teachers that typically followed observations. I claimed that I still put all of my feedback and critique into the reports I wrote for them. In this way, perhaps more than outright apathy, I might very well have just been feeling exhausted by the various responsibilities associated with my teacher education work.

Another reflection written around the same time period sheds additional light on what might have been going through my mind:

This was the last observation for me this semester. I showed up late (on purpose – not by accident). I watched a lesson where no one seemed to learn anything. I listened to the student teacher explain how the tension between teaching to the standards and teaching what he wants often results in such lessons out of necessity. I left. If this continues, I will have to give up my assistantship to someone with more energy. (personal reflection, 11-10-05)
The feelings of apathy and exhaustion that permeate this reflection seem abundantly clear as I acknowledge that I purposefully showed up late. I learned that I found it easier, though still discouraging, to do less than I thought I should do when working with student teachers, like the one referenced here, who used their specific teaching contexts as justification for engaging in standards-driven teaching devoid of the very purposes they claimed they wanted to teach for in their rationales. At times, I allowed myself to simply go through the motions in working with pre-service teachers I deemed unappreciative or unresponsive to my efforts.

Even when working with student teachers I felt might respond to my efforts, sometimes I was just tired. A personal reflection written in the final semester of this study illustrates how apathy and/or exhaustion sometimes entered into my practice. I wrote:

I didn’t ask questions or get him thinking about what things are worthy of critique, or how he might make such decisions. How can I explain my actions? I really don’t know. I am just feeling tired and burned-out. I am not always sure that I am making a difference. I am almost at a point where I think it should be mandatory for folks to take breaks from field instruction. Perhaps even from teaching? I just think our work is better when it is inspired. And I am not feeling inspired right now. (personal reflection, 03-20-07)

Taken as a whole, the examples provided in this section suggest that a powerful vision of teacher education places burdens on beginning teacher educators and creates an intensity that can lead to apathy and/or exhaustion. At these times, I knew that my practices did not match my vision.

Frustration and Restlessness

Another representation of my development as a beginning teacher educator that was captured through the methodology I employed for this study centers on the feelings of frustration and restlessness that I exhibited regarding my work. In many ways, these feelings represent the
other side of the spectrum from the feelings of apathy and exhaustion discussed in the previous section. More specifically, the feelings of frustration seemed to indicate that I did in fact care, while the feelings of restlessness indicated that I sometimes had so much energy that I actually grew impatient to effect change. Both sets of feelings can potentially work against a teacher educator attempting to more closely align intention and practice.

The origin for the frustration and restlessness that I sometimes exhibited in my work can be traced back to a realization I made very early in my graduate studies that teachers possess more power in determining their practice than they often recognize. These thoughts are captured in the following excerpt from one of my course assignments:

Too many educators doubt their own power or lack a strong conviction regarding what they think students should know. This seems evidenced by the fact that so many seem content to fall into routines and unthinkingly do things as they have always been done. I believe that the unexamined practice of the typical teacher necessarily reproduces the status quo. If you want to reproduce the status quo, that is fine. But shouldn’t it be a conscious decision? Ideally, shouldn’t all decisions be made consciously and with great thought towards the probable implications? (coursework, 09-22-04)

As a result of this realization, I came to adopt an overriding goal for my practice of wanting to help facilitate teachers who were capable of and willing to engage in conscious modes of professional activity.

Of course, achieving this goal proved more challenging than I initially thought because it requires individuals to actively question their previously formed understandings. As an example, consider the following reflection:
This leaves perhaps the most important question, at least from the perspective of a
teacher educator: how do you get a student/beginning teacher, someone without advanced
education or years in the classroom, to overcome the bias of their past so that they are
willing to explore all of the educational options open to them? (personal reflection, 09-
29-04)

I wrote this reflection after observing one of my students teach a lesson in a predictably
traditional and narrow fashion. Although I only raised the question in this reflection, attempting
to figure out ways to get student teachers to think more critically about their preconceived
notions by challenging their own biases became a regular, if largely unfulfilled, focus of my
teacher education efforts.

As I struggled to facilitate teachers who saw the importance of engaging in conscious
modes of professional activity, signs of frustration and restlessness began to appear in my work.
Along these lines, consider the following reflection written after an observation with a student
teacher:

This was one of those lessons where it just didn’t seem like anything happened as a result
of it. Students were not engaged. Students were not challenged to think about anything
worthwhile. There is no easy way to say these things. Nonetheless, I did articulate all of
my criticisms by appealing to the notion of active student engagement (thinking this
might soften the conversation). Well, I think that I overwhelmed her despite my
intentions. She only breathed a deep sigh of relief at the end of the conference when I told
her that her lesson was probably good enough to get and keep a job in the public school
system for as long as she wanted. How should I take this? Maybe it is good if I
overwhelmed her. Perhaps the emotional component of such a move will cause her to
really reflect and rethink her practice. Then again, if she was overwhelmed, maybe she just shut down and took absolutely nothing away for our conference. It is a fine line.

(personal reflection, 01-26-06)

In this example, my perception of the poor quality of the lesson I observed led me to essentially overwhelm the student teacher with so much critique that she did not seem in the least bit responsive until I also pointed out that most principals would probably be more than satisfied with what she had done. This eagerness on my part to push active student engagement in worthwhile learning might have actually worked against my goals as a teacher educator.

In another example, my frustration and restlessness were evident as I contemplated why student teachers do not seem to grasp the idea of rationale-based practice. Along these lines, I reflected:

I don’t think student teachers understand how rationales are supposed to work. I mean that quite literally, I think. They seem to get the idea of developing a list of ideals and desirable characteristics for their practice, but then their lesson plans reveal that such things are only what they are hoping for. They don’t use the ideas of their rationales to drive, or even to guide, their actual classroom practice. What can I do as a field instructor to help student teachers see the real value of rationale-based practice? I can ask questions and point out inconsistencies during observations. What else might work? Moreover, can anything really work if student teachers don’t “believe” in their rationales? (personal reflection, 02-06-07)

In my haste to facilitate rationale-based practice, it seems I overlooked how my function as an evaluator might have played into how the student teachers viewed our relationship. If they were preoccupied with how I was going to assess their performance as teachers, then the strategies I
mentioned in this reflection of asking questions and pointing out inconsistencies in their practice do not seem like they would be conducive to helping me to accomplish my goals. This represents another example of how my frustration and restlessness might have influenced my practice in undesirable ways. This also leads into another important aspect of my development as a teacher educator that was revealed through my methodology – my ongoing struggle to effectively navigate interpersonal relationships with my students.

Interpersonal Relationships

A final aspect of my development that was largely ignored in earlier chapters involves my struggle to beneficially navigate interpersonal relationships with my students and pre-service teachers. In many ways, the nature of these relationships was fundamental to how I understood and enacted my vision and practices as a beginning teacher educator. Much of my struggle in this regard was related to the inherent tension I felt in my role as both an advocate and an evaluator. Though a similar tension exists for many classroom teachers, this study points to circumstances unique to teacher education that make such a balancing act especially difficult to achieve. This section seeks to identify and describe those circumstances as they relate to the ‘living contradiction’ between my ideals and practices.

Some of my difficulty in effectively serving as an advocate and an evaluator was related to my own evolving expectations. My rapidly evolving ideas about what it meant to work with beginning teachers was intimately tied to shifts in my thinking about the purpose of social studies. I became increasingly drawn to the idea of teaching social studies for social transformation as opposed to teaching for transmission of the existing dominant order (see Stanley, 2005). In particular, I moved closer to subscribing to the views of George Counts
(1932/1978) and his call for schools to serve as a force for social reconstruction toward the ideals of a true participatory democracy.

This ideological shift problematized the expectations I held for the student teachers under my charge. I often found it difficult to support my student teachers whom I believed were primarily interested, at least implicitly, in transmitting the existing social order. For example, after one of my more traditional student teachers told me that she did not plan to go into teaching, I wrote:

Secretly, I was happy. This happiness seemed a little out of place for a number of reasons. First of all, she is nice as hell so I felt guilty. More importantly, she could have passed her student teacher experience and gotten a job - no problem. She presents herself very well, and is probably just as good of a social studies teacher as any that I had in high school. Nonetheless, I was happy that she is not going in to teaching. I was happy because I expect more. In fact, my new expectations might have affected myself just a few short months ago when I was teaching. I will have to be careful to temper my new expectations with understanding and encouragement. I feel that I am learning a lot as a field instructor, but I must remember the way I thought about things before in order to continue to be able to relate to the student teachers and to affect the type of changes that I envision. (personal reflection, 10-19-04)

In my mind, the pedagogy I brought to my work as a teacher educator was predicated on shifting expectations that caused me to interrogate my sense of what to expect from preservice teachers, most of whom were not student teaching in school environments supportive of calls for social reconstruction.
When I was able to set aside my new ideological commitments to a theory of social studies for critical democracy in favor of the more “practical” support desired by many of my student teachers, the troubling question of assessment remained. I oftentimes pondered the question, “But how good is good enough?” Along these lines, I wrote:

While these student teachers are not always performing or thinking about things in ways that I might hope for, they are still doing fine when compared to most other teachers. Additionally, I feel that most administrators in the schools would be glad to have these student teachers work for them. Where is the balance? I want these student teachers to buy into what our program is putting out there, but I am not sure that I should damage their careers if they don’t get it. (personal reflection, 10-19-04)

Several years of experience later, I am not much closer to knowing where the balance is today than I was that first semester as a beginning teacher educator.

In a similar vein, another challenge of beneficially navigating interpersonal relationships with my students was related to the limited interaction and familiarity that we enjoyed with each other. This limited interaction and familiarity posed challenges as I attempted to find the balance in my role as advocate and evaluator. The unfavorable conditions that marked the relationship between me and my student teachers often led to situations in which I found it difficult to assess whether or not they were feeling challenged. As an example, consider the following reflection:

The lesson that I saw today was lacking. On her pre-observation form, this student teacher indicated that her rationale was changing – she used to think critical thinking was important, but now she thinks giving basic general knowledge is more important. What the ****? In any case, her lesson certainly represented her newfound perspective. As such, I was fully prepared to question her intensely during our post-observation
conference. After about five minutes of this questioning, she started to cry and I backed off from my questions and transformed into a support system. Now I am really questioning if I did the right thing. What was gained? What was lost? (personal reflection, 10-04-05)

As this entry makes clear, my lack of familiarity with my student teachers often created situations in which I was unsure what we were actually accomplishing together, thereby making it difficult to judge when to support them and when to be more evaluative.

Furthermore, I found that my role as an evaluator served to hinder open and honest communication by making my student teachers more hesitant to engage in dialogue. For example, I reflected:

It turns out my suspicions were correct. Many, many students are still struggling with the idea of student engagement. They are very concerned about the ways they are going to be assessed. They don’t seem to understand that they should be active participants in this process of student teaching. (personal reflection, 10-05-04)

My experience suggests that most of my student teachers considered how they were going to be assessed as one of the more significant aspects of our relationship. This desire to do well, coupled with the fear of failure, encouraged many student teachers to view their student teaching as something to get through as opposed to something to learn from. This realization weighed heavily on my thinking about a pedagogy of teacher education.

Almost counter-intuitively, one welcomed response was the relief I experienced in a couple of the more contentious post-observation conferences I had with two student teachers. The emotional responses apparent in these conferences were almost comforting, as I read the
student teachers’ challenges as indicators that they at least cared about the process of our work together. I reflected:

These conferences made me question whether or not some of my student teachers are dodging the tough questions. After all, why are only a few having such adverse reactions to my questioning? Are they the only ones being affected by it? (personal reflection, 02-15-05)

In an effort to determine why these two reacted so much more strongly to my observations and conferences than others, I tried to consciously pay closer attention to what was occurring differently in my other conferences. It was not too much longer before I recorded the following:

Well, today’s post-observation conference only took about 30 minutes. Why does that matter? I think that the individuals who felt I was being harder on them got that impression after talking to this student teacher (and possibly some of the others). The fact that this conference only lasted half the usual amount of time almost lends credence to their claims. But the truth is that it is hard to have a substantive conversation with a person who is unwilling and/or unprepared to be involved in that discussion. While I need to formulate ways to remedy this situation, I do not want my solution to involve letting up on the student teachers who are ready for such dialogue. By the same token, I don’t want them to feel punished. (personal reflection, 02-23-05)

This response goes far to capture some of the difficulties I experienced in trying to play a role of support as well as a role of evaluation in such an impersonal environment.

Finally, my struggle to beneficially navigate interpersonal relationships with my students also appeared as a regular theme in my university-based teaching. As an example, consider the
following reflection, written early in the semester of the second social studies course I ever
taught as the instructor of record:

I feel much more comfortable (and good) about the early stage of this class. In many
ways this reminds me of the difference between my first and second year of classroom
teaching. I feel more comfortable. I feel much freer to be myself. In other words, I am
letting my personality shine through. I am making jokes and sharing my vulnerability.
Although each of these feel good, I have the same concerns I (should have) had as a
second year teacher. In particular, what do students “enjoying” my class or “liking” me as
an instructor mean in terms of their learning? I do not want an open, honest, fun
environment if students are not being challenged to think in new ways. With all of that
written though, it does feel damn nice to be appreciated in the present. (personal
reflection, 01-24-07)

Perhaps more than anything else, this reflection reinforces the notion that it does make a
difference how teachers and students perceive of their relationships with each other. In many
ways, the professional growth of both parties seems to hang in the balance.

Chapter Summary

Although Russell’s (1997) two-step model proved useful in helping me to explain my
development as a beginning teacher educator, I did not want my treatment of this experience to
incorrectly given the impression that I progressed through his proposed stages in a relatively
simple and straightforward fashion that culminated when I recognized that both what and how I
 teach as a teacher educator hold potential significance in the development of pre-service
teachers. Instead, for me, becoming a social studies teacher educator represented an ongoing
process fraught with competing and constantly changing tensions.
As such, the purpose of this chapter was to examine the various representations of my development as a beginning social studies teacher educator offered through my methodology of self-study through narrative inquiry. Such an examination seemed important in order to more fully capture the complexity of my transition from classroom teacher to teacher educator, as well as to highlight some of the inherent tensions involved in attempting to align my teaching intents with my teaching practices. At the same time as I was refining my vision for social studies and coming to understand the potential significance of my teaching, I was also, sometimes paradoxically, exhibiting fear of regression in my work, displaying apathy or exhaustion, exhibiting frustration and restlessness, and struggling to navigate interpersonal relationships with my students. These tensions are representations of my development as a teacher educator identified through this narrative inquiry self-study. They add greater depth to the story of my attempt to develop my identity as a teacher educator over three years in the context of the social studies program in which I worked. They also call into question the point at which one truly “becomes” a teacher educator.
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study was undertaken with the desire to better understand and subsequently to inform the process of becoming a social studies teacher educator from my perspective as a former classroom teacher involved in just such a transition. Given my primary interest in interrogating the role assumed and played by teacher educators, the following research questions guided my self-study:

4. How has my vision for social studies teacher education developed?
5. How has the relationship between my practices as a teacher educator and my beliefs evolved?
6. What representations of my development as a teacher educator does self-study through narrative inquiry yield?

Chapters five, six, and seven presented the analysis and discussion of the data collected in relation to these research questions. More specifically, chapter five addressed the question of how my vision for social studies teacher education developed. Chapter six addressed the question of how the relationship between my practices as a teacher educator and my beliefs evolved. And chapter seven described the representations of my development as a beginning teacher educator generated as a result of my methodological approach of self-study through narrative inquiry. In this final chapter, I provide a summary of these findings and frame their significance within the larger literature base related to the professional development of teacher educators. I then conclude with a discussion of potential implications for future research arising from the findings of this study.
Situating the Findings

The first research question for this study focused on the development of my vision for social studies teacher education. Vision was considered a critical feature in the development of teacher educators because the beliefs that support a teacher’s sense of vision can influence their practice, and practice is at the center of Russell’s (1997) theory of how teacher educators develop. I identified four primary sources responsible for contributing to the development of my vision, including coursework relevant to teacher education, the work of teacher education, peer interaction and collaboration, and studying my practice.

Completing my coursework challenged me to rethink prior assumptions that had guided my thinking as both a student and a teacher. Coursework pushed me to reconsider previously held beliefs in light of my developing understandings of the history and nature of the educational system. The formal reflection on my background and experiences prompted by my coursework encouraged me to purposefully question some of the beliefs I held prior to my move into teacher education. I began to understand how contemporary schooling rests on practices that seem to undermine a pluralistic democracy and diminish the possibility of meaningful learning for all students. I came to recognize the importance of developing a sense of purpose for one’s teaching that considers and is responsive to the broader social conditions of schooling. Ultimately these major shifts in my thinking about teaching and schooling worked together to contribute to the development of my vision for social studies teacher education.

Next, actually engaging in the work of teacher education contributed to the development of my vision of social studies teacher education in a number of ways. First, my observations and critiques of student teachers, framed by my understanding of the goals of the social studies program in which I worked, prompted me to reflect on my prior practice in ways that encouraged
me to refine my understandings of good teaching. These understandings were further enhanced as I came to better understand the culture of schools, and to contemplate ways to work both within and around the system. Additionally, engaging in the work of teacher education pushed me to think more deeply about the concept of learning and to make conceptual distinctions relevant for my own vision and practice as a teacher educator. I learned about teaching by attempting to teach others how to teach. Yet what I learned was not the product of mere experience alone. Rather I learned from the sort of reflection on experience shaped by the nature of the program, its collaborative approach to teacher education, and the careful inquiry into my practice represented by this study. Across the three years of this study, I applied, tested, and reflected on my work with pre-service teachers and actively sought ways to bridge theory and practice. By encouraging an ongoing cycle of reflection and action, all of these factors worked together to contribute to the development of my vision of social studies education.

Additionally, interacting or collaborating with my peers contributed to the development of my vision for social studies teacher education by providing me with a collaborative space in which to formulate my ideas. We wrestled with our own understandings of good teaching and how to facilitate a similar desire in the pre-service teachers with whom we worked. Our inquiries and discussions took place in an environment characterized by both support and critique. In other words, at the same time as I felt encouraged as a result of interacting and collaborating with my peers, I was also regularly pushed to rethink my assumptions regarding education and to make connections between my evolving ideas and my work as a beginning teacher educator. I came to recognize that there might not be correct answers in an absolute sense to my questions about teacher education. I also realized that there were potentially better or more thoughtful approaches than what I was already bringing to my work in this new field. A key to unlocking these new
understandings rested in my attempts to interact or collaborate with peers who possessed divergent views but similar commitments to the work of teacher education.

Finally, studying my practices as they developed and unfolded influenced the development of my vision for social studies teacher education in two ways - by preserving data for further reflection and by encouraging me to become a producer of knowledge capable of developing informed ways to deal with my situated problems of practice. The understandings generated through these active and purposeful examinations led to the formation of general beliefs about teaching and teacher education as well as specific ideas on how to best carry out my work in light of these beliefs. An equally powerful understanding was that self-study of my own practice as a teacher educator offered an unparalleled opportunity for me to continue to grow in ways advantageous for myself and my students.

Based on the existing literature on the socialization of new faculty and beginning teacher educators, my experience differed dramatically from the norm in so far as I found myself in a program that valued teacher education. I was surrounded by individuals who shared a commitment to making teacher preparation a meaningful and worthwhile enterprise – for ourselves, for our students, and for our students’ students. In this way, my time spent as a graduate teaching assistant offered me a critical yet supportive environment in which to grow as a beginning teacher educator. The context supporting my experience is an important feature of the narrative account of how I formed a vision for social studies teacher education that simultaneously called my previous understandings into question. Indeed, for me, becoming a social studies teacher educator prompted me to consider who I wished I had been as a classroom teacher, and then to develop approaches that might facilitate a similar process in pre-service teachers prior to their assuming roles as classroom teachers.
Becoming a teacher educator in the context of this social studies program led me to quickly rethink my views on education and to reconceptualize my role as an educator. The findings from my second research question traced the evolving relationship between my practices and beliefs as a beginning teacher educator. I initially brought certain default assumptions about education with me to my work in teacher education. More specifically, I understood effective classroom teachers as individuals who knew their content areas, found ways to deposit appropriate information into their students’ minds, and produced students who were able to pass standardized tests. These assumptions surfaced in my early practices with student teachers as I mostly focused my attention on emphasizing certain controlling behaviors and procedural elements to strengthen what amounted to standards-driven lessons.

Although there was some evidence of resistance to changing my views on teaching, the focus of my teacher education practices shifted as I quickly came to more closely align myself with the social studies program’s definition of good teaching as “active student engagement in worthwhile learning.” Wrestling with this definition for myself, as described in chapter five, I gradually came to take the ‘content turn’ (Russell, 1997) as I came to believe that the ideological dimension of social studies and the views individuals hold regarding the good society should influence their instruction. Taking the ‘content turn’ in my own understanding as a teacher educator led me to better understand its importance in my work with student and pre-service teachers.

My “content turn” was soon followed by a ‘pedagogical turn’ (Russell, 1997) as I began to recognize that how teacher educators teach is an important aspect of what they teach. My pedagogy underwent an important shift as I came to recognize the importance of “practicing what I preach.” So instead of lecturing or telling my students about the importance of
democracy or the power of reflection and collaboration, I felt pressed to structure learning activities in such ways that students could actually live or experience the concepts they were supposed to be learning about by engaging in them.

The description of my development offered in this dissertation generally supported Russell’s (1997) two-step model of the professional development of teacher educators. However, while Russell suggested that many teacher educators naturally take the ‘content turn’ while still classroom teaching, my experience differed in that I was not compelled to rethink the subject matter of social studies until I was already immersed in my work as a teacher educator. This delay in my development stemmed from a social studies biography accounting for my time spent as a student, as a pre-service teacher in a social studies program that did not challenge my views, and as a teacher. Again, not until I was immersed in the context of my social studies education program did I begin to seriously engage with the ideological dimension of social studies.

Finally, although Russell’s (1997) two-step model proved useful in helping me to explain my development as a beginning teacher educator, I did not progress through his proposed stages in a simple and straightforward manner that reached its endpoint when I recognized that both what and how I teach as a teacher educator matter in work with pre-service teachers. Instead, for me, becoming a social studies teacher educator represented an uneven (and unfinished) process fraught with competing and constantly changing tensions addressed in chapter seven.

For my final research question, I examined the various representations of my development as a beginning social studies teacher educator generated through my methodology of self-study through narrative inquiry. Casting these representations as tensions, I more fully captured the complexity of my transition from classroom teacher to teacher educator, and highlighted some of the challenges involved in attempting to align my teaching intents with my
teaching practices. At the same time as I was refining my vision for social studies and coming to understand the potential significance of my teaching, I also, sometimes paradoxically, demonstrated fears of regression in my work, displayed apathy or exhaustion, exhibited frustration and restlessness, and struggled to navigate interpersonal relationships with my students.

The understandings gleaned through taking the ‘content’ and ‘pedagogical turns’ (Russell, 1997) led me to embrace a clearer sense of vision for my work as a teacher educator. However, this did not mean that all of my misgivings as a beginner attempting to teach others how to teach simply evaporated. Instead, the vision I came to embrace as a teacher educator actually heightened the sense of importance and responsibility I placed on my teaching. Under the pressure of these new expectations, it was not uncommon for my thinking to be plagued by fear that I might regress to some of the less favorable vestiges of my former teaching self. This fear of regression could have been detrimental in so far as it might have predisposed me to look with disdain upon certain methods that I dubbed traditional. There was also the possibility that such fear could become so overwhelming that individuals would essentially be paralyzed by it, thereby ceasing to grow or learn from their mistakes.

Although I do not think my fear of regression ever became so overwhelming that I felt paralyzed by it, there were times when I questioned what I was actually accomplishing with my students and pre-service teachers as a result of my efforts. As I struggled with these questions, I occasionally displayed signs of apathy or exhaustion in my thinking and practices as a teacher educator. In this way, even though I came to embrace a vision for my practice as a teacher educator that heightened the sense of importance and responsibility I placed on my teaching, the
conditions and circumstances surrounding my work still paradoxically led to moments of indifference that failed to help me realize the goals I claimed I wanted to accomplish.

Another representation of my development as a beginning teacher educator that was captured through the methodology I employed for this study centered on the feelings of frustration and restlessness that I sometimes exhibited regarding my work. In many ways, these feelings represented the other side of the spectrum from the feelings of apathy and exhaustion discussed in the previous paragraph. More specifically, the feelings of frustration seemed to indicate that I did in fact care about my work, while the feelings of restlessness indicated that I sometimes had so much energy that I actually grew impatient to effect change. In both cases, the eagerness driving my feelings potentially worked against me more closely aligning my teaching intents with my teaching actions. At the very least, this eagerness sometimes strained the interpersonal relationships so important to in my work with students and pre-service teachers.

Along these lines, I also struggled to beneficially navigate interpersonal relationships with my student and pre-service teachers. Much of my struggle in this regard was related to the inherent tension I felt in my role as both an advocate and an evaluator. This struggle was significant in my development because the nature of the relationships I formed with my students was fundamental to how I understood and enacted my vision and practices as a beginning teacher educator. In the end, the tensions highlighted through the different representations of my development served the purpose of calling into question the degree to which anyone can ever truly “become” a teacher educator.

Implications for Future Research

This investigation of my move from classroom teacher to teacher educator suggests several important avenues for future research to consider. Perhaps one of the more significant of
these possibilities involves the question of how different program contexts might influence the process of becoming a teacher educator. For me, being immersed in a social studies program that valued teacher education and that facilitated communal inquiry around shared problems of practice had a significant, clear, and identifiable influence on my development. The effect was so great that, in addition to helping me understand my new role as a beginning teacher educator, it affected my larger understandings of the nature and purpose of education. The program context encouraged me to rethink my subject matter as well as the messages sent by how I chose to teach it, both important milestones in Russell’s (1997) model of the professional development of teacher educators. Given the role of context in meaning making, additional examinations into the question of how different programs and working environments influence the development of beginning teacher educators seem necessary in order to enlarge the research base around this phenomenon. Future research could compare the experiences of beginning teacher educators socialized into inquiry-based programs versus those that emphasize technical rationality.

Similarly, another important line of inquiry stemming from this research might focus on the question of how adopting an inquiry stance helps beginning teacher educators to better serve their students. This dissertation primarily focused on my own perceptions of my development as I came to adopt such an approach in my work. My inquiry stance allowed me to capture and represent my thinking, struggles, practices, and development as a teacher educator. Yet the design and frame for this particular study did not carefully tend to what my inquiry stance meant for students. How did students respond to my attempt to develop my practice as a teacher educator? Did they even notice? Does an inquiry stance effectively model reflective approaches to teaching? Were my relationships with my students strengthened as a result of this work?
Indeed, to what extent do teacher educators or the programs in which they work value inquiry as an approach to either teaching or teacher education?

As a self-study, this research drew upon my relatively limited previous experience as a social studies classroom teacher of only three years. Other research might explore whether or not the process of becoming a teacher educator looks different for someone with years of experience in the field. Does such experience help or hinder their development as teacher educators, and in what ways? In a similar vein, what role does experience play in shaping the process of developing better teacher education pedagogy? This study only hints at answers to these questions. The scholarship on beginning teacher educators might examine the sorts of research, teaching, and field experiences that best promote the development of competence in teacher education.

The results of this study also suggest avenues for future research specifically relevant to social studies teacher educators. My experience suggests that many beginning social studies teacher educators may have never taken the ‘content turn’ (Russell, 1997) for themselves as classroom teachers. In the process of attempting to teach others how to teach, what are the implications of having never considered social studies subject matter in terms of its ideological dimension? Moreover, what causes social studies teacher educators to take the ‘pedagogical turn?’ Can connections be made between how teacher educators teach advanced democratic citizenship and how their pre-service teachers subsequently understand and teach the concept to their students?

Finally, as a result of this study, I came to adopt certain guiding principles for my work in social studies teacher education. More specifically, I now embrace a teacher education pedagogy that hinges on the importance of transparency, modeling, and inquiry as methods for helping
others learn how to teach. Each of these principles deserves further scrutiny. How do students make sense of these methods? How does this understanding influence their views of my role as a teacher educator? Is there any evidence that pre-service teachers teach differently as a result of my efforts to “live these principles” as a teacher educator? Moreover, how do I choose the content for these methods? Am I consistent in my efforts to live these principles? What does all of this mean for the learning of my students? This study raises these questions in the context of my own practice as a teacher educator, and they also represent possible directions for future teacher education research and inquiry into teacher education practices.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to better understand and subsequently to inform the process of becoming a social studies teacher educator from my perspective as a former social studies teacher turned social studies teacher educator. The research was guided by the following questions:

1. How has my vision for social studies teacher education developed?
2. How has the relationship between my practices as a teacher educator and my beliefs evolved?
3. What representations of my development as a teacher educator does self-study through narrative inquiry yield?

The findings related to each of these questions highlight the primary difficulties I encountered as I transitioned from a classroom teacher to a teacher educator. These findings contribute to understanding the challenges that new teacher educators may face as they are compelled to modify their existing classroom teacher pedagogies to suit their new positions as teacher educators. The mere presence of such challenges refutes the “…assumption that educating
teachers is something that does not require any additional preparation and that if one is a good teacher of elementary or secondary students, this expertise will automatically carry over to one’s work with novice teachers” (Zeichner, 2005, p. 118).

My experience indicates that the process of becoming a teacher educator is far more complex than typically acknowledged, as it involves modifications to professional identity as well as to pedagogy. While there are certain similarities between the work of classroom teachers and teacher educators, there are also differences that must not be ignored. By bringing to light some of these differences, this study reinforces the claim that teacher education:

…demands skills, expertise and knowledge that cannot simply be taken for granted. Rather there is a need for such skills, expertise and knowledge to be carefully examined, articulated and communicated so that the significance of the role of the teacher educator might be more appropriately highlighted and understood within the profession.

(Korthagen, et al., 2005, p. 107)

Purposefully collecting and examining the stories teacher educators tell of their practice represents one way to stop taking for granted the skills, expertise, and knowledge required to do teacher education. By understanding the challenges involved in this important transition, we are better positioned to consider how novice teacher educators should be inducted into their new roles.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

Coding Scheme

Research question one: How has my vision for social studies teacher education developed?

1000 – Graduate Coursework

1001 – history of education
1002 – nature of education
1003 – standardized curriculum
1004 – political dimension of education
1005 – worthwhile learning
1006 – broader social conditions of schooling
1007 – limitations of traditional conceptions of schooling
1008 – development as a social construct
1009 – purpose of social studies
1010 – connections to work as a teacher educator
1011 – upbringing and experiences as a student
1012 – experiences as a teacher

2000 – The Work of Teacher Education

2001 – consideration of prior practices as a teacher
2002 – window of critique into the practice of others
2003 – examples of “good” lessons
2004 – examples of “bad” lessons
2005 – tensions inherent in teaching
2006 – culture of schools
2007 – process of learning
2008 – conceptual distinctions
2009 – practice arena
2010 – bridge between practice and theory

3000 – Collaboration with Peers

3001 – community of trust
3002 – feedback and critique
3003 – communal inquiry
3004 – underlying assumptions
3005 – ideas or beliefs challenged
3006 – approaches to teacher education
4000 – Self-study of Practices

4001 – record of struggles
4002 – articulation of expectations
4003 – clarification of role
4004 – failure to achieve goals
4005 – place to be uncertain
4006 – attempts at problem-solving
4007 – teaching as relational
4008 – student teachers as producers of knowledge

Research question two: How has the relationship between my practices as a teacher educator and my beliefs evolved?

5000 – Evolving Relationship between Practices and Beliefs

5001 – need to feel like an expert
5002 – strengths of lessons
5003 – control of the classroom
5004 – procedural elements of lesson
5005 – evidence of resistance to change
5006 – implicit deal between teachers and students
5007 – affiliation with university
5008 – student understanding irrespective of purpose
5009 – alignment of lessons
5010 – active student engagement
5011 – worthwhile learning
5012 – assessment
5013 – nature and structure of activities
5014 – desire to not replicate my own process of becoming
5015 – conscious modes of professional activity
5016 – rationale-based practice
5017 – moral dimension of education
5018 – standards as a vehicle
5019 – focus on ideology and/or purpose
5020 – concern for diversity
5021 – move toward an inquiry stance
5022 – selection of materials and hidden curriculum
5023 – inconsistencies between practices and beliefs
5024 – reasoning behind my pedagogical choices
5025 – importance of modeling
5026 – strategies for open and transparent pedagogy
Research question three: What representations of my development as a teacher educator does self-study through critical narrative inquiry yield?

6000 – Representations of Development

6001 – vulnerability and failure
6002 – apathy or burnout
6003 – contradictions
6004 – importance of interactions
6005 – confrontations
6006 – importance of building rapport
6007 – importance of open and honest dialogue
6008 – student concerns with evaluation
Research question one: How has my vision for social studies teacher education developed?

I. The Influence of Completing Graduate Coursework
   a. Pushed me to consider the history and purpose of education
   b. Challenged my views on the nature and purpose of the educational system
   c. Encouraged me to consider the broader social conditions of schooling
   d. Prompted reflection on my background and experiences as a student
   e. Sparked reflection on my experiences as a teacher

II. The Influence of Engaging in the Work of Teacher Education
   a. Provided a window to reflect on my prior practice
   b. Provided opportunities to critique the practice of others
   c. Allowed me to better understand the culture of schools
   d. Pushed me to think more deeply about the concept of learning
   e. Compelled me to make conceptual distinctions relevant for my own practice
   f. Offered multiple practice-based opportunities to make connections between practice and theory

III. The Influence of Interacting or Collaborating with Peers
    a. Offered me a source of support and encouragement
    b. Allowed for communal inquiry centered on educational matters of mutual concern
    c. Pushed me to rethink my assumptions about education
    d. Helped me to make connections to my work in teacher education

IV. The Influence of Studying my Practice
    a. Preserved data for further reflection
    b. Encouraged me to become an active producer of knowledge by developing informed ways to deal with my situated problems of practice

Research question two: How has the relationship between my practices as a teacher educator and my beliefs evolved?

V. Starting from Default Assumptions about Teaching
a. Conception of social studies teaching and learning as a classroom teacher
b. Banking model of education

VI. Invoking my Classroom Teaching Experience as a Source of Expertise
a. Revealed need to feel like an expert
b. Focused on the procedural elements of lesson
c. Focused on control of the classroom
d. Treated as uncritical strengths

VII. Exhibiting Resistance to Changing my Views on Teaching
a. Afraid of discrediting prior work
b. Afraid of “selling out” to higher education

VIII. Beginning to Focus on Program Objectives
a. Affiliated with university
b. Focused on active student engagement
c. Focused on nature and structure of activities
d. Expressed desire to address worthwhile learning

IX. Taking the Content Turn in my Work as a Teacher Educator
a. Came to understand moral dimension of education
b. Exhibited a concern for diversity
c. Struggled to help students develop ideas on worthwhile learning
d. Focused or rationale-based practice
e. Emphasized using the standards as a vehicle
f. Focused on purpose and/or ideology
g. Moved toward an inquiry stance

X. Taking the Pedagogical Turn in my Work as a Teacher Educator
a. Noticed inconsistencies between practices and beliefs
b. Came to understand the importance of modeling

Research question three: What representations of my development as a teacher educator does self-study through critical narrative inquiry yield?

XI. Fear of Regression
a. Afraid of discarding new beliefs for easier options in practice
b. Recognized contradictions of practice
XII. Apathy or Exhaustion
   a. Grew tired attempting to facilitate a powerful vision of social studies
   b. Led to practices not matching vision

XIII. Frustration and Restlessness
   a. Desired student teachers to engage in conscious modes of professional activity
   b. Exhibited anxiousness to effect change

XIV. Interpersonal Relationships
   a. Struggled to navigate interpersonal relationships with students
   b. Felt the tension of my own evolving expectations
   c. Felt the tension of my dual role as an advocate and an evaluator
   d. Attempted to facilitate open and honest communication
APPENDIX C

Teacher Education Assignments by Semester

Fall 2004

• Field instructor for 6 student teachers in secondary social studies classrooms

Spring 2005

• Field instructor for 8 student teachers in secondary social studies classrooms

Fall 2005

• Teaching assistant for two sections of ESOC 3420, Teaching Social Studies in the Elementary School
• University facilitator for 7 student teachers in elementary classrooms
• Field instructor for 4 student teachers in secondary social studies classrooms

Spring 2006

• Teaching assistant for two sections of ESOC 3420, Teaching Social Studies in the Elementary School
• University facilitator for 8 student teachers in elementary classrooms
• Field instructor for 5 student teachers in secondary social studies classrooms

Fall 2006

• Instructor of record for ESOC 5560, Student Teaching Seminar in Secondary Social Studies
• Field instructor for 2 student teachers in secondary social studies classrooms

Spring 2007

• Instructor of record for ESOC 2450-2450L, Initial Field Experience in Social Science Education
• Field instructor for 4 student teachers in secondary social studies classrooms

Fall 2007

• Instructor of record for ESOC 2450-2450L, Initial Field Experience in Social Science Education
Spring 2008

- Instructor of record for ESOC 4360, *Methods of Teaching Social Science in Secondary Schools*
- Field instructor for 5 student teachers in secondary social studies classrooms
APPENDIX D

Courses Taken by Semester

Fall 2004
- ERSH 6200. Methods of Research in Education.
- ESOC 9005. Doctoral Graduate Student Seminar.
- ESOC 9630. Critique of Educational Literature in Social Science Education.

Spring 2005
- EFND 8040. Pragmatism and Education.
- ESOC 9005. Doctoral Graduate Student Seminar.

Summer 2005
- ESOC 9000. Doctoral Research.
- ESOC 9005. Doctoral Graduate Student Seminar.

Fall 2005
- EDEC 8140. Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Learning Environments for Children and Young Adolescents.
- ERSH 8400. Qualitative Research Traditions.
- ESOC 9005. Doctoral Graduate Student Seminar.
- READ 8300. Culture, Literacy, and the Classroom.

Spring 2006
- ELAN 8045. Special Topics in Language Education – Teacher Education: Practice, Policy, and Politics.
• ESOC 8010. History of Social Studies Education.
• ESOC 9005. Doctoral Graduate Student Seminar.
• QUAL 8410. Designing Qualitative Research.

Summer 2006
• ESOC 9005. Doctoral Graduate Student Seminar.
• ESOC 9005. Doctoral Graduate Student Seminar.
• QUAL 9800. Issues in Qualitative and Quantitative Research – Narrative Analysis.

Fall 2006
• EDEC 9000. Doctoral Research.
• ESOC 9000. Doctoral Research.
• ESOC 9005. Doctoral Graduate Student Seminar.
• QUAL 8420. Analyzing Qualitative Data.

Spring 2007
• ESOC 9005. Doctoral Graduate Student Seminar.
• ESOC 9300. Doctoral Dissertation.
• ESOC 9300. Doctoral Dissertation.
• ESOC 9300. Doctoral Dissertation.