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Abstract

This research study used ethnographic research methods to examine teachers' perceptions of their professional identities and explored the ways in which these identities were constructed and negotiated through language as they participated on an interdisciplinary collaborative team. In theoretical foundation and methodology, the study drew on theories of symbolic interactionism and discourse, as well as key theoretical understandings of identity. Data were collected from six participants over the course of nine months through interviews, participant observation, and audio-recordings of the team's planning sessions.

The findings from this study show that each participant constructed multiple identities, such as *team leader* or *team maker*, through the use of various discursive strategies. Each of these strategies shifted the teachers' identities in moment-by-moment interactions, but also over the long term. While some of the participants' perceptions were aligned with the identity development evident from the data, a change in their understanding of who they were as teachers was not shared by all. However, all of the teachers' experienced a number of tensions that influenced their negotiation of identity, including those over authority, differing visions, balancing content, and their sense of the value of their work.

The results of this study have significance for how teachers, administrators, and researchers think about professional identity development in the context of interdisciplinary collaboration. The study indicates that individual teachers experience collaboration differently, constructing multiple identities in the process, sometimes experiencing emotional labor to present a particular identity to their colleagues. For teachers engaging in sustained collaboration, or the administrators who want to support them, awareness of identity development and measures to ease its associated tensions are recommended.

**Shifting Identities:
An Examination of Teacher Professional Identity Development on an
Interdisciplinary Collaborative Team**

By

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B.A., Colgate University, 1999

M.S., Syracuse University, 2004

Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy (PhD) in Teaching and Curriculum

Syracuse University

May 2023

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Acknowledgements

The journey from entry into a doctoral program to dissertation proposal to completed defense is a long and winding one, and it is only with the support of many others that I have been able to navigate it. To those addressed in what follows and to every other colleague, friend, and family member who has helped me on this journey, you have my deepest gratitude and appreciation.

Foremost, to the teachers on the interdisciplinary PBL team at Parker Middle School, I am forever grateful for your willingness to take part in this research. You were open, kind, honest, and willingly vulnerable in ways that are both appreciated and admirable. Thank you for allowing me into your world, answering my million questions, and sharing your deep commitment to your students. This study was only possible because of you.

My thanks to all of my professors at Syracuse University, both in the Teaching and Curriculum doctoral program and Educational Leadership CAS program. Throughout the dissertation process, I have often thought of your words, frequently going back to the coursework to find a particular reading or project. You provided the foundation for this work.

To my dissertation committee members, Dr. George Theoharis and Dr. Marcelle Haddix, your insights and feedback have been invaluable. In classes I have taken with you and in our conversations from the proposal to the completed dissertation, you have deepened my thinking in countless ways. Thank you for agreeing to be part of my journey.

My deepest thanks to my doctoral advisor and dissertation committee chair, Dr. Jeffery Mangram. I have had the privilege of being your student for two decades now, from learning how to be a teacher in your methods course to working my way through this dissertation. Thank you for constructing all of the identities I needed you to enact in each moment: mentor, friend, cheerleader, therapist, and myriad others. Thank you for our many conversations about my work,

public education, and life. Your enthusiasm is contagious. Most importantly, thank you for holding relationships at the center of your being. Knowing you were in my corner got me through many tough days of this journey.

To my graduate school friends, especially Meredith, Eryka, and Theresa, thank you for being my people. It is sometimes difficult to explain what this experience is like, and I am beyond grateful for being able to laugh and vent with others who were in the trenches with me. Even when we were living in three different states, your support and advice were invaluable. Thank you, Doctors!

To my friends and family, you will be happy to know I am finally done writing (for now). Your curiosity and questions helped me fine-tune my own thinking and articulation of this work. Thank you for all of your support, positivity, and encouragement, even when you weren't quite sure what I was doing. I hope I have made you all proud.

Finally, and most of all, to my husband Brian: You gave me the courage to begin this journey and have been my most steadfast cheerleader throughout. Thank you for doing and being all of the things that are too numerous to include here. You are now, and have always been, the best teammate a girl could ask for.

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Chapter One

Introduction

From quite early on, it was customary... for teachers to reflect on such questions as ‘Who am I?’, ‘What kind of teacher do I want to be?’, and ‘How do I see my role as a teacher?’, all of which are essential questions when it comes to developing a professional identity.

(Korthagen, 2004, p. 81)

I think sometimes you get stuck in a rut. I’ve never been the teacher that did the same thing always. I feel like you have to reinvent yourself. But I think that you do get stuck in a rut sometimes of doing the same-old, same-old, until there is an inspiration to do something different.

(Claudia, Final Interview, Mar. 11)

The process of becoming a teacher can be both a daunting and exhilarating endeavor for many. Those entering the profession confront the realities of teaching, which may or may not align with their own lay theories of what it means to be a teacher (Britzman, 2003). As Korthagen (2004) notes, it is not uncommon for teachers to reflect on their sense of self in relation to the role they are taking on. As one settles into the profession, however, it is unclear how present those questions remain. They may fade as one becomes comfortable in their professional identity, experienced teachers perhaps no longer reflecting on the question of “Who am I *now*?” Although professional identity researchers firmly assert that who we are endlessly continues to develop over time (Sachs, 2005; Olsen, 2008), it is uncertain whether this is recognized by experienced educators. They may feel *they are who they are* as teachers. And yet, experienced teachers are often in conversation with others, interactions that construct and shape who they are, as well as how they make sense of themselves (Olsen, 2008). It is perhaps not until there is, in Claudia’s words, an “inspiration” to do something differently, that they are able to “reinvent” themselves and to see themselves differently. It is with these uncertainties in mind that I began this dissertation study, which investigated teachers’ perceptions of their professional

identities, exploring how those identities were constructed and negotiated through language as they participated on an interdisciplinary collaborative team.

Background of the Problem

A quick exploration with any search engine reveals that there is no shortage of efforts to find the key to fixing the nation's education system. Yet frequently missing from these discussions is an acknowledgement of the role that teachers' identities play in efforts to improve schools. Despite this absence, teacher professional identity has increasingly become an important field of interest in educational research in the last few decades (Beijaard et al., 2004; Saha & Dworkin, 2009). Underlying this work is the assumption that examining professional identity development is important to understanding the lives of teachers and how they make meaning of their work and of themselves. This knowledge is helpful to teacher educators, school leaders, and teachers themselves, as it illuminates how teachers are shaped by, negotiate, embrace, or resist various discourses and contexts (Buchanan, 2015). Scholars in this field assert that considerations of teachers' professional identities should be included in any discussion of pedagogy, professional development, or educational change (Beijaard et al., 2000; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Vahasantanen, 2015).

Teachers' perceptions of their professional identities are integral to their work. Sachs (2005) describes professional identity as a "framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be,' 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society. Importantly, teacher identity is not something that is fixed nor is it imposed; rather it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience" (p. 15). Similarly, MacLure (1993) asserts that this professional identity is not just one that teachers have, but one that they "use to explain, justify, and make sense of themselves in relations to others, and to the world at large"

(p. 311). This body of work conceptualizes identity development as ongoing and ever changing, shifting in different contexts as it is shaped by external demands (van Veen et al., 2005; Flores & Day, 2006; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Several scholars note that teachers' perceptions of themselves influence their judgments and behaviors (Nias, 1989; Tickle, 2000; Beijaard et al., 2000). Thus, knowing how teachers' professional identities are constructed, negotiated, and performed in various situations is useful to understanding teachers' actions and decisions. It is also useful to recognize how teachers may navigate dissonance between or within their identities, such as during periods of change. Providing teachers with an understanding of the process of identity development may also strengthen their ability to take agency (Buchanan, 2015).

Despite the increasing attention to teacher professional identity, there is much we still have to learn, particularly of the identity development of experienced teachers. Although there is research done that categorizes a career into life phases (Huberman, 1993; Day & Kington, 2008), research approaches that investigate how professional identities are negotiated in particular moments or periods of change is also needed. As teachers move into different contexts and interact with new people (or in different ways with the same colleagues), it is inevitable that their identities will change as well. Thus, there is more we need to know about this development. This study seeks to fill some of these gaps in our knowledge. This would also address the call by Beijaard et al. (2004) for greater emphasis on the "context and how of the professional side" of teacher identity, as it has been limited in favor of more studies on the "personal side" (p. 125). Further, while much of the work on teacher professional identity development relies on interviews or written work, few studies investigate the interactions that are critical to how one's identity is constructed and reconstructed. One context that is ripe for examination of teachers' professional identity development is the implementation of interdisciplinary collaborative teams

that regularly integrate their curriculum. Participation on such as team is often a new experience for many secondary teachers, thus offering researchers an opportunity to examine how teachers' professional identities are negotiated during their interactions in this new context.

Isolation and autonomy for teachers has long been the norm in education (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Yet over the course of the last two decades, schools have increasingly implemented opportunities for teachers to collaborate, perceiving it as a necessary step for school change and improvement (Achinstein, 2002; Gajda & Koliba, 2008). This reflects a belief that teacher performance, and thus student learning, will improve once teachers are no longer isolated and begin working together (Little, 2002; Leonard & Leonard, 2003, 2005). This perspective that teacher collaboration is critical to improvement is evident in the proclamation of the National Commission of Teaching and America's Future that "Collaboration is the key to a rewarding career that will attract and retain highly skilled professionals, resulting in higher-impact teaching and deeper student learning. It's time for educators to harness the power of teamwork found in all other successful 21st century professions" (NCTAF, 2012, para.6).

Given the pervasive outlook that teacher collaboration is a key factor in improving schools, it is important for researchers to continue to closely examine this phenomenon. Although there are numerous studies that examine the benefits and challenges of collaboration, very few consider teachers' professional identities in shaping – and being shaped by – it. Effective collaboration takes a great deal of energy from educators as they listen to each other and, often, shift their perspectives. Further studies are needed to reveal the conditions and circumstances that foster extensive sharing and these changes (Hindin et al., 2007). Teachers may benefit from this knowledge as they undertake collaborative endeavors and begin to navigate shared decision-making with others. More studies are also needed that examine the moment-by-moment

interactions of teachers doing this work (Scribner et al., 2007), including those that take into account identity development. This entails investigating what teachers actually do while collaborating that impacts their learning and other outcomes (Meirink et al., 2010). As the vast majority of studies on collaboration rely on interviews and surveys, observations of talk and interaction would also be helpful to expand our knowledge (Havnes, 2009). Research is needed that examines how the collaborative interactions occur, the discursive strategies employed, how teachers position themselves, and the role each participant plays in the group (Glazier et al., 2017). This dissertation aims to fill some of these gaps.

Statement of the Problem

As teacher collaboration has been proclaimed as a necessary step to improve schools (Achinstein, 2002; Gajda & Koliba, 2008), schools across the country have implemented collaborative efforts. Included in these efforts are those that ask secondary teachers to work with their colleagues from across content areas to plan interdisciplinary projects, integrate curriculum, and work with a common cohort of students for a sustained period of time (McEwing & Green, 2011; Hunter-Doninger & Sydow, 2016). While the potential benefits of ongoing teacher collaboration are substantial, there is still much we do not know about the impact of this work on teachers themselves.

Significant among this missing knowledge is the role of teachers' professional identities as they engage with their colleagues in collaborative efforts. Teachers' professional identity development in these interactions has been both under-theorized and under-examined (Trent 2010). At this time, it is unclear how teachers perceive of and negotiate their professional identities in this new context. There is more we need to know about how their identities both shape and are shaped by these interactions with their colleagues, as well as of the discursive

strategies teachers use to position their own and others' identities. Without this knowledge, we are limited in our understanding of how teachers' make meaning of themselves, each other, or collaboration itself. Further, it limits our understanding of teachers' actions and decisions that may help or hinder collaborative efforts.

Purpose of the Study

This research study used ethnographic research methods to examine teachers' perceptions of their professional identities and explored the ways in which these identities were constructed and negotiated through language as they participated on an interdisciplinary collaborative team. I drew on symbolic interactionism and theories of discourse to inform the study, as well as theoretical understandings of teachers' professional identity development as evident in literature on the field.

There were three aims of this study. First, the study sought to understand how teachers made meaning of their professional identities while participating on an interdisciplinary collaborative team. To understand teachers' perceptions of their professional identities, I relied on interviews with the teachers. Second, this study sought to shed insight into how teachers negotiate their professional identities as they interacted with colleagues in a collaborative context. This required close examination of the language that teachers used in their collaborative planning sessions. Careful attention was paid to the discursive strategies employed by teachers to construct their identities, as well as position themselves and others. To capture this data, I audio recorded their collaborative planning sessions while taking copious field notes. Finally, as professional identity development is ongoing, this study examined how teachers' professional identities shifted over time as they engaged in collaborative efforts. By time, I am referring to both the moment-by-moment shifts, as well as the longer-term changes, that occurred in the course of the study.

The following research questions guided my work and reflect the goals of this study:

How do teachers perceive and negotiate the ongoing development of their professional identities when participating on an interdisciplinary collaborative team?

- *What are teachers' perceptions of their professional identities while participating on an interdisciplinary collaborative team? In what ways do these shift over time?*
- *How do the discursive strategies used by the teachers construct their professional identities?*

Theoretical Perspectives

The research questions and design of this qualitative study were informed by theories of meaning-making and identity. In what follows, I will describe the theoretical perspectives that guided my decisions for this study. These include symbolic interactionism and theories of discourse. My understanding of teachers' professional identity was also informed by five theoretical understandings that are consistently found in the literature. Due to their overlapping and interwoven nature, it is a challenge to discuss these separately, however I will attempt to present each in a way that both emphasizes its individual importance and recognizes intersections. Finally, I will describe my own conceptualization of teacher professional identity. Although there is no one common definition of teacher professional identity found in the literature, all five theoretical understandings, as well as theories of discourse and symbolic interactionism more broadly, inform my conceptualization.

Symbolic Interactionism

Understanding how teachers make meaning of their work and themselves was at the heart of this research study. For this reason, I drew on symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective to guide my study. This theory emphasizes meaning-making and aims to understand the dynamic nature of reality and the human experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Warren & Karner, 2015). Researchers employing this framework attempt to “get inside the experience” of

their participants (Blumer, 1969). This theoretical perspective is also concerned with the relationship between the self and society (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). This makes it useful for investigating the experiences of teachers on collaborative teams, including how they make meanings of and enact their professional identities.

Blumer (1969) first used the term symbolic interactionism to describe the meaning-making process that influences how people perceive the world and themselves. Basing his approach on the work of George Herbert Mead (1934), Blumer argued that human experience is mediated by interpretation. The theory of symbolic interactionism is grounded in three assertions. First, symbolic interactionism premises that people act toward objects, events, and people on the basis of the meanings they have toward them. Second, meaning is derived from social interactions that one has with other individuals or groups. Individuals takes cues about meaning from their understanding of the social norms that influence the situation, how others behave, and their interactions with others. Thus, an object's (or event's or person's) meaning is not inherent but is derived from how a person acts toward it in a particular context or moment. Meaning can therefore change depending on these factors and is constantly being negotiated in the moment. Third, meanings are modified through an interpretive process in dealing with the things encountered. A person may make a particular meaning in a certain context and situation, but as they encounter new contexts and situations, the process of interpretation continues. Based on what they understand through their interpretations, people develop attitudes, expectations, and behaviors (Denzin, 1992).

Symbolic interactionists examine how individuals and groups interpret and make meaning of different symbols as they communicate with one another (Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959). This is important as the meaning people *make* in an experience is essential to *what* is experienced

(Kratwohl, 1998). Further, this is how their view of the world is created and will influence how they act. When teachers participate on a collaborative team, the meanings they make in their interactions impact how they experience the collaboration and make sense of their work, each other, and own identity. For these teachers, there are countless symbols that they must interpret. These include, but are certainly not limited to, various documents, classroom materials, school or classroom events, instructional strategies, the physical arrangement of team spaces, and their actual collaborative practices. Perhaps more importantly, the teachers also view many facets of *each other* symbolically, such as the words, body language, gestures, facial expressions, and mannerisms of each teacher. How these are read and interpreted effects how an individual teacher makes meaning during the interaction. Significant to teachers' meaning making is also the context within which they work (Mishler, 1979). This context includes the norms, values, and beliefs of the school culture. Historical, political, or cultural contexts will also come into play in how they make meaning of the symbols. As teachers move within various contexts or situations, they may make very different meanings of the same symbols.

The theory of symbolic interactionism clearly speaks to issues of identity, as people not only make meaning of objects, events, and people, but of themselves. Mead (1934) describes the concept of *role taking*, noting the influence of others on one's identity. Individuals orient themselves to the norms of their society, taking on the roles they are expected to play. The knowledge of these societal norms and expectations influences how a person makes meaning of themselves, as well, as they judge themselves based on this understanding. An individual's sense of self is also based on their impression of others' perceptions of them (Cooley, 1902; Mead 1934). The self is constructed through interaction with others, as "people attempt to see themselves as others see them by interpreting gestures and actions directed toward them and by

placing themselves in the role of the other person” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 29). Symbolic interactionism, therefore, is an important theoretical perspective to use when considering the development of teachers’ professional identities during collaborative efforts.

Theories of d/Discourse

This study was also informed by theories of discourse. Interaction does not occur, of course, without some form of communication. This social contact may be verbal or non-verbal, yet is vital to how a teacher makes meaning when interacting with colleagues. Examination of ‘small d’ discourse (Gee, 1990), or language-in-use, was essential to the design of this study, thus I drew from discourse analysis both theoretically and methodologically. The selection and use of language have implications for one’s identity (Scott, 2015), as identity is constantly shaped and reshaped through communication with others. De Fina (2011) articulated the increasing attention being paid by scholars in the social sciences to human interaction as the site of production of identity, as well as on language, as the “enactment and negotiation” of identity (p. 5). De Fina also suggests that teachers’ personal, social, and situational identities “...will be appropriated and negotiated in everyday processes of communication...” (p. 6). This discourse is used both by and toward people to position and construct identities.

When teachers collaborate, their language is central to how they understand the situation, each other, and themselves. As both theory and methodology, discourse analysis offers multiple methods for the close analysis of talk and texts. Moreover, it provides a perspective and set of assumptions on the nature of language (Wood & Kroger, 2000). These informed this study.

Foremost, a key theoretical assumption of discourse is that language is action (Gee et al., 1992; Johnstone, 2002). Wood & Kroger (2000) note that “What they [people] do is talk, often incessantly... And, in talking, they do things” (p. ix). This assumption largely rests on the work

of Austin (1962), who asserted that speech acts not only have a meaning, but a “force.”

Language does not simply transmit information; it is not only *about* things. Rather, it *does* things. Language, therefore, is performative: it has a goal, it has consequences, it brings about a change (Scott, 2015).

A related theoretical assumption is that language is used by people to construct reality (Talja, 1999; Johnstone, 2002; Scott, 2015). As with a symbolic interactionist approach, discourse analysis as a theoretical approach is less concerned with attempting to find the “truth” or what “really happened,” but focuses on how events are discursively constructed. The way that words are put together creates different versions of reality in the minds of those who speak or hear them. Therefore, language is used variably (Wooffitt, 2005). The task of the researcher is to focus on how statements and accounts are constructed and the functions that performs. Rather than viewing language as a literal translation of what happened or a person’s beliefs, this perspective seeks to “give analytic priority to the rich tapestry of interpretations” (p. 76). The meanings of language, of course, are not solely dependent on the speaker or writer. Any speech act depends on both the speaker and the listener, as the meaning is negotiated during the interaction (Scott, 2015). Further, in any social interaction, each individual has presuppositions as to who has the right or duty to perform particular speech acts (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003). Participants in an interaction therefore take up particular positions and position others through their language. This has implications for the meanings made of each participants’ identities.

The perspective that language is action and discursively constructs the world is very useful to examining teachers’ professional identities during collaboration. A teacher speaking with her colleagues or sharing her perceptions with a researcher may select from any number of words to tell a story or articulate a point. The actual language she chooses to use and the accounts she puts

together, however, have consequences for how meaning is made in that interaction. The teacher's motives or interests come into play, as the teacher's language works to achieve a particular goal or action. Additionally, how the teacher speaks, and the meaning that is made of those words, is closely linked to the context within which they are performed. Even when speaking on the same topic but in a different setting, a teacher's language will change and reveal different meanings being made.

A final theoretical assumption that informed this study is that discourse is always socially situated. That is, language is "produced by speakers who are ineluctably situated in a sociohistorical matrix, whose cultural, political, economic, social, and personal realities shape the discourse" (Gee et al., 1992). Gee (2014) describes 'big D' Discourses as "the ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity" (p. 222). Teachers cannot escape the 'big D' Discourses that impact their identity. Likewise, these Discourses influence the 'small d' discourses and, more importantly, the meanings that are made of language during an interaction.

Theoretical Understandings of Teachers' Professional Identities

The literature on teachers' professional identity also oriented how I approached this study. Much of this work builds on theorists who study identity more generally. Although researchers of teachers' professional identity have investigated a variety of topics and conceptualized identity in different ways (Beijaard et al., 2004), five theoretical understandings of identity development are commonly found in this work. These understandings guided my study and influenced my own conceptualization of teacher professional identity.

Theoretical Understanding 1: Identity is the negotiation of meaning through interaction with others.

The importance of social interaction in the construction and ongoing development of teachers' professional identity cannot be understated. The literature consistently describes the development of a teachers' professional identity as an ongoing negotiation that is dependent on interaction with others (Beijaard et al., 2004; Lasky, 2005; Olsen, 2008). During these interactions, teachers make meaning of themselves and others as they attempt to fill particular roles or meet societal expectations (Day et al., 2006). This social construction of self results in a professional identity that is constantly being reinterpreted as teachers learn more about themselves through interaction with others. This aligns with the symbolic interactionism, as Blumer's (1969) theory "regards identity, like society more widely, as a process of negotiation: it is relational, communicative, and symbolically meaningful" (Scott, 2015, p. 11). According to Day et al. (2006), symbolic interactionism indicates that the self takes on "different approaches to different social experiences based on the particular part played by the individual" (p. 602). This suggests that teachers, too, may think of themselves differently in different interactions, dependent on the various roles they take while participating on collaborative teams. Thus, because meaning is continually negotiated, a teachers' professional identity is constantly shaped and reshaped in these interactions (Sachs, 2005; Alsup, 2006; Olsen, 2008).

Theoretical Understanding 2: Identity construction and reconstruction is ongoing and dynamic.

Given that teachers are in constant interaction with others, it follows that their professional identity is perpetually in negotiation. Wenger (1998) aptly describes identity as "constantly becoming" (p. 154). As individuals continually interact with new people, take on new roles, or

are placed in new situations, they gain an understanding of their self and make judgments about how others perceive them. Identity theorists, including sociologists Charles Horton Cooley (1902) and George Herbert Mead (1934), explored how individuals make sense of themselves as their identity is developed over time. Among the most significant contributions of these scholars was a challenge to the idea that identity is fixed and unchanging. Both initiated an understanding of identity that is reflexive, influenced by larger society, and a continuous process.

The endless interactions that teachers have ultimately contributes to their assessments of others and themselves. This second theoretical understanding of identity as ongoing and active in nature is overwhelmingly consistent within the literature on teacher professional identity (Kerby, 1991; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Sachs, 2005; Alsup 2006; Flores & Day, 2006; Olsen, 2008; Sutherland et al., 2010; Buchanan, 2015). This understanding is particularly salient in the abundance of literature on new teachers, as this is where much of the research into professional identity development is focused.

Considering the never-ending nature of identity construction, it is important to acknowledge the positioning of identity as more or less stable in the literature. Although identity theorists do not list a “degree of stability” in their work, it is clear from a study of this work that more recent literature increasingly stresses the instability of one’s identity. This is not to say that identity is completely erratic, but that scholars continue to examine the dynamic nature of identity as they research and theorize about the influence of interaction, social environments, and Discourses on identity. The growing focus on these factors supports a conceptualization in which each person has a ‘core identity’, yet a variety of sub-identities “which may be more or less central to the overall identity and must be balanced to avoid conflict across them” (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 177). As will be discussed below, these sub-identities contribute to each person not

having one identity, but multiple identities. These identities are temporal, active, and in constant development.

Theoretical Understanding 3: A person does not have one identity, but multiple identities.

Teachers continually interact with others in different settings (classrooms, faculty rooms, etc.) for a variety of purposes. There is general consensus that these interactions contribute not just to the construction of one identity, but of *identities* (Cooper & Olson, 1996; Gee, 2001). People are influenced by their background and experiences, ‘becoming’ different identities as they take on different roles within their lives. For a teacher, this may include their personal and professional identities, but also those of mother, department chair, tennis player, grade-level team leader, PTA president, wife, or myriad other selves. They may also try to achieve certain goals within their interactions, ones that are particular to the situation, resulting in further identities as they try to achieve those goals. Much of the literature recognizes that a professional identity contains multiple sub-identities: these “...may be broadly linked and can be seen as the core of a teacher’s professional identity, while others may be more peripheral... (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 122). The relevance of these sub-identities is dependent on different contexts, interactions, and the relationship between the teacher and those around her.

James Gee (2001) has argued that identity is “being recognized as a ‘certain kind of person’” (p. 99). Gee asserts that part of identity development is making clear to others who we are and getting them to be recognized as such. Gee articulates the relationship between a more central self with those that are more situated within a particular context:

"The 'kind of person' one is recognized as 'being,' at a given time and place, can change, and, of course, can be ambiguous or unstable. Being recognized as a certain 'kind of person' in a given context, is what I mean here by 'identity.' In this sense of the term, all people have multiple identities connected not to their 'internal states' but to their performances in society. This is not to deny that each of us have what we might call a 'core identity' that holds more uniformly, for ourselves and others, across contexts" (p. 99).

This view of identity lends itself to an understanding that teachers hold multiple identities at the same time even as they may be adding new ones. Gee argues that individuals intentionally work to achieve some identities through their actions in the hopes that these identities will be recognized by others. At the same time, other identities are ascribed, particularly what he terms “Institutional-identities” and “Discourse-identities” (p. 100). Each of these “can be placed on a continuum in terms of how active or passive one is in ‘recruiting’ them, that is in terms of how much such identities can be viewed as merely ascribed to a person versus an active achievement or accomplishment of that person” (p. 104). Of the many identities that a teacher may have, therefore, some may be actively sought after while others are imposed on them.

Theoretical Understanding 4: Identity is dependent on particular contexts and Discourses.

Teachers live and work in social environments, contexts that inevitably shape their interactions and identities. The influence of these external factors is already hinted at in the three theoretical understandings described above, as the movement between and within contexts results in the constant negotiation of identities in each space. Blumer (1969) posits that meaning is contingent on the particular context and situation. Teachers, like others, are in a constant process of interpreting meanings – including the meaning of their selves – as they encounter new contexts and situations. On a broader scale, Cooper and Olson (1996) note that the multiple selves of teachers are “continually reconstructed through the historical, cultural, sociological and psychological influences” which all shape the meaning of being a teacher (p. 78). While a teacher may perform a particular identity within a specific context, the meaning made of that identity and context is influenced by larger Discourses. Teachers are shaped by and navigate numerous Discourses, ultimately influencing who they are and the roles they believe they should play.

The notion that identity is negotiated through interaction within particular Discourses and social contexts is consistently agreed upon in the literature on teacher identities (MacLure, 1993; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Beijaard et al., 2000, 2004; Gee, 2001; Rodgers & Scott, 2008).

Teachers are part of multiple historical, political, social, and cultural Discourses, negotiating their identities among them and with new Discourses as they arise. These Discourses dictate the expectations of what a teacher should look like, sound like, behave like, and *be*. A teacher's negotiation of their identity is also influenced by the local school culture and norms of the surrounding community. Teachers bring their past experiences and biography with them (Beijaard et al., 2000; Britzman, 2003; Alsup, 2006), aspects that have also been shaped by larger social, historical, and cultural Discourses that will invariably influence and provide the resources they use to construct their identities (Buchanan, 2015). Among teachers' many identities are also those that are often seen as "natural" or "given," yet are Discursively and socially constructed (Gee, 2000). These include racial, cultural, gender, and class identities. As with other identities, these are not fully separate from a professional identities and effect how teachers negotiate their professional identities in school. All of these contextual and Discursive forces add to the complexity of teacher identity and the challenges of understanding how teachers make meaning of themselves professionally. For teachers, their sense of *who I am* may be confirmed or challenged as the local contexts or broader Discourses shift. This may result in changes in the teacher's professional identity or the formation of new identities.

Theoretical Understanding 5: A person is an active agent in the development of their identity.

The discussion thus far has primarily focused on external factors that shape a teacher's identity, whether it be interactions with others, the socially situated nature of identity, or the Discourses in which they live and work. Although these forces are at work, they alone do not

shape a teacher's professional identity. Rather, "human beings are active agents who play decisive roles in determining the dynamics of social life and in shaping individual activities (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 15). Holland et al. (1998) describe this as the "space of authoring," arguing that a person's responses to others are not fully pre-determined despite being influenced by Discourses (p. 274). The connection between agency and identity is noted throughout the literature on teacher professional identity (Zembylas, 2003; Day et al., 2006; Buchanan, 2015). At the same time, however, teachers cannot escape their contexts, and their "sense of agency and ability to act cannot be separated from the effects that mediated systems have on shaping him or her" (Lasky, 2005, p. 902). As teachers undergo new experiences and interactions, as well as encounter educational reforms or innovations, their identity is constantly reshaped by the tension between external forces and their individual agency (Day et al., 2006; Buchanan, 2015). This agency can take on many forms, including "resisting the processes by which change is implemented; resisting inroads on personal or professional identity; resistance to general state of things by opposition to a political or ideological stance" (Ollin, 2005, p. 153). Buchanan (2015) describes teacher agency as "identities in motion," arguing that agency is not just a performance of identity but, at the same time, their identities are influenced by the teachers' actions and agency.

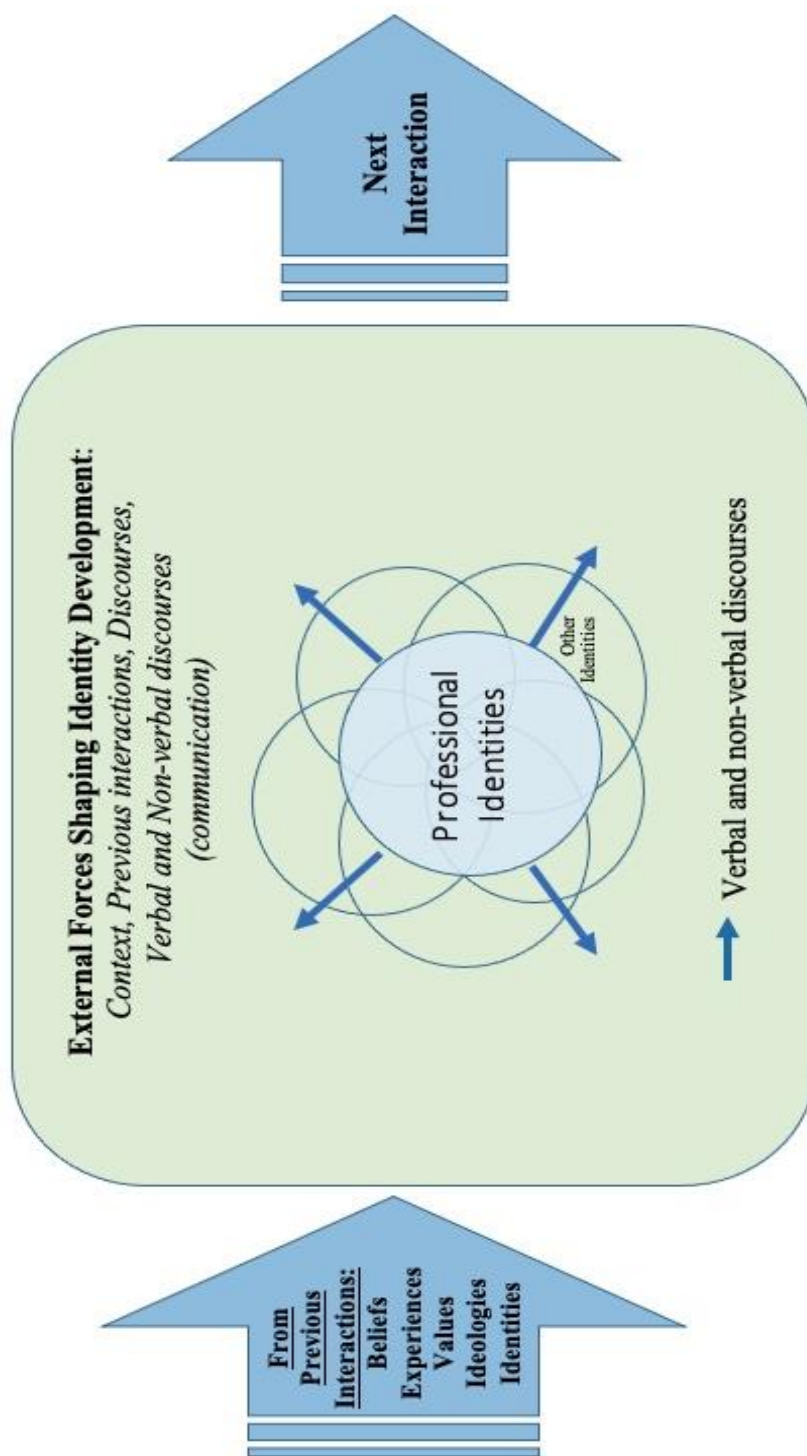
Conceptualizing Teacher Professional Identity

A review of the literature makes it clear that there is no one commonly used definition of teacher professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Thus, the theoretical understandings described above, as well as theories of discourse and symbolic interactionism, inform my conceptualization of teacher professional identity. I choose to use the term *teacher professional identity* rather than *teacher identity*, despite that many scholars use

them interchangeably or do not distinguish between the two. Foremost, I believe the former clarifies the identity I am speaking to in this dissertation. To many people, roles such as coach, mentor, or even parent could qualify for the identity of teacher. I believe referring to a teacher's *professional* identity signifies an identity that exists for those who want to be recognized as a teacher by developing the skills, competencies, and knowledge to do so through schooling and employment. This identity is also distinguished by its presence in professional interactions a teacher has with colleagues, parents, teachers, and administrators. Although a teacher continues to have a *teacher identity* when they are in other contexts, I am interested in that which they construct when they want to be recognized in a professional capacity in the classroom or school.

One of the greatest challenges of describing a conceptualization of identity is representing in two-dimensional words or a visual something that constantly changes in space and time. As such, below is an attempt to create a visual that captures it in one moment and space, acknowledging that it may only last in this rendition for the briefest of moments. Despite the impossibility of being able to capture such an abstract and complex concept in one graphic, I have found this visual useful to my own thinking and understanding of how identity development works. Following Figure 1.1, I offer a written explanation of my visual conceptualization.

Figure 1.1



Into each moment of interaction, a teacher brings her beliefs, experiences, values, and ideologies. Her identities – professional and otherwise – have already been shaped by previous interactions, both in the moments just prior to and long before the interaction. Moreover, this has influenced the meanings she enters a particular moment with. The teacher's overall identity and professional identities is layered, as her sub-identities may or may not come into play in any interaction. These include personal identities (mother, etc.) or other professional identities (team leader, department chair, etc.). Ascribed identities and their meanings – for her and others – also impact the interaction. I chose to depict these identities as overlapping circles to illustrate the intertwined and active nature of one's many identities.

The teacher's professional identity is situated in in the context and Discourses of the moment. In Figure 1.1, these are represented by the green rectangle in which the teacher's various identities sit. These external forces, as well verbal and non-verbal discourses presented by others that the teacher is making meaning of, all influence how the teacher makes sense of the moment and themselves in it. Although a teacher cannot escape the external forces – context, Discourses, other people – that influence her professional identity, she has a role in shaping it. She can enact and position particular identities, even as she is positioned by others. This is done through verbal and non-verbal discourses, language that is intended to be read by others for a particular meaning. In Figure 1.1, this is represented by blue arrows. I chose to include multiple arrows, as several discourses can be enacted simultaneously.

Indeed, a teacher's professional identities do not exist without language. Spoken and written words, body language, gestures, facial expressions, and other non-verbal language allows her to enact her identities as she seeks to be recognized for those identities. Moreover, a teacher is not simply *enacting* an identity, but *constructing* an identity through language. In her conscious or

unconscious choice of words and when to utter them, the teacher contributes to the initial creation or furthering of one - or possibly more - identities.

Although moments and interactions end, a teacher's professional identity is not completely remade in the following moments or interactions. Rather, she carries with her into the next interaction the identities of those that came before. This provides a sense of having a core identity, despite that facets of it are constantly changing.

Olsen (2008), writing of teacher identity, provides his interpretation:

“I view identity as a label, really, for the collection of influences and effects from immediate contexts, prior constructs of self, social positioning, and meaning systems (each itself a fluid influence and all together an ever-changing construct) that become intertwined inside the flow of activity as a teacher simultaneously reacts to and negotiates given contexts and human relationships at given moments” (p. 139).

My conceptualization of identity aligns with this description, with the understanding that a teacher's professional identity is one identity among many that make up who a teacher is. As shown, a teachers' professional identity is complex and nuanced, making it a challenge to both define and study.

Definition of Other Key Terms

There are several other key terms used in this dissertation that are important to define for the purposes of clarity. These definitions are supported by the literature, but also speak directly to the type of collaboration engaged in by the participants in this study.

Teacher Collaboration

A review of the literature reveals a broad range of understandings as to the meaning of teacher collaboration. For the purposes of this dissertation, I employ the definition from Leonard and Leonard (2001), who drew on Cavanagh and Dellar (1996) to describe collaboration. They

articulate this as when educators “...work together, share their knowledge, contribute ideas, and develop plans for the purpose of achieving educational and organizational goals” (p. 7).

Contributing to the lack of a clear description is the ambiguity over what actually constitutes teacher collaboration. For example, two teachers sharing ideas about classroom management during one professional development workshop could be considered to be collaborating, but so could a team of teachers meeting repeatedly to develop and finetune common lessons. The diversity in content, goals, and intensity of these two examples illustrates the vague nature of the term. As such, some scholars describe it as a continuum ranging from limited and minimally interactive to highly interdependent (Little, 1990; Monteil-Overall, 2006). The participants in this study fall toward more interactive nature of this spectrum, as they met daily to make decisions about curriculum and instruction that directly influenced their individual work. In Chapter 2, the varied approaches to collaboration will be discussed, as well as a deeper understanding of the type of collaboration employed by the participants in this study.

Interdisciplinary Team

Weller (2004), refers to an interdisciplinary team as the following:

Interdisciplinary teams are organized around teachers representing the four traditional content areas of science, social studies, mathematics and language arts, as well as teachers who specialized in reading, special education, art, music, and physical education. Teachers on the same team teach the same group of students, have the same planning time, and the same teaching schedule, and are housed in one area of the school... Team members work closely together to plan for instruction, implement the curriculum through a variety of instructional strategies and learning materials and evaluate student learning outcomes and the curriculum (p. 175).

The team in this study constituted an interdisciplinary team, as it included teachers from the four core content disciplines. To a lesser scale, a Spanish language and vocal music teacher also participated on the team. The work of the team fit an interdisciplinary model of integrating curriculum, as they began to make connections across subject areas more explicit for students,

with the curriculum revolving around a common theme, issue, or problem, and interdisciplinary concepts and skills emphasized across subject areas (Drake, 2007). They purposely worked to help students develop an understanding of how content areas are related, as well as see the application of skills across disciplinary lines.

PBL

A frequently used acronym in this dissertation is PBL. In both the literature and schools, this sometimes refers to *project*-based learning while at others *problem*-based learning. The former entails "student-centered instruction that occurs over an extended time period, during which students select, plan, investigate and produce a product, presentation, or performance that answers a real-world question or responds to an authentic task" (Holm, 2011, p. 1). The emphasis tends to be on the product created. Problem-based learning uses inquiry as the central component for learning (Savery, 2015). This involves "identifying problematic situations within the curricula, posing questions, researching, and reporting" that "depend on and foster a community of inquiry" (Barell, 2007, p. 3). Quite often, as educators seek to make curriculum more authentic to engage students and to develop critical thinking skills, projects move toward problem-based learning that uses an inquiry approach. Despite these distinctions, the teachers in this study often used these terms interchangeably, generally referring to either as PBL and not specifically explaining which they were referring to. Further, although the curriculum the team used in during the majority of this study would be categorized as project-based learning, they were working toward it becoming more problem-based.

Significance of the Study

If educators and policy makers are to make informed decisions about efforts to improve schools, it is essential to improve our knowledge of how teachers making meaning of themselves

and of their work, the professional identities they construct, and how these identities shift and are negotiated. This dissertation expands our understanding of the professional identities and the discursive features employed by teachers to enact their shifting identities. Despite the increasing focus on teacher professional identity in the last few decades, there is much that we do not know about how teachers' make meaning of or negotiate their identities in the context of collaborative interactions. This study begins to fill those gaps. For schools that are considering implementing interdisciplinary teaching and learning contexts, developing this knowledge may influence the steps they take and the strategies they use to facilitate a collaborative environment. The study also gives voice to teachers, as they share their perceptions not only of collaboration, but of how these interactions shape their sense of themselves as educators.

More broadly, this study will provide insight into how teachers adapt to change and ultimately have implications for professional development. Multiple scholars assert that teacher education for both pre-service and experienced teachers should include measures to increase teachers' knowledge of their own identity development (Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Mockler, 2011; Buchanan, 2015). This may be particularly important for teachers experiencing changes in their work, such as during the implementation of collaboration with colleagues, as they can be better prepared to anticipate shifts in their identities. This study contributes to our understanding of what those changes might be and how they will be navigated in the context of interdisciplinary collaboration.

Overview of Dissertation Chapters

The chapters that follow build on the background and theoretical perspectives presented above. In Chapter 2, I provide a review of relevant literature on teacher professional identity and teacher collaboration that were instrumental to this dissertation. For each, I include studies that

use discourse as a lens to explore the construct. As this dissertation brings together teacher professional identity, teacher collaboration, and discourse, I also describe the few studies that do so as well.

Chapter 3 discusses the qualitative research methodology and methods used for this study. It connects the theoretical framework to the methodological decisions. This is followed by a description of the research setting and participants, as well as the methods of data collection and analysis. I also discuss my own positionality in relation to the study and participants.

Chapters 4 through 6 address the findings from the study. I use these three chapters to describe the professional identity development of the participants, including their perceptions and the negotiation of these identities. In Chapter 4, I explore the professional identity development of three of the teachers. In profiles of each, I examine who they saw themselves to be as educators, as well as how these and other sub-identities were constructed through their language. These professional identities were often recognized and supported by the other participants, evident in the similarities between how they were positioned by others in their conversations. In Chapter 5, I examine the commonalities that influenced the teachers' individual negotiations of identity. These were a result of tensions that emerged as they navigated their interactions with each other, such as those over authority, differing visions, balancing content with the interdisciplinary project, and the value of their work. Despite these tensions, the findings from this study showed that the teachers actively contributed to the collective identity of the team, constructing individual identities as *team makers*. The teachers' use of language to develop this identity is explored in Chapter 6.

In the final chapter of this dissertation, I summarize and discuss the key findings of this study, particularly in their implications for both theory and practice. This chapter will also offer

recommendations for teachers, administrators, and researchers, followed by a discussion of limitations of the study. I will conclude the chapter with some final thoughts.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine teachers' perceptions and negotiation of their professional identities while participating on an interdisciplinary collaborative team. It is therefore necessary to review the ways in which both teachers' professional identity development and teacher collaboration have previously been studied. This literature review will begin with an overview of the literature on teacher professional identity. While the participants in my study are all experienced teachers, a great deal of the current literature focuses on identity development in pre-service and new teachers. I include these studies in my review here because I believe there is much we can learn from those experiences, which occur at a time of significant change, and found it useful to my own thinking about the changes my participants were experiencing. This review will also examine the studies that focus on the identity development of more experienced teachers, including a discussion of studies that focus on the role of discourse in teachers' professional identity development.

As this dissertation focused on identity development in the context of teachers' collaborative interactions, I will also review the literature on teacher collaboration. This is a broad field of study, so I begin with a summary of the approaches to teacher collaboration, discussing more fully the use of interdisciplinary teaming. This chapter will also explore the benefits and challenges of collaboration, especially those that might impact a teachers' sense of self. This review also includes studies that consider teachers' discourse in the context of collaboration. I will then describe the few studies that bring together teacher's professional identity development, discourse, and collaboration. These are studies that have been most instrumental in my thinking

on the topic. Finally, I will discuss the how my dissertation addresses gaps in the current literature.

Teacher Professional Identity

For decades, scholars have theorized over identity and identity development (Mead, 1934; Erickson, 1968), with a focus on teacher professional identity emerging over the course of the last thirty years (Nias, 1989; Kelchtermans, 2005; Shapiro, 2010). These studies range from examining the negotiation between the role that teachers' believe they play in the classroom and their personal self-image image (e.g. Volkmann & Anderson, 1998; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Flores & Day, 2006) to the role of emotions in their interactions (e.g. Hargreaves, 2001; van Veen et al., 2005; O'Connor, 2008) to attempts to identify the characteristics associated with professional identity, such as vulnerability (e.g. Kelchtermans, 1996, 2005) or commitment and effectiveness (e.g. Day & Kington, 2008). Despite the range in topics, the literature on teacher professional identity consistently reflects the five theoretical understandings outlined in Chapter 1 that contribute to identity development. For the purposes of organization and clarity in what follows, I will focus on three prominent categories of research studies in the field: identity development of new teachers, that of experienced teachers, and the construction of identity through language and emotion.

Identity Development of New Teachers

One of the most common areas of research in this field are studies that focus on the identity development of pre-service and new teachers. This is perhaps not surprising given that this may be the phase of a teacher's career in which their professional identity changes the most dramatically. Two studies, that by Lortie (1975) and Nias (1989), are frequently cited in more recent literature that examines identity development. In his classic sociological study on the

teaching profession, Lortie did not specifically examine teachers' identities, but described the 'apprenticeship of observation' as a crucial influence in how new teachers begin to make sense of themselves and determine the role that they play as a teacher. The experiences that new teachers have as students contribute to the construction of their personal selves, but also the development of their professional selves, as they work to reconcile the two. Nias investigated the interaction between new teachers' sense of their professional role and their conception of self. She found that it took a significant period of time for an individual to incorporate the identity of "teacher" into their self-image. For most of the teachers in her study, it took almost a decade for each to feel they could "be themselves" in school.

More recently, scholars have examined the tension between new teachers' understandings of teaching based on the historical, social, and cultural Discourses, and the reality of the job (e.g. Britzman, 2003; Alsup, 2006; Olsen, 2008). These studies highlight some of the challenges of professional identity development. Long before becoming educators, new teachers have observed and been instilled with societal perspectives of the profession that influence, and possibly challenge, their understandings and actions. Britzman (2003), in her analysis of the experiences of student teachers in the early 1990s, notes that "learning to teach – like teaching itself – is always a process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become" (p. 8). This requires constant negotiation of the self, as pre-service teachers develop a workable teaching identity by reconciling their internal beliefs with external Discourses. She asserts that cultural myths about teaching and stereotypical images of teachers lead them to believe they must 'take on' rather than construct a teaching identity. This can be a challenge for those new to the field, as "becoming a teacher may mean becoming someone you are not" (p. 4). Danielewicz (2001) also examined how this 'becoming' happens as

pre-service teachers enter the profession. In order to ‘become’ a teacher, it “requires an engagement with identity, the way individuals conceive of themselves so that teaching is a state of being, not merely a way of acting or behaving” (p. 3). Alsup (2006) investigated the tension between pre-service teachers’ personal and professional identities, particularly how the latter is shaped by Discourses of teachers and teaching. Drawing on the concept of “borderland discourse” from Gee (1999) and Anzaldua (1987), Alsup argued that the integration of personal and professional subjectivities “can lead to cognitive, emotional, and corporeal change, or identity growth” (p. 36). Without this integration, it is difficult for new teachers to develop a workable teaching identity.

The perspective that professional identity development for new teachers can at times be difficult is similarly explored in other research. Pillen et al. (2013) examined the tensions encountered by new teachers, as well as the feelings that accompanied these tensions and how they tried to cope with them. Among the 13 tensions they identified included that of feeling incompetent in terms of knowledge versus being expected to be an expert, as well as wanting to invest in a private life versus feeling pressured to spend time and energy on work. The greatest tension found in their study involved new teachers’ wanting to care for students versus being expected to be tough. It is in working through these struggles that their participants transitioned from student to teacher.

Another line of research examines the challenges new teachers face in reconciling their new professional identities in different contexts and Discourses. For example, using Lave & Wenger’s (1998) concept of *communities of practice*, a term used to describe how people gain entry into and develop and sense of belonging within a community, Flores (2007) found that contradictions between the learning of new teachers in two communities of practice - university

teacher preparation programs that focus on social justice and the urban schools that they taught in – resulted in multiple tensions that effected the participants’ identity development. This study found that those teachers with a strong sense of professional identity were able to overcome these tensions and maintain their commitment to social justice, but struggled with isolation from their school colleagues or periods when they had to compromise on their ideals. She argued for universities to work closely with school districts to reduce the contradictions between competing Discourses. In another study that focused on competing Discourses, Leuhmann (2007) used identity as a lens to understand why teacher preparation programs were failing to prepare science teachers who could implement the vision for science education in the new professional standards. Based on her examination, she called for greater opportunities for new teachers to develop their identities as reform-minded science teachers in ways that were scaffolded and allowed for emotional risk-taking. They would then have a more fully developed identity as reform-minded educators as they transitioned into their own classrooms. These studies both speak to the need for teachers to be more fully aware of the Discourses in which they are engaged.

Although my study does not include pre-service or new teachers, I found the research on their professional identity development very useful to my own thinking. Foremost, these studies reinforce that identity development is highly dependent on context and Discourses. Both those of the moment and those that a person has previously experienced contribute to the identities being constructed. I also find these studies an important reminder that periods of change are particularly salient for observing identity development. As will be described in later chapters, much like teachers new to the field, the participants in this study experienced a number of challenges as their context changed, having to navigate a number of tensions. This ultimately had an impact on their identity development.

Identity Development of Experienced Teachers

Once the “state of being” has been achieved (Danielewicz, 2001), a teacher’s identity work is not complete. A professional identity, after all, is not one that is fixed or permanent, but fluid as it is constantly in the process of being shaped and reshaped. Though far less numerous than the studies with new teachers as participants, there are some that highlight identity development in more experienced teachers. Some of these studies examine this development during certain career stages (e.g. Hubermann, 1993; Day, 2012) or as teachers move throughout their careers. For example, Beijaard et al. (2000) explored how teachers saw themselves as subject matter, didactical, or pedagogical experts, determining that teachers see their professional identity as a combination of these other identities. They found that teachers’ sense of themselves changed as they progressed through their careers, many of the teachers moving from viewing themselves as subject area experts to didactical and pedagogical experts. Interestingly, many of the teachers asserted that whichever identity they saw themselves as – subject area, didactical, or pedagogical expert – was the most important to their authority as a teacher. That is, without that type of identity, they would have limited authority in the classroom. This indicates that teachers believe that in order to perform their identity (teacher) effectively, they must also have certain sub-identities (pedagogical expert, etc.). Brooks (2016) explored one of these sub-identities, subject area expert, finding it to be a significant factor in teachers’ overall professional identity.

There are also studies that examine how various contexts or Discourses shape the professional identities of more experienced teachers. For example, Coldron and Smith (1999) examined how teachers construct their professional identities through how they situate themselves within four sets of practices or traditions within education: the craft tradition, moral tradition, artistic tradition, and scientific tradition. In positioning themselves in a particular

tradition, teachers contribute to the construction of their professional identity, as these traditions illuminate who they see themselves to be as teachers. Each of these inform how they think, act, and make meaning of themselves as educators. The craft tradition is a technical, skills-based view of teaching and teachers. Teachers who locate themselves in this tradition believe the refinement of skills through years of experience is central to their identity. Teachers who locate themselves in the moral tradition, on the other hand, regard identity development as dependent on the moral judgments made in the classroom or school, rather than skills development. The artistic tradition gives emphasis to the personal dimensions an individual teacher brings to their work, such as how they uniquely act with others, conceive of learning, or respond to school policies. The scientific tradition assumes that all educational problems can be solved through testing various practices, gathering evidence, and identifying the solution. Teachers who locate themselves in this tradition approach teaching with this mindset and view this as integral to who they are as teachers. Where a teacher places themselves among each of these traditions influences how they make sense of their job and themselves as an educator. Each of the traditions are similar to Discourses, in that they both constrain and make possible what is available to teachers. They provide "models for responding to issues and questions arising from practice. They make available certain kinds of resources and discourses that frame understanding of development" (p. 716). These scholars assert that these traditions, and their influence over how teachers perceive of themselves, should be taken into account when implementing reforms.

More recently, a popular line of research in the last two decades is that which explores teacher identity in the context of neo-liberal reform (Day et al., 2005; Mockler, 2011). Buchanan (2015), for example, examined how elementary teachers made sense of themselves and constructed their professional identities in the context of accountability reform. She asserts that

“formally addressing teachers’ identity development may make it possible to create a culture in the profession where critical self-reflection is not only about teaching practices, but also about how ideologies, policies, discourses, and frames are implicated in teachers’ self-understandings” (p. 715).

A review of the literature specific to experienced teachers’ professional identity development shows that it has been examined in varied ways, but overall it has not been explored nearly as much as it has been for new teachers. While the work that has already been done is very helpful, there are still many gaps in our knowledge. One line of research in the field that includes both new and experienced teachers is that of the role of emotion in teachers’ identity development. This will be discussed in the next section, as well as the construction of teachers’ identities through their language.

Identity Construction through Emotion and Language

While examination of external Discourses on teachers’ professional identity development is important, it is equally necessary to consider how teachers’ communication - their ‘small d’ discourse - within their interactions constructs their identities. Two important communicative features are emotions and language. Each of these contribute to the active nature of identity as people use them to present their identities to each other. At the same time, how emotions and language are interpreted by others influences the meanings made of each other’s’ identities. Thus, they are necessary aspects of identity development to explore if we are to understand how teachers’ make sense of their world and themselves.

As teachers navigate their professional lives, they will experience positive and negative feelings, influencing how they approach their work. This emotion is both an expression of their identity and also helps shape it (Zembylas, 2003; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Teachers

undertake the effort of *emotional labor* to display particular identities in certain situations, the reaction to which can confirm or challenge their beliefs about their identities (Hargreaves, 2001; Schutz & Lee, 2014). Zembylas (2003) argues that emotion plays a crucial role in the construction of a teacher's professional identity and is not simply inherent to the person or completely socially constructed, but both. Zembylas lays out four important assumptions about emotions: they are constituted through language and refer to wider social life, power relations allow for some emotions and limit others, emotions can be used for social and political resistance, and emotion is performative and embodied. The need to therefore study how emotions are performed and the larger "sociological, political, and institutional forces that shape and reshape the emotional landscapes of teaching" is evident (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 836).

Studies that explore the role of emotion with teacher identity have approached it in various ways. Given the importance of interaction in the development of identity, examining the emotions present in the relationships that teachers have with others is one prominent line of research. Hargreaves (2001) described the "emotional geographies" that consists of the "spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure and color the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other" (p. 1061). Hargreaves points to five categories that impact the emotional understandings between teachers and colleagues, students, and parents: sociocultural, moral, professional, political, and physical. These each involve closeness or distance in the interactions and relationships that teachers have with others, the latter potentially resulting in an identity that is fractured or must be performed in a particular way to "mask" the emotions the teacher is feeling. The work of Hargreaves indicates that understanding the emotional nature of teaching is essential to understanding how teachers make meaning of and perform their identities.

Researchers have, and continue to, take up the call to examine the role of emotion in teacher identity development. O'Connor (2008), for example, explored teachers' beliefs about caring and the management of emotions involved, noting that "the study of teachers' caring is the study of each individual teacher's commitment towards their work and how their interactions with others shape the identity that they take on as a professional" (p. 119).

More commonly in the literature, the use of verbal language to develop an identity has been examined through studies of teachers' narratives. "People tell others who they are, but even more importantly, they tell themselves and they try to act as though they are who they say they are. These self-understandings, especially those with strong emotional resonance for the teller, are what we refer to as identities" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 3). In their study of the relationship between knowledge, context, and identity, Connelly & Clandinin (1999) refer to professional identities as "stories to live by": "Through storytelling, teachers engage in narrative 'theorizing' and, based on that, teachers may further discover and shape their professional identity resulting in new or different stories" (p. 121). Sfard & Prusak (2005) similarly describe identities as "collections of stories" (p. 16) and narratives as "the discursive counterparts of ones' lived experience" (p. 17). The language teachers use and the stories they choose to tell, therefore, are essential to the development and performance of their identity. Scholars have drawn on a variety of data sources to analyze teachers' narratives, such as through interviews (Watson, 2006) or diaries (Arvaja, 2016).

Of the studies on teachers' professional identities, however, very few examine the discursive construction of these identities in conversation with others. One study that does so was Le Roux's (2011) investigation into how teachers "interpret and re-interpret their own understandings of who they are as teachers" and the discursive strategies they use to cope with

periods of educational change (p. 303). Through analysis of five South African teacher groups' discussions on who they are as teachers, Le Roux found that the teachers drew on discourses of vocational commitment and possibility to lessen the threat of educational change. That is, the teachers positioned themselves as driven by purpose, firmly grounding their professional identity as committed and refusing to be deprived of agency by those imposing change. Moreover, Le Roux argues that the teachers' willingness to discuss and engage with their professional identity development was itself a tool to cope with change. Le Roux's findings demonstrate why we need further studies that examine the discursive strategies used in teachers' conversations, as these can provide insight into how teachers negotiate their professional identity in changing contexts.

Teacher Professional Identity and Social Identities

Teachers, like any individual, also make sense of themselves through identities that mark their inclusion in socially-constructed categories. Social identity theory asserts that people's sense of self is based on their memberships in these categories (Tajfel, 1979). These memberships include racial, class, sexuality, and gender categories among others. Cultural discourses shape how people make sense of and negotiate these identities, something that teachers are not exempt from. Teachers' understanding of their identities, and how those identities are perceived by others, influences how they understand the world and how to act in that world. The lived experiences that result from possessing these various identities undoubtedly informs how teachers make sense of themselves in the classroom. These are components of identity that have been explored to some degree in the literature on teacher professional identity, yet are also ignored in much of the literature. Indeed, Olsen (2011) only a decade ago argued that research has "for too long viewed teachers in broad strokes" (p. 259), emphasizing that studies into teachers' professional identities should consider the influence of their multiple other identities. He asserted that

“teacher identity proponents can treat teachers as both three-dimensional individuals (with particular sets of lived experiences that become personal or professional influences and effects) and as social beings simultaneously constrained and empowered in relation to the groups, structures and roles in which they participate” (p. 259).

As with much of the literature on teacher professional identity development, a great deal of work that takes into account teachers’ social identities focuses on the experiences of preservice teachers. Much of this literature is focused on the impact of race on how preservice teachers make sense of themselves in their programs and in the classroom. Alsup (2006) argued that, while developing a teacher identity may be challenging for any preservice teacher, non-White teachers also have to take into account how others perceive of them because of their race. Those whose identities do not fit what is normalized in educational systems (i.e. middle class, White, female, and heterosexual) have to contend with and negotiate their marginalized identities in classrooms and schools. Scholars who investigate the experiences of preservice teachers of color within their teacher education programs highlight some of the difficulties, including feelings of isolation from their White peers due to insensitivity about racial issues or the normalization of Whiteness (e.g. Brown, 2014; Jackson, 2018). Others, including Agee (2004), have illuminated how teacher education programs maintain White hegemony, even while attempting to produce teachers who are more culturally responsive. Agee’s study of African American preservice teachers indicates that though teacher education programs may intentionally prepare teachers to be working with students of color, they may do so in ways that assume the teachers will be White, further marginalizing preservice teachers of color.

The notion that preservice teachers must be prepared to work in racially and ethnically diverse schools, including understanding how their own identity markers influence their

interactions with students, has been consistent for the last two decades (e.g. Sleeter, 2001; Utt & Tochluk, 2016). This is much needed and useful, yet should move beyond a focus on White preservice teachers to include the myriad of racial, gender, and other identities that influence teachers' sense of self, biases, and positioning. In one interesting study, Vetter & Schieble (2016) asked preservice teachers to do just that. The teachers were asked to watch videos of themselves teaching while reflecting on and discussing how race, class, gender, and sexual orientation shaped their positioning in conversations with students. The preservice teachers discussed the influence of these identities on their assumptions about how they should act in the classroom, as well as how they were being perceived. Some even recognized that they were not enacting the teaching identity that they had hoped to as a result. The researchers found that while the preservice teachers' conversations about their video analysis was not always easy or comfortable, it helped many of them gain a better understanding of how their own identity markers influenced their teaching identity. They warn, however, that such a conversation must be well-structured and that more studies are needed to explore how these classroom discussions can be facilitated to disrupt normative constructions of social difference.

One commonality in the research done in service of understanding how various social identities impact teaching identities are findings that highlight the additional efforts some teachers with marginalized identities must make, often determining where and how to incorporate their social identities with their teaching identity. For example, Russell (2020) examined the experiences of LGBTQ+ preservice teachers, finding that participants negotiated when to hide or disclose their identities in school contexts. Chow (2019), when investigating the experiences of Asian American preservice and novice teachers, similarly found that participants had to make choices about how their identities, in this case racial and ethnic, would interact with

their teaching identity. She found that the teacher's performances of identity both "reify and resist" stereotypes, as the teachers acted as cultural role-models while at times also downplaying their identities (p. 21). It is clear from this work that educators do not abandon or their social identities when they step into a classroom and 'become' a teacher. Instead, these influence both how they make sense of themselves as teachers and decisions they make about how to act in their interactions with others.

A teacher's gender identity will also have an impact on their sense of professional self. As of 2018, 77% of teachers in the United States were female (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020). Although much of the literature on teacher professional identity does not speak to differences between male and female teachers, cultural discourses of gender and teaching have implications for both male and female teachers' professional identity construction. In their literature review on gender and teaching, Sabbe and Aelterman (2007) point out that teaching is often associated with femininity, comparisons to motherhood, and expectations of altruism, self-sacrifice, and dedication. This can place burdens on female teachers, who may feel that they are required to take on more of the caring responsibilities. This can also challenge male teachers, who may see themselves as expected to fulfill the socially-constructed idea of masculinity - authoritative and unemotional - while also being "good teachers" who are nurturing. In their review of 32 studies on teachers' perceptions of emotional display rules in schools, Stark and Bettini (2021) found that studies show teachers generally believe that professional norms dictate that they should display more positive than negative emotions, but that female teachers were more likely than male teachers to feel that way. Ybema and van Dam (2014) found that female teachers had a heightened sense of professional responsibility to enact particular positive

emotions. In these studies, teachers' gender clearly had an impact on who the teachers thought they were supposed to be and how they were supposed to act in the classroom.

One challenge to understanding the intersection of social identities and professional identities is the sheer complexity and overlapping nature of these identities. After all, each teacher has many identity markers - race, class, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, etc. - that will play a role in their identity development. Despite the studies mentioned above and the growing number of studies into teacher professional identity development, I believe it is important to note that much of the literature does not, in fact, specifically address the intersection or overlap of these social identities and teacher identity. In fact, the vast majority of the studies discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, for example, do not mention the influence of race, class, gender, or any other identities on teachers' sense of themselves as educators. Although I cannot say for certain why this is, there are several possibilities as to why it may be. One reason may be the complex nature of identity development. Identity is a multifaceted and complicated construct, one that is challenging to study and fully understand, particularly given that identity development is constant and ongoing. Isolating teacher professional identity as the sole focus of studies, without consideration of the influence of other social identities, may make it more manageable to examine. Unfortunately, the lack of discussion of these other social identities in many studies may also be due to the dominance of white, cisgender, heterosexual, and middle to upper-class norms in the American educational system and American society at large. Assumptions that all teachers fit these identities and failure to take into account teachers of marginalized identities does a disservice to these educators and limits our ability to understand the influence of various social identities.

Teacher Collaboration

Educators, particularly secondary teachers, often work in isolation and with autonomy over classroom decisions (Westheimer, 1999; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Lortie (1975) memorably used the term ‘egg-crate schools’ to characterize the physical separation of teachers, their time interacting with one another limited. It is the norm in many schools for teachers to work alone in their own classrooms, plan their own lessons, focus on their own students and, particularly at the secondary level, concentrate on their own subject area. In the last three decades, however, the rhetoric of collaboration has become rampant in the literature on school change, with many studies claiming it as a necessary step for reform (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Hord, 1997; Achinstein, 2002; Gajda & Koliba, 2008). As schools turn toward more student-centered, cooperative learning opportunities in classrooms, teachers also need to develop collaborative skills in order to “practice what they preach” (Coke, 2005, p. 397). This literature suggests that adult learning and professional development cannot happen in isolation. “There is a ceiling effect to how much we can learn if we keep to ourselves...The ability to collaborate on both a small and large-scale is becoming one of the core requisites of postmodern society” (Fullan, 1993, p. 14). Growing alongside its implementation in schools is the scholarly research on teacher collaboration. In what follows, I will first briefly describe the general approaches to teacher collaboration, providing a more detailed understanding of the background of interdisciplinary teaming. As much of the literature focuses on the benefits and challenges of collaboration, I will dedicate the majority of this review to those studies. I will also discuss the few studies that examine the language used by teachers in collaborative interactions.

Approaches to Teacher Collaboration

As described in Chapter 1, there are a broad range of understandings as to the meaning of teacher collaboration. The variety of terminology in how collaboration is approached and implemented similarly impedes clarity in the literature. However, there are four general approaches to collaboration that have informed my thinking and give insight into the many types of teacher collaboration that are studied: *professional communities*, *professional learning communities*, *communities of practice*, and *teacher teams*. While I distinguish these as separate approaches in what follows, it is important to note that much of the literature fails to do so. In fact, at times these terms are used interchangeably to refer to the same group or collaborative effort. However, I believe it is necessary to describe these here in order to better understand the types of collaboration that researchers have studied.

At the broadest level, schools may encourage a culture of collaboration by referring to themselves as a *professional community*. In this sense community implies togetherness, agreement, respect, and responsibility to each other. Different researchers, however, offer different meanings and connect professional community to various constructs, such as collegiality or teacher networks (Lomos et al., 2011). In numerous studies of teacher collaboration, this view of professional community as encompassing the school as a whole is evident (e.g. Toole & Louis, 2002; Achinstein, 2002). A second approach to teacher collaboration is *professional learning communities (PLCs)*, a type of collaboration that focuses on the process and outcome of teacher learning as a means to improve teacher effectiveness and increase student learning (DuFour et al., 2006, Stoll et al., 2006). In the last twenty years, there has been an increased growth in this approach, particularly that which is based on the model developed by DuFour and Eaker (1998). PLCs generally consist of teachers working in small groups, meeting regularly to use student data to direct needed areas of professional development

and to drive instructional changes. This entails development of shared values and vision, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration, and the promotion of group and individual learning.

Although less commonly referenced in the literature, I believe it is important to describe *communities of practice* as another approach to understanding teacher collaboration. Although schools may or may not explicitly refer to themselves as such, researchers use this construct as a lens to study all of the approaches to teacher collaboration described above (e.g. Lima, 2001; Grossman et al., 2001, Hindin et al., 2007). This approach to implementing or studying teacher collaboration draws on the work of Lave and Wenger (1991), who first conceptualized communities of practice as groups of people who come together to share common interests and goals. In these communities, people become connected through their learning, as members of the community develop shared norms, values, and practices, with experienced members instilling these in new members. This conceptualization is certainly reflected in teacher collaboration, as teacher groups work to develop and reinforce a collective understanding of curriculum and pedagogy.

The most pervasive term used in the literature is that of the *team* or *teacher team* (Vangrieken et al., 2015). This term, too, carries with it various descriptions that dilute our understanding of this approach, with teams ranging from any collaboration between professional friends (Smith, 2009) to referring to an entire school faculty as a team, whether or not they collaborate (Vangrieken et al., 2013). Indeed, teams are often also PLCs. Despite these differences in type of team, the literature on teacher collaboration frequently uses this term to describe groups of teachers who interact regularly and develop a shared vision (Salas et al., 2010), have a common commitment and mutual accountability (Katzenbach & Smith, 2006), and

“identify themselves as a team” and “are jointly committed to a common purpose and task and are interdependent on their tasks and outcomes” (Vangrieken et al., 2015, p. 25). In one particularly interesting analysis of research on teacher teams, Vangrieken et al. (2013) applied the concept of entitativity as a tool to understand different types of teams. This refers to the degree to which a team is considered a tightly knit group. In other words, “the ‘teamness’ of the team” (p. 87). This concept is helpful to understanding collaborative groups as a whole, as it provides one way to differentiate the depth of collaboration in groups that may have the same label, such as team or professional learning community.

In this dissertation, I refer to the participants as a *team*. Although their collaboration certainly had elements of the other approaches, their collaboration most closely reflected the descriptions of a team given above. More importantly, the participants referred to themselves as such.

Interdisciplinary Teaming

The participants in this study were not simply members of a team, but of an interdisciplinary team. The use of collaboration by teachers from across content areas, particularly at the middle school level, is not new and has been around for decades (Valentine et al., 2004). Organizing teachers into interdisciplinary teams is a common feature of many schools, viewed as an effective practice that allows educators to better address the particular developmental needs of students of that age. This is based on the belief that in sharing students in common, having common planning time, and being able to work as a team to provide students with emotional and academic support enables teachers to better serve the needs of young adolescents (Weilbacher, 2006). Indeed, quantitative research shows correlation between staff collaboration at the middle school level and increased student performance (Flowers et al., 2000; Wilcox & Angelis, 2009).

While teams labeled as interdisciplinary are ubiquitous in middle schools across the nation, their integration of content is often multidisciplinary rather than interdisciplinary. That is, as Drake (2007) notes, while the teams may find deliberate connections under the umbrella of a common theme or issue, the teachers do not make many changes to their own instructional practices, content, or assessments. It is only when they begin to make these connections more explicit and alter their methods that they move into the interdisciplinary model of integrated curriculum. This is when interdisciplinary concepts and skills are emphasized across subject areas rather than solely within them. In this way, the content - and the teachers - become less isolated.

One of the most important factors necessary for effective interdisciplinary teaming is common planning time (Murata, 2002, Strahan & Hedt, 2009, Gayton, 2010). Studies also note the importance of the team members having a common purpose and shared vision (Murata, 2002; Sileo, 2011). Other studies indicate the benefits of implementing this model of teaming, such as its impact on teachers building meaningful relationships with students and helping them to feel a sense of belonging in the school (Wallace, 2007; Gayton, 2010). Interdisciplinary teaming also helps adults feel more connected to each other and create a sense of community (Flowers et al., 1999; Murata, 2002). However, studies on teaming that is truly interdisciplinary - rather than multidisciplinary - also point to the many challenges of this work. For example, Rye et al. (1999) noted that teachers may not be trained to collaborate or teach in this way or that they may face pressure from their principal or school district to include specific curriculum that does not align with the team's integrated curriculum. There is also the risk of one subject becoming subservient to another (Hammerness & Moffett, 2000). Although this possibility was not mentioned in any of the research that I read, I would also suggest that, as this type of work entails additional steps in

order to engage with others and identify connections between content areas in a deep and meaningful way, many teachers may simply find it is easier to just not do it.

Interdisciplinary teaming also creates a context in which STEAM-focused education is possible. There has been a call in the last two decades to prioritize STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education (Tytler et al. 2008; National Research Council (US), 2011). Some proponents have further called to incorporate the arts and humanities, the A in STEAM, into learning opportunities for students (Jolly, 2014). Although there is still the need for a clear conceptualization of STEAM-based teaching practices, the number of schools implementing this focus is increasing (Herro & Quigly, 2017). Given the relative newness of interdisciplinary teaming with a STEAM focus, there is much we still need to know about its impact on teachers themselves. Studies that investigate teachers' perceptions of STEAM show they view it positively and agree that it would shift classroom practices from being teacher-centered to student-centered (Son et al., 2012), but that there was a much greater need for professional development around how to implement this approach into their specific content areas (Geum & Bae, 2012). Teachers also worry about having opportunities for common planning time, being able to effectively scaffold STEAM units for students with multiple ability levels, and the pacing of STEAM curriculum with other content that they are expected to teach (Herro & Quigly, 2017).

Benefits of Teacher Collaboration

It is clear from the ubiquity of schools that tout collaborative practices, including interdisciplinary teaming, that there are numerous perceived and actual benefits of teacher collaboration. Indeed, much of the literature explores the advantages students, teachers, and schools gain from teacher collaboration. As has already been noted, developing collaborative

cultures is seen as a mechanism to improve schools and sustain change (Hargreaves, 1994; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Datnow, 2011). A number of studies point to the relationship between teacher collaboration and increased student achievement (Little, 2002; Achinstein, 2002; Johnson, 2003; DuFour & Fullan, 2013). Of equal importance is understanding how teachers themselves benefit from participating in collaborative endeavors. Recognizing these gains is useful in our considerations of the effectiveness and sustainability of these efforts. Moreover, for the purposes of this dissertation, they give insight into effects of teacher collaboration that might appeal to teachers and impact their sense of self. Among the potential benefits of teacher collaboration are opportunities for teacher leadership, sustained professional growth, and a better quality of work life.

Teacher Leadership

A number of studies indicate that teacher collaboration can serve to provide openings for distributed leadership. This perspective argues that leadership is most effective when it is distributed among those those have the best skillsets, experiences, or expertise to meet certain outcomes (Harris, 2014), including teachers. It views leadership not simply as the positions of authority that people hold, but that it develops from the interactions and relationships between people (Gronn, 2000; Crow et al., 2002). Models of distributed leadership may take many forms, but in schools it often includes teacher teams or professional learning communities that work to address any number of issues, such as improving instructional outcomes. This aligns with the research on professional learning communities that suggests that change is more likely to be sustained when those responsible for implementation share in the decision-making process (Louis et al., 1996; Scribner et al., 2007).

Professional Growth

One assumption prevalent in the research on teacher collaboration is the belief that teachers' performance will improve once they are working together (Leonard & Leonard, 2005). Indeed, professional learning and growth may be an important benefit of collaboration. Little (2002) notes that improved teaching and learning occurs when teachers work together to question ineffective teaching routines, explore new conceptions of teaching, and find ways to respond to difference and conflict. This type of professional growth is one of the outcomes of teams using the PLC model described earlier (DuFour et al., 2006). In working together to analyze student data, reflect on their own practices, and determine corrections to their pedagogy, teachers inevitably learn and develop as practitioners. Teachers who regularly work in collaborative teams, particularly those focused on instruction, are able to support each other in their learning (Levine, 2011). This may result in developing new teaching methods and improving their skills and practices (Goddard et al., 2007; Levine, 2011; Chong & Kong, 2012). Collaboration also offers opportunities for teachers to share resources and their knowledge of content, curriculum, or students. Discussions between teachers during collaborative meetings may reduce gaps in knowledge or limit redundancies across classrooms (Coke, 2005), as well as improve their practices through engagement in a collegial discourse (Glazier et al., 201).

Improved Work Life

Working closely with colleagues and breaking the norms of isolation can increase the quality of day-to-day life in schools (Furman-Brown, 1999). Collaboration facilitates moral support and can improve morale (Hargreaves, 1994; Johnson, 2003). Teachers may develop deeper relationships and a better understanding of each other that contributes to this sense of support. For example, Johnson (2003) found that teachers perceived the benefits of collaboration as increased collegiality, trust, openness, commitment, improved feelings, and less stress. As

teachers increase their learning during collaboration, their sense of self-efficacy may also increase (Tarter et al., 1995). This may come from the experience of successfully working through the challenges presented by collaboration, such as coming to a consensus, negotiating shared beliefs, or developing a common curriculum. It may also be prompted by the increased sense of support from peers. There may also be opportunities for intellectual renewal (Johnson, 2003). Teachers who work in collaborative groups may also gain a sense of contentment from knowing that they are “practicing what they preach” (Coke, 2005, p. 397). They can be assured that they are modeling for students the very qualities that they are trying to develop in them, such as the ability to work with and understand others, make sense of differences, or work toward a “the pursuit of community” necessary for a “thoughtful, engaged, and vigorous democratic society” (Grossman et al., 2001, p. 1001).

The Challenges of Teacher Collaboration

Despite the many benefits of teacher collaboration, the literature is rife with studies that explore the obstacles that hinder collaboration. Some of these challenges are structural. For example, one of the most frequently cited challenges is the lack of time for teams or groups to meet, plan, share ideas, or observe each other (Leonard, 2002; Leonard & Leonard, 2005; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2007). Finding time within the school day may be a challenge due to scheduling conflicts, yet slating collaborative time outside of the regular school day limits teachers’ desire or ability to participate (Leonard, 2003). Further, the shared work and increased responsibility for their team members may lead to ‘work intensification’ that requires additional time and energy (Johnson, 2003). For the purposes of this dissertation, I was particularly interested in the literature that describe the cultural and political obstacles that hinder collaboration, factors that a team might have to navigate together, or those that could influence

how the teachers made meaning of their work and themselves. Among the challenges frequently cited in the literature are concerns with collegiality, issues of power, and differences in teachers' beliefs, values, and norms.

Beliefs, Values, and Norms

One consideration for schools interested in encouraging teacher collaboration is whether the culture of the school facilitates or hinders collaboration. McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) suggest that some schools are not successful at implementing PLCs as it requires "reculturing the profession" (p. 125). Changing a school's culture can be incredibly difficult, as it demands confronting deeply rooted norms, behaviors, habits, beliefs, and assumptions (DuFour & Fullan, 2013). Even as school districts across the nation tout their move toward increased collaboration, many of these have not truly established professional learning communities or communities of practice (DuFour et al., 2009). That is, they may talk the talk, but do not walk the walk. Schools that effectively implement collaborative practices, on the other hand, address both structural and cultural challenges (Hargreaves, 1994).

The significance of this cultural challenge is vital for educators to consider, as the importance of holding shared beliefs and goals is frequently noted in the literature (Hord, 1997; Leonard & Leonard, 2005). At the most foundational level, challenging the norm of isolation may be difficult (Goddard et al., 2001; Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Glazier et al., 2017). Even in schools which claim to encourage collaboration, teachers may occasionally work with their colleagues on a particular endeavor, but quickly return to autonomous and solitary practices indicating individualism (Pounder, 1998; Westheimer, 1999). Teachers with different beliefs about pedagogy, curriculum, or a number of other topics may find it difficult to work together. Further, teachers may not be willing to engage in discussions about their beliefs, as these conversations

may cause discomfort or reveal areas of conflict (Johnson, 2003). While some collaborative efforts might occur, collaboration in these schools remains superficial with a low degree of entitativity.

Perhaps most vital among studies of teacher beliefs are those that reveal how teachers feel about collaboration itself, providing insight into the challenges of implementation. Lawrence and Pauline Leonard, both individually and together, conducted a number of studies that investigate teachers' beliefs regarding collaboration compared to their perceptions of the actual collaborative practices in their schools. Their studies in the 1990s found that teachers indicated a number of alleged barriers to effective collaboration, such as the perception that 'collaboration-by-design' has minimal effect on improving programs or stimulating innovation (Leonard & Leonard, 1999). Teachers also articulated that competitiveness among teachers, conflict avoidance, a fragmented vision, and time constraints were obstacles (Leonard, 1998). As in many of their later studies, Leonard (1998) found that schools might appear from the outside to be highly collaborative, yet in reality were not. The researcher believes this reflects Senge's (1990) contention that teachers may be compliant, but not committed. That is, in these schools the teachers do as they are told by administrators, but do not engage with collaborative practices to the extent that is necessary for real change. In two other interesting studies, they found that while teachers strongly expressed the importance of and their desire to engage in collaboration, they felt their ability to do so was constrained by circumstances within their schools, such as lack of administrative support or inadequate time (Leonard & Leonard, 2001; Leonard, 2002).

Collegiality

Another challenge for schools hoping to promote collaboration is the concept of collegiality. While collaboration and collegiality are closely related, they are not the same. Collegiality is

often assumed to be a natural component of collaboration. Kelchtermans (2006) distinguished between collaboration and collegiality, referring to the latter as “the quality of relationships among staff members in school” (p. 221). Collaboration, however, is the cooperative actions that reflect collegiality. Both collaboration and collegiality are mediated by the context of the particular school, including the structures, norms, values, and other elements of the school culture. Almost thirty years ago, Hargreaves (1994) provided important insight into why establishing a culture of collaboration may be difficult in many schools. He distinguished between collaborative cultures and contrived collegiality. In collaborative cultures, Hargreaves argues, working relationships between teachers are established voluntarily, with the belief among teachers involved that the work is valuable, productive, and enjoyable. In these cultures, collaboration is spontaneous, pervasive, and the outcome often unpredictable. In contrast, schools with contrived collegiality establish mandated collaboration that is regulated by administrators. The work is highly structured and the outcome predictable. Hargreaves argues that, while this may result in some short-term gains, this type of collaboration does not generally result in meaningful or sustainable change.

These two cultures, that of collaboration or contrived collegiality, were revisited by Datnow (2011) in a study of two school systems that promoted teacher collaboration in their efforts to use data-driven decision-making to improve student achievement. The study found that where school leaders had already developed a culture of trust and positive relationships amongst staff, what begins as contrived collegiality evolved into genuinely collaborative situations. This suggests that establishing a culture of trust and respect can play a crucial role in laying the foundation to make collaboration successful. The importance of developing trust is also evident in work by Bryk & Schneider (2002), who in a study of 400 schools in Chicago found relational trust

(willingness to engage in conversations and take on the challenge of working together to improve their school) to be the strongest predictor of school change. Tschannen-Moran (2009) similarly states that “collaboration involves the investment of time and energy, as well as the sharing of resources, responsibility and rewards, and this is difficult without trust” (p. 315). If educators do not trust each other, the development of collegiality, collaborative teams, or distributed leadership may not be possible. Kelchtermans (2006) notes, however, that although collegiality is often assumed to be a positive attribute that is necessary for collaboration to occur, it can, in fact, interfere with the process. Teachers, fearful of disrupting collegial relations, may be less willing to critique others’ or assert their ideas. This may be due to a lack of trust. Efforts to maintain collegiality may also result in conformity or group-think (Lima, 2001).

Although not directly naming the construct of collegiality, Achinstein’s (2002) study of teacher collaboration in two urban school districts warns of the danger of focusing only on building consensus and positive feelings among teachers. The teachers in one of the schools in the study generally avoided conflict with each other while taking on a deficit mindset that blamed their students and families for failures rather than each other or themselves. Though this created solidarity among the faculty, it did not solve the problem of poor student achievement. The teachers in the second school, on the other hand, represented a greater diversity of racial identities and viewpoints. They viewed themselves as responsible for student achievement, the norms of the school dictating self-reflection and collective critique of their practices. They confronted differences directly and publicly, sometimes creating discomfort, but ultimately developing practices that better served their students. Achinstein argues that community and conflict form an “unexpected marriage,” but one that allows for diverse perspectives and an essential component of effective collaboration (p. 440). Further, while the study did not

specifically speak to the role of teachers' various social and professional identities in the school's collaboration, the "openness to dissenters and alternative voices, including students' perspectives and minority teachers, made their community a more dynamic one, with inclusive and expanding borders" (p. 444).

Power

Issues of power are a further challenge that must be confronted for collaboration to be successful. Teachers in collaborative groups may feel vulnerable or fear exposure if they have limited knowledge or skills in a particular area. Teachers' knowledge of the specific pedagogical or subject-matter discourses, their years of experience, and even their prior relationships with each other all contribute to their comfort level, degree of participation, and willingness to expose their shortcomings (Hindin et al., 2007). Competitiveness among teachers may be another issue, as some teachers want to be the ones making the decision. Johnson (2003) found that shared decision-making may be a challenge as some teachers do not want to relinquish the power of autonomy. The work of collaboration also places emotional demands on educators as they interact and negotiate with each other (Grossman et al., 2001; Kelchterman, 2006), issues that should not be ignored as they impact the effectiveness of the collaboration. For those teams that successfully collaborate, issues of competitiveness do not necessarily go away. In some schools, teachers may be on multiple collaborative teams. There may be competitiveness between the groups or the teacher may get conflicted messages from the various groups in which they participate (Johnson, 2003). Hargreaves (1994) referred to this as "balkanization" where different groups take on different norms and compete amongst each other (p.18). This is problematic for developing a collaborative culture within the school as a whole.

Teacher Collaboration and Discourse

Within the broad range of studies of study on collaboration, a limited number examine the language used by teachers in collaborative interactions. In their systematic review of articles on teacher team discourse and interaction, Lefstein et al. (2020) found these studies show a “diversity of purposes, topics, theories, and methods” (p. 10). They argue that, while there is a plethora of studies that shed light on classroom discourse, including commonly recurring discursive structures and strategies, there is a sizable gap to be filled in terms of similar studies that examine teachers’ discourse during interactions with each other. Even within the 64 studies that do, in fact, examine this, the majority offered only thematic or narrative accounts of teachers’ talk. Only 27 conducted a close analysis of teachers’ conversation, paying attention to the nuances of language. The review also found that very few studies focused on the discursive moves or recurring structures in the teachers’ talk; most also fail to offer a full coding scheme or presenting any sort of quantitative findings that other researchers could build on. Thus, there is a great need for research into teachers’ talk during their interactions.

Despite the evident need for growth in this field, the studies that examine discourse and teacher collaboration are useful to consider what is revealed by the patterns of talk in teachers’ conversations, particularly those patterns that contribute to the effectiveness of collaboration. In other words, *how* teachers talk may be indicative of whether their collaboration will be successful. Schools may claim to have teachers working collaboratively, but the language of these teaching teams may be far from collaborative. For example, Havnes (2009) investigated the discourse of two teaching teams that each claimed collaboration, distinguishing between the patterns of talk found in each teams’ conversations. In one, the discourse used by teachers preserved individualism, was absent of shared reflections, and focused on the coordination of

work tasks. In the second, however, patterns of talk reflected cooperation, negotiation of the purpose of teaching, management of conflict, and development of a shared practice. Thus, despite claims of collaboration, it was only evident in the discourse of the latter. Scribner et al. (2007) similarly explored the patterns of discourse used by two teams, finding them to be shaped by the purpose and autonomy given to each team by administrators. The authors assert that teachers need to be made aware of these “conversational dynamics that lead to or subvert effective collaboration” (p. 67).

A number of studies on teacher collaboration are concerned with issues of collegiality (Kechtermans, 2006; Datnow, 2011) and trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tashannan-Moran, 2009). Again, there are limited studies that address this through analysis of teachers’ discourse. One important study, however, was conducted by Grossman et al. (2001) in their investigation of the tensions between English and social studies teachers participating in professional development to create interdisciplinary curriculum. The authors, facilitators of the group, acknowledged their own inadequacies, describing their failure to establish ground rules of civil discussion or recognize subject-matter differences. Although described to a lesser degree in their findings, the researchers acknowledged that participants’ racial and other social identity differences shaped how each made sense of their work and influenced the member’s ability to discuss charged topics. For example, some teachers worried about saying anything that might be deemed offensive or politically incorrect. As evident in the teachers’ conversations, this failure to recognize and acknowledge differences - subject matter, racial, or otherwise - resulted in hurt feelings and disinterest by some teachers. Awkward silences and limited engagement by some teachers indicated attempts to maintain collegiality rather than challenge others’ ideas.

Grossman et al. (2001) argue that as teachers work together toward a common goal, steps to build community will constantly be in tension with the individual diversity of group members, whether that be differences of background, subject matter, or social identities:

By its very nature, community presses for consensus and suppresses dissent. Without constant vigilance, diversities of many kinds may not survive the formation of community. Left on their own, participants retreat from the public space and begin to congregate into smaller groups based on perceived or actual similarity (p. 992).

The authors suggest that collaborative efforts that do not engage with problems of collegiality, are not sustained over time, or that offer genuine follow-up on dilemmas may result in the development what they termed a “pseudocommunity” (p. 955). In these, teachers may behave as if they agree and give the illusion of consensus but continue to maintain separate beliefs and practices when they return to the own classrooms. This study also indicates that paying careful attention to the language and patterns of talk used by teachers is necessary to truly understand collaborative interactions.

Teacher Professional Identity, Teacher Collaboration, & Discourse

There are several gaps in the literature that this study is hoping to fill. Teacher professional identity is a growing field of study, but the majority of studies currently focus on that development for new teachers, leaving much we still need to learn about identity development in experienced teachers. Furthermore, while there is a great deal of literature on teacher collaboration, limited studies consider teachers’ language use within collaborative interactions. Even fewer consider the role of teachers’ professional identities, or the discursive construction of their identities, during collaboration with colleagues. There are, however, three studies that bring together the concepts of teacher professional identity, collaboration, and discourse that are useful to my own study.

Arguing that the role of teacher identity in promoting and sustaining collaboration has been undertheorized and underexamined, Trent (2010) explored how the construction of teachers' identities through discourse shapes collaboration. Drawing on Fairclough's (2003) model of identity development, Trent examined the ways content and ESL teachers used their language to explain and justify their roles, beliefs, and knowledge. The study found that each set of teachers discursively constructed their worlds and identities differently. This ultimately led to challenges and conflicts in their collaboration. This study is useful in considering the ways different secondary teachers discursively construct their identities – and the implications of that construction – in the classroom and in collaboration.

The discursive strategies used to construct a professional identity were also explored by Cohen (2008), who focused on how secondary teachers communicate both explicitly and implicitly to accomplish their identities. Although the data was drawn from focus group conversations, the researcher noted that these discussions were an extension of the types of conversations held during participants' planning meetings. Drawing on theories of role identity and discourse analysis, Cohen examined the use of discursive strategies that implicitly construct the teachers' identities, such as reported speech, oppositional portraits, and pronoun shifts. The findings demonstrate that teachers “strategically position themselves in relation to others and institutional practices” and “actively negotiate competing discourses about teacher identity” (p. 79). They used subtle strategies to accomplish an identity of teacher as collaborator in distinct and varied ways across participants. Cohen's work is useful for considering the ways that professional identity is discursively constructed and negotiated in teachers' interactions.

As secondary teachers work collaboratively, it is perhaps inevitable that controversial topics may arise, such as those pertaining to race or social class. Boyd and Glazier (2017), interested in

how teachers in collaborative settings discursively engage with these issues, examined how teachers participating in interdisciplinary professional development constructed their sense of self and their notions of others through their talk. Analyzing the teachers' conversations using the lens of Harré and van Langenhove's (1999) positioning theory, the authors describe the participants as engaging in a "well-choreographed dance" that results in "comfortable collaboration rather than critical colleagueship" (p. 135). They found consistent patterns in the way that teachers positioned themselves and others in these conversations, ultimately avoiding challenging each other or critically engaging with the topic. This study certainly has implications for teacher education and the need for efforts that move teachers toward "critical colleagueship." The use of positioning theory is also pertinent for considerations within my own study, as the study illustrates how teachers position themselves in particular ways to construct their identity, even as their identity is constructed by others.

Although the studies described above are useful to consider how teachers discursively construct their identities during collaboration, no studies exist that investigate teachers' professional identity development in the ways that I have examined in this study. I have been unable to find any studies that explored the professional identity development of teachers working in the context of sustained, interdisciplinary collaboration. I have also been unable to find any studies that examine how professional identities are discursively constructed as teachers collaboratively plan. This indicates a gap in the literature that is left to be filled. This dissertation attempts to do so.

Conclusion

This literature review on teachers' professional identity development and teacher collaboration has demonstrated that while we have learned a great deal in both areas in the last

several decades, there are still many open questions left to be answered. The literature on professional identity indicates that we must expand studies to focus not only on the development of new teachers' identities, but the ongoing construction and reconstruction of experienced teachers' identities. There is also a call to move beyond studies that use interviews or written work to investigate teachers' moment-by-moment interactions with colleagues (Scribner et al., 2007), particularly taking into account identity development. The literature on teacher collaboration provides important insights into the benefits of collaboration, such as opportunities for leadership or professional growth, as well as its challenges, such as issues of collegiality or power. I found these factors to be useful to my own thinking about how teachers might make sense of themselves and their work in a collaborative context, keeping them in my mind while speaking to and observing my participants.

This dissertation sits at the nexus of research into teachers' professional identity, collaboration, and discourse. There are very few studies that bring together all three of these concepts, indicating an important gap to be filled. In exploring teachers' perceptions and the negotiation of their professional identities in a collaborative context, a methodology that reflects the theoretical perspectives and goals of the study was required. This methodology will be described in the following chapter.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Methods

In this study, I sought to understand how teachers perceived, constructed, and negotiated their professional identities as they participated on an interdisciplinary collaborative team. Investigating questions about people's experiences, perspectives, or meaning making requires a qualitative, rather than quantitative, approach. Qualitative research is "...an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting" (Cresswell, 1994, p. 1-2). This dissertation endeavors to fulfill all aspects of that definition.

This chapter explains the methodology and methods used to investigate the research questions. In what follows, I will first connect the theoretical framework to my methodological decisions, explaining how the former informed the latter. I will then describe the participants and research setting. This information provides basic information on the backgrounds of the teachers in this study and the environment in which they worked, offering an introductory glimpse into their identities. This, of course, will be explored extensively in later chapters. I then describe the methods of data collection and analysis used. Finally, I will acknowledge my own positionality in relation to the study and participants, as well as discuss measures to ensure the trustworthiness of the data and findings.

Connecting Theory to Method

As outlined in Chapter 1, this dissertation was informed by theories of symbolic interactionism and discourse, as well as five theoretical understandings of identity. It is from this theoretical foundation that methodological decisions were made. These various theoretical perspectives intersect at times, with overlap and connections between them. Consequently, they

prompt similar methods to properly investigate this study's research questions. Here, I articulate the methodological choices made based on these perspectives.

As a key aspect of this study was exploring the meanings that collaborative interactions had for teachers, the methods used in this study were informed by symbolic interactionism. Despite that symbolic interactionist methods are "as diverse as the society they attempt to study" (Reynolds & Herman-Kinney, 2003, p. 242), these methods are useful to examine how participants negotiate meaning. Symbolic interactionism dictates that inquiry be grounded in the empirical world being studied, in "the minute-by-minute, day-to-day social life of individuals as they interact together, as they develop understandings and meanings, as they engage in 'joint action' and respond to each other as they adapt to situations, and as they encounter and move to resolve problems that arise through their circumstances" (Wood, 1992, p. 348). Central to symbolic interactionism is a reliance on data collection and analysis methods that use the researcher as the primary instrument (Wolcott, 1994; Patton, 2002). For these reasons, I collected data through interviews and participant observation.

It is perhaps not surprising that one of the best methods to learn what particular symbols mean to someone is to interview them. Qualitative interviewing is a method that helps a researcher learn how people understand their lived experiences and the meanings they make of those experiences (Van Manen, 1990; Seidman, 2006; Brinkmann, 2018). Interviews are also a method to explore the shared meanings of people who live and work together (Lichtman, 2010). Spradley (1979) articulates the importance of interviews:

"By word and by action, in subtle ways and in direct statements, [researchers] say, 'I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experiences, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you would explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand?'" (as cited in Hatch, 2002, p. 91)

Interviews allow a researcher to gather descriptive data in a participants' own words that show how they interpret their world (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). This includes gathering their perceptions, reflections, thoughts, feelings, and intentions. Thus, interviews are helpful to understanding how teachers experience working on collaborative teams. Interviews provide "the story" from the point of view of the participant (Lichtman, 2010). This perspective may not be evident from observation, making the interview an essential component of data collection. Unlike other methods, interviews offer a way to find out "what is on someone else's mind" (Patton, 1990, p. 278), giving a fuller picture to understand someone's behaviors and to put them into context (Seidman, 2006). In fact, these perspectives may be taken for granted by the teachers themselves (Hatch, 2002).

In this study, interviews were the primary instrument of data collection to understand how the teachers made meaning of themselves and their work. Interviews investigated teachers' perceptions of their identities and interactions. Interviews also provided information that reinforced the theoretical understandings of identity. This data opened a window into the context and Discourses that the teachers' identities were dependent on, as well as gave insight into the multiple identities they believed they had in their personal lives, the planning sessions, and the professional context at large.

Interviews alone, however, are not always sufficient to understand the meanings that participants make in a situation (Seidman, 2006). Symbolic interactionists not only want to understand the perspectives of their participants, but also the processes by which they develop those perspectives (Jacob, 1987). In order to understand the meaning of actions, words, and other symbols, as well as the processes the teachers used to construct those meanings in collaborative interactions, participant observation was also necessary. Participant observation is a means by

which a researcher becomes at least partially socialized into the group under study, learning the nature, purpose, and meaning of the social action that takes place there (Schwandt, 2001). By capturing the “thick descriptions” of the interactions, a researcher is better able to interpret the many possible meanings of particular symbols (Geertz, 1973). It also helps her to better understand the relationships among the participants (Lichtman, 2010).

Participant observation as a method of data collection held two main purposes in this dissertation. First, it was useful to “situate the research” (Wood, 1992, p. 362). That is, it helped provide the context and circumstances in which the interactions under study occurred. As the circumstances of a situation can affect perspectives and actions of the interactions, and vice versa, it was important to pay attention to the influence these may have had on each other. It was also important to observe over time, as the same symbols may mean different things on different occasions (Blumer, 1969). Wood (1992) asserts that any research methods selected, including participant observation, must “grasp a sense of social flux,” as some meanings are “fairly stable, others variable, and others emergent and developmental” (p. 362). In my study, therefore, participant observation was not a one-time or limited endeavor. Further, it was a necessary complement to interviews, as it allowed me to observe actions and language that did not come up in interviews (Patton, 2002).

The second purpose of participant observation was to capture the teachers’ language in their conversations. Given the theoretical assumptions about discourse and its relation to social interactions and identity, discourse analysis informed this methodological decision. For the purpose of this study, my definition of discourse aligns with Gee’s (1990) description of ‘small d’ discourse: language-in-use. This study relied on close examination of the participants’ words as they interacted with each other. It also took into consideration the ‘big D’ Discourses to better

understand how the teachers combined and integrated “language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity” (Gee, 2014, p. 222). Discourse analysis aims to “make visible the ways in which discourse is central to action” (Potter, 2004, p. 609). Wooffitt (2005) argues that

“...if we do not properly understand the way that language is used in the performance of social activities, in talk and in texts, then we have, at best, an incomplete account of a key dimension of human behavior as it affects precisely those areas of inquiry which have traditionally been conceived as the core topics of social science disciplines” (p. 75).

This indicates that carefully examining the language used by teachers was not only wise, but essential. It was therefore necessary to not only take field notes during observations, but to collect data that allowed for a closer examination of that language. For this “microanalysis of interaction,” audio recording was necessary to capture the speech of the participants (Erickson, 1992, p. 206). This allows for examination of patterns, variability, nuances, and timing in speech. This also allows for repeated returns to the interaction for analysis.

Using participant observation as a research method, with data collected in both field notes and recordings of teachers’ conversations, is an important tool to learn the teachers’ individual and shared behaviors, beliefs, and values. It allows the researcher to see meaning making in action and increased the likelihood of understanding the world from the teachers’ point of view. Analysis of the teachers’ language from these observations gives insight into how they construct and negotiate their identities, both through their own agency and in the positioning by others.

Participants and Setting

Participant Selection

To investigate my research questions, it was necessary to interview and observe no fewer than three secondary level teachers who participated on an interdisciplinary collaborative team. As this study was interested in how teachers negotiate their professional identity during the process of interdisciplinary collaboration, I believed it was vital for the team to be in the early stages of the process, as this is a time that important identity development may be occurring. I also chose to conduct my study in a middle or high school, as the division of subject areas and departments in secondary schools lends itself to siloed teaching (Brady, 2008). Thus, interdisciplinary collaboration with their colleagues was a new experience for the participants. Secondary-level teachers also have a subject-matter expertise that may influence how they make meaning of themselves and others. As this was conducted in a public school, these teachers would be mandated to teach particular standards and curriculum, as well as have state assessments that they are required to prepare students for. This too, influences how they make meaning during their collaborative interactions. In selection of my site, I looked for a team that represented no less than three distinct subject areas.

In order to recruit participants, I contacted a number of colleagues and acquaintances that had been involved in efforts in the region to promote interdisciplinary learning that addresses 21st century skills, particularly though STEM or STEAM programs. These contacts pointed me to a number of school districts that had already implemented some interdisciplinary collaborative teams in their schools or were interested in doing so. I met with staff from several different school districts to gauge their teams' compatibility for the study and whether the district would allow access. After an engaging conversation with the STEM coordinator for Springfield School District, I learned that the district had one team who was in the early stages of interdisciplinary collaboration. (Note: All names in this dissertation, including those of the school district,

building, team, and teachers are pseudonyms.) I then contacted the building principal to gain permission to meet with the team. I met with four of the teachers on the team to learn more about their initial plans for interdisciplinary collaboration in upcoming school year and to discuss their potential participation in the research study. These four teachers represented the core content areas. (At that time of that meeting, two of the teachers who ultimately participated in the study were not yet working with the team.) After the teachers expressed their initial willingness to participate, I obtained permission and a letter of cooperation from the school district, per IRB requirements. I also had a phone conversation with the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction to learn about the district's interest in promoting interdisciplinary collaboration. I then met again with the four members of interdisciplinary team to discuss the study in greater detail and receive their consent for participation. I met with the other two teachers at a later date once they joined the team to do the same. (See Appendix A for Informed Consent Form).

Research Setting

Data for this dissertation was collected at Parker Middle School, part of the Springfield School District, a public school located in a Northeastern state. Parker Middle School is the only middle school in the district, serving approximately 600 students in grades 7 and 8. The demographics of the school reflect those of the small city it serves, 72% of the students identifying as white, 10% as Hispanic or Latino, 8% as Black or African American, 8% multiracial, and 2% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. 82% of the students are considered "economically disadvantaged" on the state report card. 21% of the students have been identified as having disabilities. Only 1% of students are English Language Learners. The school employs roughly 50 teachers. Students at each grade level are organized into two teams. The participants on this team led Team Curiosity.

In the several years prior to the study, the district had increased its professional development offerings for teachers to learn more strategies to incorporate PBL and STEM into practices and curriculum. It had also sent teachers, including some of the participants, to observe schools where teams of teachers collaborated to integrate their curriculum and plan projects to develop students' critical thinking and collaboration skills. As administrators and some of the teachers on this team began to discuss and make plans for an interdisciplinary collaborative team that could engage in ongoing, extensive PBL with their students, the district supported the team with help from other staff, such as the STEM coordinator and technology specialists. The building's schedule was adjusted to ensure the team had students at the same time and a common planning period. They were also given several half days in which substitute teachers covered their classes so they could meet for a larger segment of time to plan.

For the majority of observations of participants' planning session, data was collected in one of the teacher's classrooms, the location where the team met regularly. The two earliest sessions, which occurred in the summer prior to the school year, occurred in alternate locations. The first started in the schools' library, then was relocated to a nearby coffee shop when the team was informed the building was closing for the day. The second was located at one of the teacher's homes. The remainder occurred in the same classroom. I also observed and took field notes during some of the activities the team had their students participate in (see Appendix C for a description of activities). These activities were not audio-recorded, but rather were used to help my understanding of the contextual factors that the teachers were engaging with. The observations of this work occurred within the school building, with the exception of their final culminating activity, which took place off-site. Individual interviews occurred in each teacher's

own classroom, with the exception of one which was held at a local restaurant and two which were held over the phone. These were done so for the convenience of the participants.

Description of Participants

The teachers in this study included six teachers who constituted an interdisciplinary collaborative team in a public middle school in the Springfield School District. Although the makeup of interdisciplinary teams vary, these teachers represented the core content areas of math, social studies, ELA, science, and the elective content areas of vocal music and Spanish. [In this dissertation, I make several references to the “core” teachers. It is the teachers of the four primary content areas that I am referring.] All of the teachers taught 7th grade. The participants in this study had a range of personal and professional experiences, but all were new to participation on an interdisciplinary collaborative team. Each had taught at the secondary level in a public school for at least thirteen years and were certified in their subject areas.

The team primarily consisted of the teachers who taught the four core subject areas: Allyson, Mark, Claudia, and Nathan. These teachers met almost every day to plan curriculum, discuss instructional strategies, and determine how to implement their ideas. They also discussed any school, team, or student issues. They shared all of the same students and did not have any others. Two of the participants, however, were part of the interdisciplinary team but to a lesser degree. Although Nora and Maya shared many of the same students as the core teachers, they also taught classes with students who were not shared by them. This was primarily due to conflicts with the master schedule of the school and the nature of the courses they taught. Both teachers were present and participated in some of the planning sessions, but not all.

Below, I will provide a brief description of the participants. As this was a study that closely examined professional identity development, however, further description of some of the participants will be provided in the chapters that follow.

Claudia: At the time of the study, Claudia was a 20-year veteran who had taught science at the middle school level for her entire career. She is originally from the same community as the Springfield School District and had spent her entire teaching career working at Parker Middle School. She was also the team leader of the school's science department. Claudia identified as white and female. She was in her early 40s.

Allyson: Similar to Claudia, Allyson had spent her entire career thus far teaching at Parker Middle School. In her mid-30s, she was a 16-year veteran English teacher, one of those years spent as a literacy coach in the building before returning to the classroom. She was also the team leader of the school's English department. Although she was not originally from the area, Allyson went to high school in the same region of the state where Springfield School District was located. She identified as white and female.

Mark: Mark was the most veteran teacher in the study, having taught social studies for 26 years. Besides his first few years of teaching, almost all of this his teaching experience occurred in the Parker Middle School. He grew up and received his schooling in the Midwest region of the United States. Although his bachelor's degree was in social sciences with an elementary education minor, he completed a master's degree that focused on middle school curriculum. Mark was the team leader of the school's social studies department. He identified as a white male and was in his early 50s.

Nathan: Nathan was in his thirteenth year of teaching math at the time of the study. However, he was new to the Springfield school district, having taught in two other school districts before

starting at Parker Middle School the prior year. He had taught middle school math and AIS math courses during his career. This was also Nathan's second career, having lived and worked in various parts of the country as a chef prior to returning to school to pursue an education degree. Nathan was in his early 40s and identified as white and male.

Maya: Having spent her entire career in the Springfield School District, Maya had taught Spanish for 13 years. Although not originally planning on being a teacher, an opportunity to use her bachelor's degree in Spanish to teach in the district's high school led to her desire to pursue the profession. During the first few years of her teaching, she taught a combination of middle school and high school classes. More recently, she had worked solely in Parker Middle School. Maya was in her 30s and identified as white and female.

Nora: Nora was in her fifteenth year of teaching vocal music. After having received her bachelor's degree in music and education from a college in the region, she taught K-12 general and choral vocal music in a nearby school district for a decade. Having completed her student teaching in Springfield School District, she was excited when a position opened up. She had taught in the district for the last five years, the last two of which were at Parker Middle School. Nora was in her 30s and identified as white and female.

Data Collection and Analysis

As previously discussed, this dissertation used methods of data collection that aligned with the theoretical foundation of the study. These methods allowed me to investigate the research questions, as they provided data pertaining to teachers' perceptions, the discursive strategies used to construct their professional identities, and the negotiation of these identities in collaboration. Data were collected from multiple sources, including interviews and observations of the

interdisciplinary collaborative planning sessions. These will be described in what follows. Prior to this, I provide a note on the timing of this study.

Data collection took place over the course of nine months, from June 2019 to March 2020. This time period included the team's initial planning that began in the summer before the academic year began and continued through March of 2020. In this time, the team completed one interdisciplinary project and had begun to plan for their next project. I had originally intended to only observe and interview the team through the course of one interdisciplinary project. Following the culminating activity of this project, I observed the team for one more planning session. Mistakenly assuming I was done with data collection through participant observation, I stopped attending their planning sessions. This was close to the district's Thanksgiving and winter breaks. I kept in contact with the team, however, and they told me that most of their planning sessions focused not on interdisciplinary work, but on student issues or building requirements and activities that were always completed at that point in the year. As this is a busy time of year for many people, including teachers, I did not ask them to complete their final interviews yet. I also wanted them to have some time to process their experiences.

In late January of 2020, I contacted the team to see if I could schedule their final interviews. Allyson informed me that they were just beginning to discuss their next interdisciplinary project and she believed I might find it useful to my study. I attended several more planning sessions, finding that their ongoing conversations as they planned the next project frequently referenced their earlier project. I believed these conversations were significant to understanding how the teachers were making meaning of themselves and their work and included them in my data for this study. In early March of 2020, I began to schedule the final interviews for each of the participants. In retrospect, this timing was fortunate, as the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered the

school just as I was close to finishing these. In fact, the final interview for participant Allyson was held over the phone.

The table below outlines the schedule, duration, location and types of data collected during the course of this study.

Table 3.1 Schedule of Data Collection

Collection Method	Date	Time (hr:min)	Location	Other Notes
Interview	6/3/19	1:25	Allyson's classroom	1 st interview with Allyson
Interview	6/10/19	0:29	Mark's classroom	1 st interview with Mark
Observation	7/10/19	0:58/1:48	PMS library/coffee shop	Collaborative Planning Session #1 (Location moved because school closed)
Observation	7/11/19	3:00	Claudia's home	Collaborative Planning Session #2
Interview	7/16/19	42:37	Nathan's classroom	1 st interview with Nathan
Interview	8/20/19	1:31:53	Local restaurant	1 st interview with Claudia
Observation	9/6/19	39:11	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #3
Observation	9/9/19	See FN	PMS auditorium	First Town Hall meeting with students
Observation	9/9/19	41:13	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #4
Observation	9/13/19	56:38	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #5
Observation	9/16/19	31:44	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #6
Observation	9/18/19	See FN	PMS library/ auditorium	Mayoral candidates met with the students. Students then in auditorium for short Town Hall
Observation	9/18/19	43:56	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #7
Observation	9/24/19	1:04	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #8
Observation	9/26/19	54:20	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #9
Observation	10/2/19	44:40	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #10
Interview	10/2/19	33:50	Maya's classroom	1 st interview with Maya
Observation	10/7/19	1:11:38	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #11
Observation	10/10/19	1:06:51	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #12
Observation	10/15/19	44:04	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #13
Interview	10/15/19	46:41	Allyson's classroom	2 nd interview with Allyson
Interview	10/15/19	28:46	Phone	1 st interview with Nora
Observation	10/17/19	36:25	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #14
Interview	10/17/19	58:53	Claudia's classroom	2 nd interview with Claudia
Observation	10/21/19	51:14	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #15
Interview	10/21/19	25:12	Nathan's classroom	2 nd interview with Nathan
Interview	10/21/19	29:36	Mark's classroom	2 nd interview with Mark
Observation	10/24/19	1:17:52	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #16
Observation	10/29/19	40:02	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #17
Observation	11/5/19	48:22	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #18
Observation	11/8/19	50:52	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #19
Observation	11/13/19	See FN	Off-site location	Culminating activity for project
Observation	11/19/19	47:21	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #20
Observation	2/5/20	1:04:49	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #21
Observation	2/10/20	46:29	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #22
Observation	3/4/20	3:14:46	PMS empty classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #23
Observation	3/9/20	32:49	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #24
Interview	3/9/20	31:05	Claudia's classroom	3 rd interview with Claudia

Interview	3/9/20	24:15	Nathan's classroom	3 rd interview with Nathan
Observation	3/11/20	32:33	Claudia's classroom	Collaborative Planning Session #25
Interview	3/11/20	34:08	Maya's classroom	2 nd interview with Maya
Interview	3/11/20	32:11	Mark's classroom	3 rd interview with Mark
Interview	3/25/20	45:41	Phone	3 rd interview with Allyson

Interviews

One component of the research questions required an ongoing understanding of teachers' perceptions of their professional identities. As interviews "can reveal details that help unlock the ways your informants see themselves fitting into the world around them, as well as how they communicate in that world" (Finesbury, 2020), I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with each of the teachers on the team. These interviews also allowed me to better understand the teachers' personal and professional backgrounds, pedagogical beliefs, thoughts on the interdisciplinary teaming, and perceptions of the team's collaborative work.

Scholars note that participants may be reluctant to discuss certain topics, particularly if there is poor rapport with the researcher (Seidman, 2006; Lichtman, 2010). For this reason, I did my best to create a good relationship with each participant and make them feel at ease in the interviews. Participants were free to choose the location, date, and time of their interviews. We engaged in small talk unrelated to the study prior to (and often after) the interview session. I always reminded the participants at the beginning of each interview that they didn't have to answer any question that they didn't want to, and that they could always tell me during the interview or at a later time if they wanted to redact any of what they said. Neither of these occurred for any interview.

Examining their changing perceptions over time was important to this study, therefore teachers were interviewed more than once. The core teachers on the team were each interviewed three times:

- at the commencement of the research study; prior to or very early in the planning of an interdisciplinary project
- in the second month of school, at approximately the midway point of the first interdisciplinary project
- after the conclusion of the interdisciplinary project

I selected these points for the interviews as they provided participants' perspectives at different points in the collaborative process, potentially providing data that illustrated the shifts in their perceptions and identity development. (See Appendix B for the interview protocol.)

It is important to note that two of the teachers who participated with the team, Maya and Nora, did not meet with the team during their summer planning sessions or in those I observed in September 2019. These teachers' schedules did not completely align with the other teachers on the team, as they taught courses (Spanish and vocal music) outside of the four core content areas that met only every other day. They also had students who were not part of Team Curiosity. I received their consent to participate in the study in September but was unable to conduct their first interview until October. They therefore only had two interviews each.

Each interview was audio-recorded. As soon as possible following each interview, I transcribed the audio-recording. I also wrote memos of my initial thoughts on the interview, any questions it was raising for me, commonalities or differences I was detecting, and anything else that I noticed or stood out. These memos were returned to and reflected on for data analysis purposes. I also used the second and third interviews to seek clarification and, more importantly, share some of my interpretations thus far with the participants for their consideration and feedback. I found this to be particularly significant as I was developing profiles of each participant and the identities I believed they were constructing through their language.

Participant Observation

In order to investigate the discursive strategies the teachers used to construct their professional identities and how they were negotiating these identities while participating on an interdisciplinary team, capturing the teachers' language in their interactions was necessary. One way to capture the teachers' language would have been to simply ask the teachers to submit audio recordings of their meetings to me, but I chose to observe these sessions for several reasons. The observations allowed me to take field notes to capture both what was happening in these sessions and my thoughts. These "descriptive" and "reflective" field notes captured the setting and teacher's actions and other body language during the sessions, but also my ideas, concerns, and initial take on what I was observing (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 120). When teachers talked about themselves and their team in interviews, having observed the planning sessions provided a context to better understand how they were making meaning in these interactions. The observations also allowed me to better understand the context of the teachers' work: in how the project fit into their curriculum, in the expectations, circumstances, and requirements of their school and district, and in their dynamics with those outside of the team.

Bogdan & Biklen (2007) note that researchers may vary on where they fall on the "participant/observer continuum" (p. 91). At one end of this continuum, teachers' may remain as detached as possible, limiting how much involvement they have with their participants. At the other end, researchers may directly participate in the work or actions of their participants, gaining first-hand experience. I would place myself somewhere in between these two. When observing these planning sessions, I sat at the same grouping of desks as the participants. We shared in small talk at the beginning and end of each session, and I felt I developed an easy rapport with the team. While I did not offer my thoughts on or suggestions for their planning,

they occasionally directly asked me for my opinion on something or other questions about myself. At these times, I gave brief responses, attempting to frame these as nonjudgmental and objective. As noted earlier, I was also present to observe some of the team's work directly with the students. These were not recorded, but I did take field notes to document my thoughts and to capture any contextual factors that I thought might be significant to the study.

Most importantly, during sessions of participant observation I was able to capture the teachers' conversations via audio recording. Although teachers did not directly discuss their perceptions of their identities in this data, the conversations were useful for providing context for the perceptions they gave in their interviews. Moreover, this data was analyzed to get at a primary goal of this study: to understand how the teachers' identities were constructed and negotiated through language and particular discursive strategies. Audio recordings allowed me to listen to the sessions numerous times, both in order to transcribe and to think about the teachers' interactions. I transcribed the planning sessions adapting the transcription conventions for conversation from Tannen (2005). (See Appendix D for transcription conventions.)

Data from this study included participant observation of 25 planning sessions, some as brief as 32 minutes to longer sessions that were over three hours. In total, these sessions constituted 27 hours and four minutes of participant observation. I began my observations of the team's work during two extensive planning sessions in the summer prior to the school year. Although the team had a common planning period every day to meet once the academic year began, the realities of school quickly became apparent in how they informed the observation schedule. There were a multitude of other factors that interfered with the team's ability to focus solely on their main objective, such as building or district requirements that had to be addressed, team or individual meetings with the guidance department or other staff, student or parent meetings, and

other general issues that often arise early in the school year. To decide which dates and times worked best for observations, I regularly spoke with Allyson and/or Claudia to determine which sessions would be clearly dedicated to planning and implementing their first interdisciplinary project. Ultimately, I generally observed the team once or twice each week of the project, followed by the later observations mentioned above.

Data Analysis

Analysis occurred both during and after the collection of data. Conducting qualitative research is, of course, not a linear process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Several stages of analysis were used to interpret the data, but these did not always occur in a straightforward fashion, as my findings from one source of data influenced analytical decisions and interpretations of another. I repeatedly returned to the data, often listening to recorded conversations multiple times as I reread the prepared transcripts. As I noticed new patterns or had questions, I continually reexamined the data for confirmation or contradiction of my interpretations. The research questions guided my analysis, but I also constantly asked myself: *What is happening in this piece of data?* While the messiness of qualitative research was very present during this study, I attempt to explain the stages of analysis below in a way that provides clarity as to my methods and methodology.

Following the first set of interviews from the core group of teachers and the summer planning sessions, I began the first stage of analysis: transcription. This was an act of analysis unto itself, as “transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions” (Ochs, 1979, p. 44). I made decisions about where to include non-verbal language, such as tone, smiles, or sighs as I wrote the transcripts. As I listened to the recordings of planning sessions, I also made decisions about what conversations were relevant to the study. At times, there was

sensitive personal information shared that I did not feel was either significant to the team's work or ethical for me to include in the data. In these instances, I chose not to transcribe this data. There were several discussion segments that I considered off task as they did not pertain to the teachers' professional responsibilities. For some of these segments, I transcribed the conversations as long as the team returned to the focus of their work within two minutes or so and nothing too personal was included. If it did not meet these criteria, I did not transcribe the conversation segment fully, but rather inserted a comment in the transcript that described the general topics of that segment and who was involved. I did so in case I felt that I needed to return to these segments of conversation for full transcription at a later date, as well as to remember why I chose not to transcribe it. As transcriptions were completed, I uploaded them into ATLAS.ti 8.4. This qualitative data analysis and research software allowed me to keep the data organized, quickly find specific words or phrases, code the data, group codes, and search for patterns or representative excerpts.

The intensive listening needed for transcription, particularly of conversations, prompted many thoughts and questions which I recorded in a memo. I frequently returned to this memo as data was collected and transcribed to add additional comments, but to also see if any questions were answered or interpretations furthered by the new data. For example, in a comment added on September 19, 2019, I wrote "It seems like it is assumed that they are all equals in this endeavor and have equal power, but do they really?" At the time, it was a quick thought that I simply wanted to get down, but in rereading a few weeks later, it informed some of the questions I asked in interviews.

As the data collection and analysis process continued, I frequently created new memos. These ranged from keeping an ongoing memo detailing my analytic decisions each day to

memos that explored my interpretations of particular segments of data to brief blurbs about patterns or themes I noticed. As Becker (2007) noted of the research process, “First one thing, then another, comes into your head. By the time you have thought the fourth thing, the first is gone.” However, a thought written down “is stubborn, doesn’t change its shape, can be compared with other thoughts that come after it” (p. 55-56). These words accurately reflect the importance of writing memos during any qualitative study, and I found doing so a significant factor in conducting a thorough analysis of the data in this study. For instance, early in the transcription process, I wrote the following comment in a memo:

Both in interviews and in the planning sessions the teachers occasionally mention other teachers/administrators in the building, what those people think of what they are doing, or problems that they have to deal with because of these other people. How does this inform their perceptions? How does it shape what they are able to say/do in their planning sessions? Maybe I should look for/include a code that gets at these outside dynamics?

Ongoing Questions/Thoughts Memo, Oct. 2

In my frequent re-readings of this memo, this was a point that I kept returning to and thinking about. Ultimately, attention to these nagging questions resulted in the findings that are part of Chapter 6.

For the next steps of analysis, coding the data, I used several cycles of coding (Saldana, 2009). As I approached the coding of interviews and planning sessions slightly differently, I will describe them separately here. Although I did not have an *a priori* list of codes, I did assume that because of the questions asked in interviews, as well as my knowledge of teachers’ work during planning sessions, some topics that would be codes would be obvious in the data. Some of these assumptions were confirmed, others were not. For example, since I asked the teachers to describe their teaching, I had assumed that I would have codes specific to teaching strategies they used, such as the *flipped classroom* strategy or methods that were very teacher-centered such as *lectures*. I also wondered, early in the study, if decisions made by the team in their planning

sessions might require or facilitate changes to the methods they typically used. However, once I began coding, I did not find the need to develop codes for this as they did not make statements that spoke to specific teaching strategies in the way I had envisioned. My initial speculation about how their new context might impact their usual teaching methods and strategies also did not pan out in the data.

In the first cycle of coding of the initial interview data, I created descriptive codes that reflected the general topics in our discussion, such as *teaching style* or *professional background*. I also coded data that spoke to the teacher's perceptions of their identities, such as *description of self* or *relationship with students*. As I began to construct codes during this early stage of analysis, I used the constant comparative method to generate additional interview questions to ensure that I understood how each teacher was making sense of their colleagues' comments during collaborative sessions (Glauser & Stauss, 1967). For instance, there were multiple times when I asked an individual teacher how they understood or felt about what their colleagues said when making decisions about a particular team activity. This helped me to ensure that I understood their perspective on the conversation and how they were making meaning from it. As further interviews were conducted, I added new codes, sometimes finding I had to recode earlier interview data to make previously used codes more specific or clear.

The next cycle of coding in the interview data was influenced by my interpretations of the data from planning sessions. At this point in the analysis, I had begun to develop categories and notice patterns in all of the data. The interview data was coded and organized to reflect this. For example, I developed a category for the teachers' talk about work (work they had done, work they were intending to do, etc.). I noticed both in interviews and in planning sessions that this was often accompanied by language that expressed how they were feeling. Therefore, in one

cycle of coding, I added codes such as *stress/frustration* to identity these emotions and later look for further patterns. Additional codes were similarly generated with other categories.

Intermixed with my coding of the interview data was that for the teachers' planning sessions. I first broke each planning session into a series of discussion segments. I marked the start of a new discussion segment as when someone introduced a new topic. Rather than coding individual words, phrases, or statements, codes were given to the each of these chunks of data as a whole. I did this so I could see what codes were being used simultaneously by the teachers. I then generated codes that focused on how each teacher contributed (or not) to the conversation, leading to codes such as *introducing the topic*, *adding an idea*, *asking for clarification*, or *remaining quiet*. As these were broad categories, in the next round of coding I broke these into more specific codes. For example, an initial category of *adding understanding/knowledge* was divided into *knowledge of curriculum*, *knowledge of student*, etc. By being more specific in these codes, I was able to better understand what each person was contributing to the conversation.

As this study is interested in the development of teachers' professional identities while participating on an interdisciplinary collaborative team, my analysis required interpreting how their identities were being constructed and negotiated in these planning session conversations. To do so, I created a table showing the number of instances of each code applied to the planning session data (see Appendix E). This table allowed me to compare the contributions of each teacher within the conversation. I looked for patterns in the data, such as who tended to ask for the opinions of others or whether the teachers equally raised concerns. During this analysis, I kept in mind some of the benefits and challenges of collaboration described in the literature, paying attention to whether these were occurring with my own teachers while also noting any

additional ones I noticed and keeping a memo with my thoughts on how this might influencing the teachers' sense of themselves. For instance, in one memo I wrote the following comment:

Many times, the teachers seem to be generally interested in helping each other when they have an individual problem, even if it has nothing to do with the team or will affect the other teachers in any way. There have been several instances of this so far where they discuss some of these problems and the others appear emotionally invested in the outcome (evident in raising their voices/scowling faces/etc.) on behalf of the teacher with the issue. This may be an advantage of being part of a team that is cohesive: support in dealing with individual issues. Perhaps this also affirms the feelings of frustration, anger, etc. that the teacher is feeling, as well as confirming their perceptions of the problem are correct?

Memo, Sept. 28

As I returned to reread this and other memos, comments such as this were helpful in shaping my thinking. Some of these comments pointed toward new themes and patterns. The one above, for instance, ultimately led to the theme of personal and professional interest in each other that is explored in Chapter 6.

With the information gathered from the patterns of the table in mind, I drew on methods of discourse analysis for the next stage of analysis. This was necessary to determine the discursive strategies the teachers were using to construct their professional identities in their conversations with each other. In many ways, the codes used in this table already started to answer this research question and were a form of discourse analysis. As many of these codes were process codes, or those that “connote observable and conceptual action in the data” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 75), they indicated when the participants employed particular discursive actions in their talk with each other. Thus, they began to give insight into the identities that were being developed through language. For example, one code I used was *leading conversation*, which applied when the speaker was guiding the discussion segment through a combination of introducing the topic, asking questions that prompted discussion, explaining a topic, and/or answering other's questions. In leading a conversation, a teacher can contribute to a variety of identities, such as

authority or *team leader*. My intention, therefore, in this next stage of analysis was to closely examine specific discussion segments to see how the teachers were constructing their identities in conversation. Gee (2011) asserts that people use language to “build an identity” (p. 34). As I read through the discussion segments, I used his identity building tool to think about the teachers’ language. This tool asks the researcher to consider what identity or identities the piece of language is being used to enact or get recognized by others. I relied on several other questions I formulated to help with this. These included: What was the topic of conversation when this code was used? What do I notice about the words or phrasing of the contribution? Was the utterance prompted by something someone else said? Did it prompt others to speak? What else do I notice in this discussion segment? As I looked much more closely at the discussion segments, these questions helped to identify patterns in the teachers’ language that indicated the discursive strategies the teachers were using to build different identities in the moment and over time. Moreover, I considered the various identities they were constructing with those strategies. (See Appendix F for excerpts of a memo that illustrates this.)

Although I knew at the outset of the study that I would find numerous discursive strategies teachers were using, one strategy that I was particularly interested in paying attention to was how they positioned themselves and others in conversation. Based on the work of Rom Harré and Luk Van Langenhove, positioning theory considers “how people use words (and discourse of all types) to locate themselves and others” (Harré, 2012, p. 193). In all conversations, participants have different responsibilities and expectations based on this location. McVee (2011) asserts that positioning theory draws attention to the relationship between discursive practices and identity. The positions that one takes up in a conversation – whether one is aware of them or not – reveals the “reality of any individual” (p. 14). A person’s sense of their identity can be challenged or

supported by positioning (Dennen, 2010). With this in mind, as I examined each discussion segment, I noted how the teachers positioned themselves and others, including how their utterances were taken up (or not) by others. This proved to be a useful lens to think about how teachers were negotiating their professional identities through their language during interactions. For example, as will be described in Chapter 4, one of the teachers, Allyson, both positioned herself and was positioned by others with a *team leader* identity through the types of contributions she made to the conversation and how those were responded to by others.

As I closely examined the moment-by-moment interactions in discussion segments, I wrote a series of memos on each participant. Each memo addressed the questions and considerations described above. For example, one code I analyzed further was the teachers' references to work they had done. For each teacher, I noted the topic of conversation the reference was made in, the type of work referenced, the exact wording they used when discussing it, whether the teacher was prompted by another to make the statement, and whether and how the statement was responded to by the other teachers. I considered how the teacher positioned themselves and also how they were positioned by others in these moments. I also paid attention to who the teacher interacted with during these references. For each participant, I drafted approximately eight of these memos, culminating in a final memo in which I summarized my findings and began to build a profile of the teacher. (See Appendix F for excerpts of one of these memos). These findings included the numerous discursive strategies each teacher used to construct various identities, such as Claudia's *advisor* identity or Nathan's *experienced rookie* identity, that will be discussed in Chapter 4.

With the initial findings in mind, I conducted the final set of interviews. Included in these interviews were questions that asked the participants for their thoughts on my interpretation of

the identities they constructed and how this compared to their own perceptions. For each of the participants, I shared with them some of the patterns I had noticed in the data and the identities these suggested they were constructing. To give an example that will be explored more fully in Chapter 4, one of the identities that I believed Claudia constructed was that of *housekeeper*. The data showed how her discourse constructed this identity, such as in her insertion into the team's conversations of references to the minor tasks she had done or would do. She was also positioned by the others with this identity, as their language showed both the secondary and tedious nature of the work Claudia took on as well as their expectation that she would do so. In my final interview with Claudia, I shared these findings and the label of *housekeeper* I gave to this identity. She confirmed this identity, agreeing with my interpretation of the data as aligned with her perceptions of herself. In essence, I used the final interviews with the teachers to get their feedback on how I was making sense of the data, much as I did with Claudia in this example. While the teachers' responses generally confirmed my interpretations, there were often longer discussions that followed that illuminated their feelings on the development of those identities, such as whether they accepted, disliked, or were resigned to dealing with them. These conversations helped me to refine my understanding of how they were making sense of themselves in the context of interdisciplinary collaboration.

It is important to note that although I used the cycles of coding described earlier in this section for the interview data, I did not analyze the interview data using the same discourse analysis methods used for the planning session data. Some scholars who employ discourse analysis methods avoid examining language from interviews, considering it as "contrived" rather than "natural" data that is more suited for such methods (Nikander, 2012). Other researchers, of which I am aligned, view interviews as a "discursive space, and the interview questions as well

as the interviewer's participation are a crucial part of the data" (p. 410). This was something I recognized in this study, aware that the interviewee and I were both participating in the meaning-making process during our conversations, taking note of how my questions may have influenced the participants' responses. In my field notes, I at times wrote of these issues or concerns. For instance, there were times I was aware of my own enthusiasm for the work the teachers were doing, leading to some tangents in the conversations about how other schools were implementing similar collaboration. Despite my awareness and attempts to appear neutral in these discussions, I made notes following the interviews regarding how the teacher might have made meaning of me during those conversations, possibly becoming hesitant to be fully critical of this type of collaboration.

The language teachers used in these interviews was undeniably paramount to understanding the teachers' perceptions. That being said, I chose not to use the interview data to conduct as fine-grained an analysis of the teachers' discursive strategies as I did when investigating that which they used to construct their identities in planning sessions. I made this choice because although the participants were constructing their identities in their interactions with me, the focus of this study was on this construction in their conversations with *each other*. However, I did use the interview data to understand the context for these interactions, learn the teachers' views on their discussions with each other, and to get feedback on my interpretations regarding their identity development.

As a final stage of analysis, I reviewed codes for the entire data set of interviews and planning sessions for any other patterns. The teachers had many unique individual identities, but I also saw many similarities in some of their identities, how they were negotiating their identity development, and in discursive strategies they used. From these, I generated themes that were

ultimately described in the findings of the data chapters that follow. These themes include the discursive strategies that contributed to their various individual or common *team maker* identities, such as making personal remarks or distinguishing themselves from out-groups. They also include the tensions they navigated as they negotiated their identities, such as over differing visions or balancing content with integrated curriculum.

The Role of Researcher

One of the most prominent and consistent thoughts I had throughout this research study was my own role in it and the influence I was having on my participants and the biases I was potentially bringing to the data analysis. As noted by many qualitative researchers, the importance of paying attention to one's role and impact on the research itself is essential (e.g. Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell & Baez, 2021). As the primary instrument of data collection (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2007), I am not outside of or separate from the research. Rather, I directly influenced my participants and the situations I studied. This required consideration of my own positionality in relation to the study, as well as constant reflexivity of how I inevitably effected it (Wood, 1992).

All qualitative research is social interaction (Seidman, 2006; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Warren & Karner, 2015). No matter how removed I attempted to position myself from my participants, interviews and participant observation require interaction and therefore effected how my participants made sense of each situation. Gubrium & Holstein (1997, as cited in Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) note that *what* the researcher finds out is inherently connected to *how* she finds out. Therefore, when selecting methods of data collection, I considered how those selections effected the outcomes of the research itself.

Interviews are not simply the “truth” of a participant’s perspective but are co-constructed between the researcher and the participant (Wood, 1992). As a site of interaction, meanings are interpreted and made during the conversation. During interviews, I was aware of my proximity, body language, gestures, and verbal responses, as all effected how the teacher was perceiving and making meaning. These therefore influenced the responses that the interviewee gave to the questions being asked. I also acknowledge that the questions I asked were framed in particular ways and may have guided the responses in certain directions. The interviewee, like the interviewer, “looks at the world through the other’s eyes, incorporating both self and other into the process of interpretation” (Warren, 2002, p. 98). Hence, I played a critical role in the interview and the data that was elicited.

Reflexivity is an equally important consideration for participant observation. My choice of words, actions, and other non-verbal cues most likely had an impact on my participants: in how they behaved, in what they said, in the emotions they displayed, and in how they made meaning of a situation. This may have been particularly relevant in this study, as teachers are frequently used to the norms of isolation and individualism, rather than having other adults present as they work (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). Thus, as researcher I was unable to be a passive observer (Warren & Karner, 2015). Consequently, I documented my own “activities, circumstances, and emotional responses as these factors shape the process of observing and recording others’ lives” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 15). By keeping detailed field notes and creating memos of these reflections, I critiqued my own influence when in the field. Additionally, I reflected on the choices made when observing and interviewing as to what I focused on, what details made it into the field notes or interviews, and which did not. All of this information influenced how I thought about the study and the interpretations I made, as well as my consideration of other possible

interpretations, what I might have missed, or what might have occurred differently had I not been present.

Acknowledgement of my positionality in relation to the study is also essential, as all information in the study is filtered through the eyes and ears of the researcher (Lichtman, 2010) and analyzed from a particular standpoint (Warren & Karner, 2015). I have been shaped by my own social location, experiences, values, interests, and perspectives – each of which influence my interpretations. I am a white, middle class, female, forty-ish teacher and doctoral candidate. My understanding of the world is shaped by the meanings of these attributes as I interact with the world. That is, my identities and realities have been constructed by what “white,” “female,” “middle class,” “forty-ish,” “teacher,” and “doctoral candidate” mean to others and to me. This construction did not end once the research study began. At the same time, how I was viewed and understood by my participants – in how they interpreted my words or actions, in what they felt comfortable saying or not saying, in how they perceived our relationship or positions of power – was undoubtedly tied to how they made meaning of these parts of my identity.

Researchers often focus on a particular topic because of their personal interest in or experience with it (Warren & Karner, 2015), a factor that influences how they makes sense of the topic. This is no different for me. I, too, am a secondary-level teacher and have had my own experiences participating on an interdisciplinary collaborative team. I have directly engaged in the type of work that my participants were attempting and considered my own professional identity development in doing so. It led me to question how others navigate this and what it might mean for collaborative efforts as a whole.

My own knowledge and experience with interdisciplinary collaboration undoubtedly influenced my methodological decisions, conversations with the teachers, and how I made

meaning and interpreted data in this study. It also gave me an “insider” status that I had to consider. Insider status refers to researchers who are members of the populations that they study and share an identity, language, and experiential base with those populations (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Greene, 2014). This shared membership impacts the interactions of researchers and participants, the data collected, interpretations and analysis, and conclusions drawn. Although I have not taught in the school or on the team that I studied, my participation on an interdisciplinary collaborative team allowed me to build rapport with my participants based on similar experiences and understanding of their work (Chavez, 2008; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). At times, they may have felt more comfortable sharing their perspectives or articulating their views on uncomfortable topics with someone who they know “has been there.” As teaching is a profession rife with complex emotional labor (Hargreaves, 2001), my experience of these emotions may also have allowed for a more accurate or nuanced interpretation. This insider status also has its disadvantages, however. Despite my best attempts to appear objective, my participants may have felt reluctant to engage with probing questions or share their emotions for fear that I was comparing their experience to my own. For these reasons, I constantly worked to interpret their observations critically, not judgmentally (Seidman, 2006).

Trustworthiness

While there is no one truth or reality to be discovered in qualitative research, I took several steps to ensure the trustworthiness of the data and findings. Foremost, I considered the criteria for trustworthiness set forth by Lincoln and Guba (1986). To achieve credibility, I experienced prolonged engagement in the field. Continual observation of and conversations with the participants over the course the nine months allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of their context and the teachers themselves. I used multiple methods of data collection, including

observation, taking field notes, and conducting interviews. This triangulation allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the data in my study, to identify nuances and establish identifiable patterns (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). When analyzing the data, I consciously looked for negative instances of my developing categories or themes, adjusting them accordingly to accurately reflect the data. I also conducted a number of member checks, either in interviews or after observing planning sessions. In the former, I shared my emerging findings for reaction and feedback from the participants. This included asking the participants about the identities I believed they were constructing, which led to revisions in my thinking and the descriptions that appear in the data chapters that follow. In both interviews and conversations after planning sessions, I would often summarize or paraphrase what the participants had said, asking for clarification to make sure I understood the meanings they were making.

Although qualitative research does not aim for replicability, it does strive to expand understandings through transfer of findings from one context to another. In this chapter, I have provided a detailed description of the methods of data collection and analysis for reference by future researchers. One way to achieve a third criteria, dependability, is to work with other researchers to act as checks on each other's' interpretations. I was the sole researcher in this study however I shared and discussed my interpretations and data with my dissertation advisor at multiple points in the study for critique and discussion. Throughout the research process, I also considered my own influence on the participants, data, and analysis, keeping reflective memos as a constant reminder and check of my own subjectivity and biases.

As this dissertation employed discourse analysis, I also kept in mind considerations offered by Antaki et al. (2003). These scholars assert that there are shortcomings discourse analysts should avoid, including summarizing, taking sides, overquoting or underquoting, and circular

reasoning, that can interfere with a rigorous analysis. I repeatedly reminded myself of the danger of under-analyzing through summarizing and paraphrasing the data, drawing more attention to certain utterances and neglecting others. Although summarizing themes and paraphrasing data is sometimes necessary when explaining findings, it is important for the researcher to include and use the exact words of the participants in their analysis and write up. Not doing so loses information and complexity, as well as potentially distorts the participant's actual words. I also was conscious throughout data analysis and in drafting my findings to not take sides or a position on the data, aligning myself with particular participants or statements they made simply because they supported my personal beliefs or my initial interpretations. Given my own subjectivity and biases described in an earlier section, this required constant vigilance. Related to taking sides is the danger of under or overquoting participants. When selecting excerpts for inclusion, I was mindful of not just selecting those quotes that best exemplified my argument, but that accurately reflected the contributions of the participants. Moreover, I chose excerpts that represented what emerged from the data rather than ones that confirmed thoughts I had coming into the study. Likewise, I didn't go into data analysis with a pre-determined list of identities I believed their discursive strategies would construct. This allowed me to avoid circular reasoning, searching for discourse that would simply support my preconceived ideas. By keeping these considerations in mind, I believe the findings I present in this dissertation demonstrate trustworthiness and rigor.

Conclusion

This study sought to understand how teachers perceived, constructed, and negotiated their professional identities as they participated on an interdisciplinary collaborative team. This chapter outlined the qualitative research methods and methodology I used to investigate the research questions, the basis of the data collection and analysis choices rooted in a theoretical

foundation of symbolic interactionism, as well as theories of discourse and identity. When conducting qualitative research, “researchers’ interpretations cannot be separated from their own background, history, context, and prior understandings” (Creswell, 2007, p. 39). I therefore included a statement that acknowledged my own role and influence over the research, as well as the measures I took to ensure trustworthiness.

In the chapters that follow, I present the findings of this study. I begin in Chapter 4 with profiles of the identities of three of the participants: Allyson, Claudia, and Nathan. This chapter explores how these identities were constructed through their language, as well as the teachers’ perceptions of their identities. It also sets the groundwork for the findings discussed in the latter chapters, as some aspects of the teachers’ identity development are integral to the themes explored in these chapters. These include the shared tensions the participants navigated as they negotiated their identities that will be discussed in Chapter 5, as well as an identity that was common among the participants, that of *team maker*. This identity will be explored in Chapter 6.

Chapter Four

Constructing Identities: Profiles of Individual Teachers

As a society, we often speak of those holding the label of *teacher* broadly, painting our descriptions and understandings of teachers in broad strokes. Yet each teacher has a distinct professional identity, one that is constantly in negotiation as they interact with others. The teachers in this study have varied life experiences, educational backgrounds, content expertise, and relationships with members of the team and others. Each spoke of their professional identity in ways that were distinct and personal. In this chapter, I explore how three of these teachers saw themselves to be as educators, as well as how these and other sub-identities were constructed through their language. These professional identities were often recognized and supported by the others, evident in the similarities between how they were positioned by others in their conversations.

Although the interdisciplinary team included six teachers, for the purposes of this dissertation I have focused on professional identities of three of these: Allyson, Claudia, and Nathan. I determined this focus for several reasons. First, these three participants spoke the most during planning sessions, providing the greatest amount of data to examine. At the same time, however, there were clear differences in categories such as when they spoke, their types of contributions, and when they remained quiet, among others. Second, the profiles constructed below show both pronounced and more nuanced differences between teachers, these differences illustrating the need to consider teachers as individuals. Finally, although all of the teachers presented identities that give insight into the challenges and benefits of interdisciplinary work, the daily work of Allyson, Claudia, and Nathan was the most consistent, resulting in a constant negotiation of identities that was very clear in the data. Maya and Nora's less frequent meetings with the team,

as well as Mark's very quiet demeanor, provided more of a challenge to exploring their identity development.

In each of the three profiles below, I begin with a brief biography of the participant and description of his or her perceptions of their professional identity prior to the beginning of the school year and the team's first interdisciplinary project. For Allyson and Claudia, a description of their role in the team's formation is also included. Next, I describe three or four sub-identities constructed by and of each participant through the language used in interviews and planning sessions. Although there were certainly had other sub-identities that were evident in the data, these are the ones that my analysis showed as most prominent, or in one case, surprisingly absent. As the study proceeded, participants were asked in interviews about how they were making sense of themselves as educators doing this work and their thoughts on my findings, confirming many of the sub-identities described below. As will be seen in later chapters, these distinct identities both benefited and presented challenges to the team as they engaged in their collaborative planning.

Profile: Allyson

From the first moment I met Allyson, she was friendly and engaging. She willingly shared her experiences, often smiling as she told stories from her classroom or personal life. The ease of our conversations often resulted in the interviews extending much longer than anticipated, as we took side tangents to discuss lesson ideas or education-focused books. I rarely felt that Allyson was holding back on sharing her opinions or perspectives, even when we discussed the challenges or frustrations of collaboration.

Allyson grew up in a military family, spending her teenage years living in the region of the state where the Springfield School District is located, attending a local community college and

then state college in the area. Becoming a teacher had always been something she considered, eventually deciding to become an education major after enjoying an experience tutoring high school students. She focused on English due to her “passion for reading.” Allyson is also a mother of three young children, frequently referencing her children or husband in interviews and during the team’s planning sessions.

At the time of the study, Allyson had spent 16 years as a middle school English teacher, all of it at Parker Middle School. She also spent one year as a literacy coach in the building before returning to the classroom. In recent years, she participated in a teacher leadership program at an area college and was the team leader of the school’s English department.

Allyson’s Professional Identity Prior to the Project

As with all of the teachers, I met with Allyson prior to the school year to learn more about her experiences, goals and values, and sense of herself as an educator. Throughout this first interview, Allyson told many stories about herself and her students, providing anecdotes to illustrate her points. Telling stories is one of the ways professional identities are constructed (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Thus, these stories give insight into Allyson’s perception of her professional identity and the particular beliefs and commitments that contributed to her sense of self.

When I first asked Allyson to describe her professional identity and what it meant to be a teacher, she took a long pause. After several moments, she stated, “Well, it’s changed a lot since I started. I went into teaching English because I love talking about books.” Although Allyson wanted her students to develop a love for reading similar to her own, she went on to say “And now, I think it’s more about communication. I want them to be good citizens.” She articulated this as “getting them to listen to each other, talk to each other. That’s probably the biggest thing I

focus on more than reading. How do you have a conversation with somebody? How do you disagree with people?” She viewed her primary role as a teacher as developing students’ ability to communicate, actively listen, and clearly express thoughts or questions.

Allyson also described her professional identity as “really about building relationships” with students: “I try to find something I can talk about with each kid.” She asserted that she worked hard to connect with kids, having a “soft spot for those troublemaker kids.” She believed some students view her as a “mother figure,” laughing as she shared the story of one student who called her mom: “I mean, just as a joke, because he called me mom one time. But he still calls me mom. And I’ll say ‘Bye son!’ as I walk out the door and we laugh about it.” At another point in our interview, she described her relationship with a student who had a difficult home life, telling the story of going to the student’s home to take her to play with her own children on the playground. Sharing stories such as these illuminated Allyson’s sense of herself as an educator as she gave examples to support her perceptions.

Throughout her first interview, Allyson described her experiences with colleagues, providing further insight into how she viewed herself. For instance, when describing her role as a literacy coach for one year, she labeled herself as “a little bit of a know-it-all.” Similarly, she stated that her tendency to encourage her colleagues to try new things in their classrooms can sometimes make her “annoying.” At another point, we discussed Allyson’s frequent movement from one teaching team to another. “I’ve been told I’m not going to say no, that’s why I get moved.” One of these moves occurred because “they needed a kind, gentle teacher” to work with a particular group of students. Allyson’s language suggests that she saw herself not only as flexible, but as “kind” and “gentle.”

This sense of herself as a compassionate colleague and team player was also evident in our discussion of her view of others' perceptions of her:

I think people think of me generally as a happy person. I try really hard to keep this a nice place, because it is really easy to get negative with the kids and staff. I try very hard to make this a place that people want to be. But again, that can be kind of annoying sometimes, you know? When people are too happy? I wish I had the guts more to say what I want to say to administration. But... they're still my boss. So I can't be disrespectful to someone who is my boss. But I think sometimes people need to be called on what they are not doing.

Of note in this statement is the negotiation Allyson makes between how she sees herself and how her identity may present to others. In this statement, Allyson described herself as a "happy person," doing her best to make a positive workplace for her colleagues. At the same time, however, she felt that she had to temper this piece of her identity, as it can be perceived as "annoying." Similarly, Allyson carefully navigated the tension between speaking up about her concerns with maintaining a respectful identity for her superiors. In both of these instances, she negotiated the professional identity that she exhibits, lessening one aspect of her identity and amplifying another. This type of identity negotiation was further evident in interactions with her colleagues in the context of interdisciplinary work.

Allyson's Role in the Team's Formation

Allyson was instrumental in the formation of the interdisciplinary, PBL-focused team. Prior to undertaking this endeavor, Allyson attended PBL training and a conference for collaborative teams but noted that the text *Learner-Centered Innovation* (Martin, 2017) was "a game changer" for her. She described discussing the text with a colleague:

So we did our own kind of book club. We didn't have meetings or anything, but we were constantly going back and forth to each other's classrooms going, "Did you read this yet? This is what we want!" And this is probably the thing that got me into it. And we've been on this damn list [a state list indicating low student achievement scores] for as long as I've been here. So I've been highly effective pretty much my entire career, but my kids are in the bottom 5%? That doesn't make any sense to me

whatsoever. The test is bogus. And so it doesn't matter what I'm doing in the classroom, my kids are still always on the same level, so why am I brow beating them over what a simile is? It doesn't matter. So what's going to make them a better person? What's going to make them actually learn something? And so, we're like, we've got to do something different."

Although the teachers were already on a grade-level team, Allyson encouraged her colleagues to work collaboratively to create projects that integrated curriculum, were student-centered, and developed students' "soft skills." When asked her goals for the team, she stated that "I think it's about getting kids out of their comfort zones and getting to work with other people than they normally would."

This desire to change her pedagogy suggests several things about Allyson's professional identity. First, she presents herself as a risk-taker regarding seeking out a pedagogy that will benefit her students. In her willingness to "do something different," she positioned herself as willing to think outside-of-the box and forego the traditional curriculum and instructional strategies employed in her school. Second, Allyson placed her content-area identity as subordinate to her overall teaching professional identity. Rather than basing her work on ELA standards, Allyson prioritized curriculum and strategies that will "make them a better person." In the early stages of the study it was not yet clear whether these identities would be further reinforced or challenged by words or actions in the team's planning sessions or Allyson's individual interviews. I was also curious during this early conversation as to whether Allyson's desired goals would eventually be achieved through the team's work and, if so, the impact it would have on Allyson's perception of her identities. That is, if Allyson was pleased with the outcomes of the team's work, perhaps she would also be more likely to acknowledge and accept the identities she constructed and presented in the process of achieving those outcomes. If not, she might struggle to accept or reconcile these identities.

Allyson's Professional Identity on the Team

A professional identity is not one static identity, but contains many sub-identities (Cooper & Olson, 1996; Gee, 2001). Like the other teachers, Allyson wore many “hats” on the team, taking on various roles to support the team’s work. These sub-identities often intersected and ultimately contributed to how Allyson perceived herself as a member of the team and as a teacher. As will be shown in what follows, Allyson constructed the identities of *team leader*, *worker*, *cheerleader*, and *liaison*. These identities were evident in the ways that Allyson described herself during interviews. Moreover, the conversational data from planning sessions illustrates how these identities were constructed by Allyson and her teammates through their language.

Team Leader

Allyson was not given the formal label of *team leader* by administration or her colleagues, but it was clear that this was a sub-identity that had become part of her professional identity. This may be because she was one of the teachers to initiate this model of teaching and learning for the team, prompting her to take a vital role in the team’s work. As an outsider, I too was given this impression of Allyson during my initial meeting with the team to gauge their interest in taking part in the study. Although I directed questions to the entire team, Allyson most frequently answered and described the anticipated work of the team. Her *team leader* identity was evident in the team’s planning sessions and confirmed in her interviews. When interacting with her team, Allyson used several discursive techniques to construct this identity, including introducing topics, raising work to be done, and answering other’s questions. Allyson’s verbal presence in almost every discussion segment also indicated her integral role on the team.

In interviews, Allyson acknowledged that she was the de facto team leader, sharing that she was the one who organized team meetings: “I am the one who has to set the agenda. And I am

the one who has to tie everyone to that agenda. If we don't have a goal for every team meeting, nothing gets done." Data from the team's planning sessions confirmed Allyson's perception. Moreover, analysis of these conversations revealed a number of discursive strategies used by Allyson to construct her identity as *team leader*. One such strategy was introducing a new topic, effectively changing the course of the overall discussion. Of the 309 discussion segments, Allyson used this discursive strategy 156 times, often changing the subject to talk of particular team activities, student issues, or even off-task topics. Use of this strategy positioned Allyson as central to the direction of the overall conversation. Another strategy was simply leading conversations. I define this as instances where one of the teachers did most of the speaking, was focusing the topic, and moved the conversation toward a deeper understanding or decision. Of the 115 segments when someone was clearly leading the conversation, Allyson took on this role 68 times, compared to only 22 times for Nathan, 16 for Claudia, and 9 for Mark. (Note: There were many discussion segments in which no one person was leading the conversation.) Allyson was also the most likely to raise work that the team needed to complete (32 instances), suggesting that she was the supervisor of the team's tasks. Each of these discursive techniques, when used frequently over time, positioned Allyson as managing the team's discussions and eventual actions, effectively constructing her sub-identity as *team leader*.

A typical example of this is illustrated in the following excerpt from a planning session midway through the team's Citizenship USA project. In this conversation, the team discussed the upcoming student interviews:

- ALLYSON: Alright. We have to plan, like we have to plan the interviews and the MAPS training because those things need to happen like in Town Hall-ish meetings, I think. Um... so what should we do about the interviews? I mean, we could, I would prefer to do them next week, if at all possible, but is that going to hold everybody else up?
- MARK: Yeah, we need to get into it.
- ALLYSON: I mean we could do ...

CLAUDIA: But we've got to get, I mean if you're saying we've got to get fifteen people, we've got to get like all the people that we just asked to

ALLYSON: Well I was thinking that we ask [principal]. Um, and [assistant principal].

CLAUDIA: Do you want me to write an email as we are talking? Or do you want to do it?

MAYA: [Wait. You need fifteen people for what?

ALLYSON: Job interviews.

NATHAN: [Job interviews.

ALLYSON: If we are going to do job interviews

MAYA: [Adults to give them the interview?

ALLYSON: Yeah, well we could do it different ways. Like, we could um... Like I could do them like one whole day and schedule kids. You know, five minute intervals. And I could knock out job interviews all day, but then kids would have to go somewhere else for English class. Or we could do it in Town Hall, where all the kids go to a different room. Five kids to a room for ... job interviews. Or like ..

MARK: Five kids to a room? That's twenty different locations.

NATHAN: [We could do Town Hall.

CLAUDIA: I think that if we're going to ask other people to be involved that we should do a Town Hall, because otherwise we are taking up their whole day.

ALLYSON: That's what I mean.

MAYA: [Right.

NATHAN: And we could do like, if they ever fix the wi-fi, we could do I-Ready. You know? Like you do your interview then you sit down and you work on English or math I-Ready.

MAYA: Right.

NATHAN: I mean, I'm doing it. I don't know if you [to Allyson] were doing it or not.

ALLYSON: Yeah.

NATHAN: And then they have something to do during that time. And then just get called.

ALLYSON: Yeah but .. I-Ready is not working. But

NATHAN: I-Ready is down?

ALLYSON: [Or I mean wi-fi is, is

NATHAN: Yeah.

ALLYSON: But, like, tell me if there is a better way, but in my head I envisioned Town Hall style starting off and having maybe, you know, three or four teachers in the auditorium with a group of five kids. Four kids are sitting in the chairs watching the other kid interview, with almost like a critique. Like fill out the rubric the teacher is filling out. And then they take turns doing their interviews.

MARK: [Mm-hmm.

MAYA: Another idea

MARK: [That's, I like the idea in the auditorium. I'm sorry [to Maya].

MAYA: Go for it.

MARK: Because I mean if we have five teachers right in there, we could spread out and everything and still have the rest of the kids working.

ALLYSON: [Well what I was thinking instead of having them working, we would be doing it at the same time. Like there would be twenty groups going. I mean, maybe not

MARK: [No, that's what I mean.

ALLYSON: twenty, but fifteen. I think fifteen there would be. We wouldn't need one for city hall, would we?

MARK: You'd still need financial officers and stuff like that.

ALLYSON: [Okay. So we'd need fifteen teachers. There's five of us that day, so we would need ten other people.

MAYA: So, on this, what if we use the main lobby and set up a couple of dividers. That way they could just meet there and it's not a far place to travel.

ALLYSON: O::h. >Yeah, yeah, yeah.<

Maya: And then there's a couple of dividers up there. The interviewer and the five kids. So we could set

ALLYSON: [Okay.

thread that tied the conversation together. Allyson added ideas for the team to debate, such as suggesting that she would conduct the interviews in her own class instead of doing them with multiple adults in different rooms. She came to the conversation with ideas to prompt discussion, rather than relying on her peers to do so. This also suggests a more nuanced perception of leadership, as Allyson did not position herself as an authoritative leader who makes all of the decisions, but as one who wants feedback from others. This leadership style was confirmed in her interview, in which she stated that “that is generally how I am, where I am like, okay, what does the consensus want because I am okay with it either way.”

This excerpt also demonstrates how the team positioned Allyson as the team leader. Each participant looked to her for answers. Claudia, for example, asked for her permission to craft an email. Nathan and Maya asked multiple clarifying questions to understand the activity. In each instance, Allyson was positioned as the authority. Even when Mark added the idea of some students participating as interviewers, it was Allyson he directed the idea to. It was Allyson who responded, first through her insertions of “Okay” throughout his explanation to an enthusiastic “Yeah!” when he was done. In doing so, she gave permission for the incorporation of this idea into their plans. Examples of the teachers specifically asking for Allyson’s thoughts and approval are rampant in the data. Furthermore, Allyson was frequently the one to answer a question when it was not specifically directed at one team member. For example, of the 63 questions Claudia asked in the data, 28 were directly asked to Allyson and 41 were answered by Allyson, as she answered both those directed to her and those open for anyone to answer. Similarly, of the 78 questions Mark asked, 32 were directly asked to Allyson and 43 of these were answered by Allyson.

Throughout the team's planning sessions, Allyson introduced topics, explained activities, raised work that needed to be done, and guided conversations such as is demonstrated above. Each of these contributions to the planning session positioned her as leader. Her leadership style, however, was democratic. More than any other participant, Allyson framed her questions as soliciting the opinions of her peers. She considered their opinions, yet she also came to the table prepared with potential solutions or answers if no decision was made. A typical example is illustrated in a conversation about an upcoming field trip during which Allyson asked the team to give input: "I've got to figure out the parent chaperones for next week. I didn't know if you guys wanted to look at the list and see who we wanted? We had eighteen parents volunteer to do the chaperoning." After Allyson asked for their opinion, the teachers reviewed the parents who volunteered, yet the discussion quickly turned to a focus on the children of particular parents.

Later in the planning session, Allyson returned to the topic:

- ALLYSON: So, how do you want me to do this? Because we had eighteen parents volunteer for this trip. We can only take seven. So I thought what I could do is I can call the ones that don't go to [ropes course trip] and say "Would you be interested in doing the walking tour or the Citizenship USA trip?"
- MARK: We need the walking tour. I haven't worked on that.
- ALLYSON: Okay, so how about I say, if they don't come, would you be interested in coming to the walking tour instead?
- MARK: Right.
- CLAUDIA: Yeah.

(Planning Session, Sept. 13)

Allyson sought input from her teammates, but clearly had a plan in her mind of how to address the task. This framing – asking for others' opinions, considering ideas, then giving her opinion or a solution – was used frequently in discussions of activities. This is a more democratic style of leadership, yet Allyson's preparedness indicates that she was leading the group.

Another discursive strategy used by Allyson that constructed her identity as *team leader* was the sheer volume of her utterances. In the 309 segments of coded conversation, Allyson only remained quiet in four of these. This positioned her as integral to every discussion they had.

When others were explaining particular topics, Allyson frequently overlapped their talk with utterances of agreement, such as “Okay,” “Yeah,” or “Mm-hm.” This demonstrated that she was actively listening, but also positioned her as central to the team’s conversations and decisions. For example, as Mark explained the schedule for the mayoral candidates, Allyson repeatedly inserted utterances that suggested she was both listening and approved of his plan.

- MARK: Okay. Alright. And just real quick, there’s a time schedule there. It’s hopefully not too screwed up. We want to keep it to 20 minutes a piece. They’re being informed to go for 15 minutes on the presentation and 5 minutes for Q & A. And the staff or escorts can move them real quick and line
- ALLYSON: └Okay.
- MARK: them up so they keep going so that way they will all be done by 9:25.
- ALLYSON: └Okay
- CLAUDIA: End of 3rd.
- MARK: └They have five minutes to move between classrooms, so they’ve been told to go the shortest distances. I hope I have it all figured out right.
- ALLYSON: └So we’ll just go right to 4th period.
- CLAUDIA: We’ll just play it by ear. [said to Allyson]
- MARK: Um, they will give introductions to them as well. At each location, they’ll say, at each location, each person [looking at his sheet of student escorts] has a separate, except Allison. Allison has two people. So they’re just doing a quick introduction to each person. At the different locations that
- ALLYSON: └Okay
- MARK: they’ll go. Your classes just stay there. They don’t move. But the candidates will be rotating so in
- ALLYSON: └Okay
- MARK: other words, in the auditorium, Jeff will go down to Mr. P’s next, and then will eventually go to the library. One, two and three [pointing at sheet, indicating the schedule that is printed out on it].
- ALLYSON: └Okay
- MARK: Um, but that, let’s see... I want to talk real quick. Can we talk real quick? Is there anything as far as this? [indicating sheet for Citizenship USA. Each adult will be assigned to one business.] I want you guys where you want to be for sure. And that, I have other staff that I’m trying to
- ALLYSON: └Oh.
- MARK: get. And then, whatever parents don’t go on the trip here, we could try to plug them in and I’ll
- ALLYSON: └Okay
- MARK: make sure that I get permission. I’m not going to hand it out. I’m in a situation with Erie right now. I have 80 kids that are going, and I have 70 parents that want to go too. So I have to make
- ALLYSON: └Yup
- MARK: all these phone calls to say we don’t need you. You know? We’re only taking 2 or 3. Because we
- ALLYSON: └Okay.
- MARK: don’t have space. So I want to just be able to get those permission slips for those parents
- ALLYSON: └Okay
- MARK: specifically, so if we can find out who they are and talk to them.

(Planning Session, Sept. 16)

This overlapping agreement placed Allyson as integral to the conversation and decisions of the mayoral candidate planning. The repeated insertion of “Okay” indicated her understanding of

Mark's explanation, but also functioned to give her approval of his suggested plan. It was not Claudia or Nathan, but Allyson who gave Mark feedback through these utterances. Thus, Allyson positioned herself as having the authority to do so, contributing to the construction of her *team leader* identity.

In her final interview, Allyson confirmed this identity of *team leader*, expressing how she positioned herself and was positioned by others as such:

I think a lot of people come to me for answers. I feel like a lot of times people will just assume that I know the answer. I know Nathan will call me sometimes and just get my opinion on things. It's kind of intimidating, to be honest with you, because I don't... I'm very contradictory in it, I guess. I've been to leadership conferences and I feel a lot of times that people look at me as a leader, but I don't often feel that way about myself, so I get insecure offering my opinion because what if I'm wrong? But I do feel like a lot of times I'm one of the ones that jump in, sometimes too quickly.

Allyson acknowledged her team leader positioning, yet this statement also reveals a recognition of her ongoing negotiation with this identity. Although it was clearly part of her professional identity, she struggled at times with feeling confident in presenting this sub-identity. This dynamic of acceptance and resistance reflects the unstable nature of identity development, as a person does not simply have or not have a particular identity. Rather, sub-identities can be foregrounded or backgrounded, accepted or challenged, intensified or tempered. This negotiation occurs in the context of interaction with others, but – as seen with Allyson – can be consciously navigated by the person themselves.

Worker

Closely tied to Allyson's sub-identity as team leader is that of *worker*. She positioned herself as a worker through both her actions and her language. She did, indeed, take on many of the tasks that need to be completed for the team. For example, in her second interview, Allyson described the amount of work she undertook for the students' walking tour of businesses:

I did all the walking tour, like I organized all the walking tour groups. I got all of the stuff together for the chaperones for the walking tour, so they knew what the rules were. I printed out all of the maps, where they were going, where the bus was going for the walking tour, put the addresses on it. All the chaperones sent me the pictures that they took and I put them in our Google Drive. I renamed them all which businesses they went to.

In addition to statements such as this one, Allyson also shared with me that she contacted many of the businesses and worked with administration on organizational details. Data from observational field notes and planning sessions show that Allyson executed this level of work for many of the activities planned for students. During team planning sessions, she was frequently working on documents (drafting permission slips or invitations, updating shared files, creating rubrics, etc.) even as she engaged in the conversation. In interviews with all of the teachers, it was clear that they recognized Allyson's hard work as a contribution to the team. For example, Claudia shared her appreciation of Allyson's work ethic: "Allyson is the one who is like 'okay, we need to get this planned. Let's go ahead and do it.' But I think because she is a doer and so she's like, 'let's just get this done.'" Similarly, Nathan noted that both Allyson and Claudia "picked up good chunks [of work] that they are good at."

This identity as a *worker* was also constructed through the language that Allyson used in team planning sessions. She referenced work that she was doing or going to do far more than anyone else, often without directly being asked to speak to that work. In other words, of the 154 instances when Allyson referenced work, 133 of these were simply inserted into the conversation rather than prompted by a teammate. For example, she frequently made statements that she would update a shared calendar, make contact with someone for the team, or take care of a task with students during her own class time. She was not directly asked about what she was doing or was going to do, but referenced it nonetheless. She also raised tasks the team needed to

accomplish more than others during the team's planning sessions, often taking on these tasks herself rather than delegating it to others.

Allyson's identity as a *worker* contributed to the overall goals of the team, but also supported her identity as *team leader*. As briefly mentioned above, one of the categories of work that Allyson frequently referenced in team planning sessions was updating or creating shared documents for the team. These shared documents consisted of task lists, responsibilities, and schedules that outline team assignments and plans. These frequent references to this work positioned her as responsible for tracking everything the team is doing or needs to do. This contributed to her identity of *team leader*, as she organized and managed team tasks.

Liaison

Related to her team leader sub-identity, Allyson positioned herself as a *liaison* for the team. By *liaison*, I mean Allyson was often an emissary, acting as the face of the team to outsiders. While she was certainly not the only teacher to communicate with others, this sub-identity was foregrounded for her more than for others. I first detected it when reviewing my field notes, noticing that Allyson was frequently the team member to contact parents for meetings or to chaperone, to speak with the guidance counselor or nurse, or to seek answers from administrators. Further analysis substantiated that Allyson constructed this identity through her language in planning sessions. Team members and Allyson herself also confirmed the presence of this *liaison* identity.

As with all of her sub-identities, Allyson used her language in planning sessions to construct herself as a *liaison*. Indeed, throughout the discussions, she inserted comments about talking to administrators, parents, business owners, or other school personnel for the team. These were frequently linked to work that she had done or was going to do. Another discursive strategy that

constructed this identity was in the information she added prior to the team making a decision (separate from her opinions or ideas). Though she added far fewer of these considerations than Claudia or Nathan, when she did so, these statements tended to connect outside factors to the work the team was doing. For example, she reminded the group of outside events that may influence their decisions regarding scheduled activities or cautioned that their decision would impact Maya and Nora's schedules. In this sense, she acted as a mental liaison, keeping in her mind the external contexts and people who would be a factor in the team's decisions.

One particularly interesting way that Allyson constructed her identity as a *liaison* was in her references to speaking to students. Several times in the team's planning sessions, Allyson made statements about sharing what she told students regarding activities or team expectations. For example, during the September 16 planning session, she explained that she "told them today for the activity for the posters...what they had to do, like what they had to sell or the service they had to provide." Later during the same planning session, she explained the team's expectations for work:

I told them that they have to complete it and they need to either come in tomorrow during first period or Wednesday during first period or they had to stay after school and do it. Because, I said, this is something that when I tell you we have to get stuff done, we have to get it done.

At no point while observing the team did I hear them discuss who would take responsibility for communicating with students, yet a number of times Allyson inserted statements such as the one above. These comments ranged from telling the team she shared interview questions with students to reminding students of the team's expectations for their job applications. Inserting statements that she "told them" positioned her as team member to act as *liaison* with students.

In constructing the team leader sub-identity, it was perhaps inevitable that Allyson would also construct a *liaison* sub-identity. This sentiment was articulated by Maya during her final interview, as she spoke to Allyson's strengths:

She has emotional grace...Even when she is expressing things that people don't want to hear, she really knows how to say it so they can still hear it. And that also puts her as the leader of our pack, because she does have that skill with people. She has a very nice reputation in our district as well. She has managed to be dominant without ruffling feathers the wrong way, but she's always said what needs to get said.

Allyson's willingness to engage with various adults and students as the face of the team was something she acknowledged when asked about. She further remarked that "It makes me feel a little honored" to be valued for this role, but that "sometimes it does make me uncomfortable or sometimes it does put a little stress on me." The additional time and emotional effort needed for this sub-identity was something that Allyson navigated, yet it was vital for the effectiveness of the team.

Cheerleader

A fourth prominent sub-identity Allyson constructed was that of *cheerleader*. By cheerleader, I mean that Allyson became an enthusiastic and vocal supporter of her teammates, assertively optimistic even in times of frustration. She used a number of discursive strategies to construct this sub-identity, including praising colleagues, using encouraging language, and tempering her complaints with softening language or positive statements.

Throughout the team's planning sessions, Allyson used language that acknowledged and showed gratitude for her colleagues' work. She was the most likely of the team members to thank a colleague for their work or to praise a teammate. An example of this is illustrated in the following excerpt from the team's second summer planning session:

MARK: Well, would it be too much, I mean if we're grilling it out back or whatever and just walk through the cafeteria and bring your food out front?

ALLYSON: Yeah.
 MARK: And then just have it in the corridor there or the covered area, food tables on one side and then
 ALLYSON: [Yeah [That's a great idea.
 MARK: coming out and then maybe have the soccer field open.
 ALLYSON: Great idea. That's a really good idea, Mark.
 NATHAN: [Yeah. Takes care of any rain problems, the space is contained. We already
 know how to set up tables in that area.
 ALLYSON: Yup. Good idea. That's a great idea.

(Planning Session, July 11)

As Mark shared his idea for the staging of the team barbeque, Allyson repeatedly praised him for the idea. Again, we see Allyson insert overlapping agreement, giving her approval and commending Mark for his suggestion. During other planning sessions, Allyson pointed out her teammates' strengths, such as when she when she told Claudia she was "good under pressure" or Mark that he was "good at" handling the cafeteria manager. Allyson was also quick to reassure others, such as when she responded to Claudia's apology for disorganization during the poster activity with "No! I thought it was great!" By inserting statements like these, Allyson constructed an encouraging and supportive identity.

Allyson's *cheerleader* identity was evident not only in her numerous positive statements, but in her restraint of negative ones. Unlike some of her teammates, Allyson tended not to raise concerns about school issues that were out of her control, limiting complaints that brought a negative tone to team conversations. Even when Allyson did raise concerns, she used softer language to voice these frustrations, inserting phrases like "I guess that part is kind of bothering me" or a wholesome "Oh my gosh" to temper her complaints. At other times, she literally softened her voice to minimize the assertiveness of complaints, such as when she began a conversation about another teacher by whispering "I need to vent for a second about something." Multiple times, Allyson was even apologetic that she was being negative. For example, on the day the mayoral candidates visited, Allyson voiced frustration that one of the instrumental music teachers did not allow students to miss their lessons to attend the speeches. Although she raised

the concern, she quickly stated “Sorry. I’ll stop. I’m not going to dwell on it. I’m done. I’ll let it go.”

Although each of the individual discursive strategies described above – encouraging language, expressions of praise and gratitude, softening language, apologies for negativity – was not used in excess, the combination of these strategies clearly constructed a *cheerleader* identity. This also aligned with Allyson’s claim in her first interview that she tried “really hard to keep this a nice place.” Similarly, she confirmed this identity when asked about it in her final interview. After I pointed out how positive she tended to be, Allyson responded “I just don’t want people to be uncomfortable. I don’t want to hurt anybody’s feelings...I just really feel like if you always look at the negative, it just doesn’t work.” Allyson’s continual optimism and focus on the positive was clearly evident in the data, ultimately constructing the *cheerleading* identity.

Allyson’s Shifting Professional Identity

Given the theories of identity, it is inevitable that Allyson’s professional identity was shifting in the context of her team’s work. As a member of the interdisciplinary team, Allyson was no longer siloed in her own classroom, constructing a professional identity through interactions with students and only occasionally with adults. Instead, the daily interactions with her colleagues constructed additional sub-identities that contributed to her overall professional identity. For Allyson, constructing and presenting *team leader*, *worker*, *liaison*, and *cheerleader* sub-identities created a professional identity that was distinct from her peers. To be clear, this is not to say that these sub-identities were not present in some capacity as part of Allyson’s professional identity before. Allyson’s previous interactions with others most likely produced these to some degree. For example, Allyson may have already perceived of herself as a worker in her own classroom or a positive figure in the school. However, the data suggest that these sub-identities were enhanced

and moved to the forefront in her actions with colleagues. The construction of these sub-identities was prevalent in her language and the discursive strategies she used to position herself having these identities. Simultaneously, others' recognition of these identities was frequently evident in the language they used that similarly positioned Allyson. Thus, in moment-by-moment interactions, each of Allyson's sub-identities was formed. Allyson's perception of her overall professional identity as including these sub-identities was confirmed in her interviews.

The dynamic nature of identity development, with the construction of Allyson's sub-identities more perceptible in some moments than others, was evident throughout the planning sessions. Another active aspect of identity development are the internal negotiations and emotional energy necessary to navigate new or enhanced identities (Hargreaves, 2001; Schutz & Lee, 2014). Allyson, as described earlier, grappled with taking on a *team leader* identity, both unsure of her opinions and decisions while also honored her colleagues looked to her for guidance. In her second interview, when describing her thoughts on how the team's work was going, Allyson asserted that the delegation of work was not going well, "but I also feel sometimes that I take over too much, so that be my fault...I feel like I've been placed in charge of the whole team when I don't necessarily want that." She continued "I think it adds more stress," going on to explain how the additional work required was a challenge to balance with family commitments. With these statements, Allyson recognized that she positioned herself and was positioned by others as having the *team leader* identity. At the same time, however, she didn't "necessarily want that" and that it "adds more stress." Thus, her words indicated that she wrestled with this identity, particularly as it added additional emotional energy.

The new context in which Allyson worked – with the interdisciplinary team, planning shared activities and curriculum, reaching out to community members, colleagues, and parents for

assistance – created new experiences and interactions that forced her to step out of her comfort zone. When asked to describe this, Allyson shared both the discomfort and gratification she felt, ultimately linking it to her shifting professional identity:

Well, I was pushed out of my comfort zone when reaching out to other people, because I'm a little bit of a control freak, so asking other people to take part. And also trusting the rest of the team to say, like, you're going to do this, then I'm done and I just have to trust that you are going to take care of it. And even if it's not organized the way I want, it's going to be fine. And also, like getting parents involved. Part of me is a little hesitant because I'm afraid of that judgment of parents being upset with something that I do or say. And so actively getting them involved was a little bit uncomfortable for me. But now I enjoy it all a lot more than I've actually done it. And I think being... I think since I've done PBL that has pushed me more into a leadership role.

Allyson's description reflects the *worker*, *liaison*, and *team leader* identities she constructed in this new context. Further, this statement reveals that Allyson wrestled with aspects of these identities, at times suppressing her need to be controlling, at others "afraid" or "uncomfortable." This suggests there is additional emotional energy needed to construct these identities, something that could very well have made Allyson not want to do so. However, expending this energy ultimately shifted her perception of herself in ways that she appreciated. She noted that working in this context made her "a lot more motivated when I'm doing this":

I feel a lot more connected to my peers. And I think I just love the planning of PBL. I love sharing the ideas and generating all the things we could do and fit to a schedule and standards. I just love all of it.

Profile: Claudia

Daily team meetings occurred in Claudia's classroom, thus she was the teacher that I had the most contact with throughout the study. We would often chat before the other teachers arrived for the meeting, the topics ranging from her children to books we had read to school issues. Even when Claudia was in the middle of a task at my arrival, she was welcoming. She frequently let

me stay in her room to pass the time before an interview with another teacher. Her attitude was always friendly, even on days when she claimed to be overwhelmed from the workload. Our conversations flowed easily, and I always felt that Claudia was open about her feelings and perceptions. She was also quite funny, both during interviews and the team planning sessions, not afraid to make a risqué comment or share an entertaining story.

Raised in the same community as the Springfield School District, Claudia attended college out of state. Originally wanting to become a veterinarian, her undergraduate studies focused in the sciences. In the summer during college, she worked at a local rehabilitation center, helping children with disabilities in their pre-school department. Following graduation, she returned to the area and substitute taught. These two experiences contributed to her desire to become a teacher. She returned to school to get her a master's degree in education, ultimately taking a position at Parker Middle School. Married to another teacher in the district, Claudia frequently referenced her own daughters during interviews and the team's planning sessions, particularly her daughter who was in 7th grade at the time – the same grade the team taught.

During this study, Claudia was in her 20th year of teaching middle school science. In recent years, she taught in the summer STEM camp for elementary students. She was also the team leader of the building's science department.

Claudia's Professional Identity Prior to the Project

Throughout Claudia's first interview, she illustrated her perception of her professional identity with stories of her classroom and interaction with students and colleagues. Like Allyson, Claudia's primary perception of herself as an educator was as a nurturer of the skills and values she believed would help students later in life. To that end, she asserted that she built relationships

and held high expectations for her students. At the same time, her descriptions provided evidence of her willingness to be a “rebel” and an advocate for what she believed was right.

Foremost, Claudia described her professional identity as an educator as being committed to building foundational skills students would need throughout their lives. When asked what it meant to be a teacher, Claudia responded “Helping kids grow is the best way to say it.” She further elaborated that this entailed guiding students to develop “intellectually, grow in their maturity level, grow in [their] skill set, and grow in their ability to believe in themselves.” During the interview, Claudia made comments that illustrated how she saw her identity in the classroom as closely linked to achieving this goal. For example, at one point, she described helping each student to become “a good human,” equating this with someone who was “a functional part of society, to be good to the people around them and are able to contribute to the world around them.” Rather than asserting a professional identity in which her content expertise, years of experience, or pedagogical choices were at the forefront, Claudia perceived her professional identity primarily as a creator of decent, participatory citizens.

The secondary status of a content-focused identity was acknowledged by Claudia, who reflected on how this has changed during her career:

I don't think I would have said that from the beginning as well. I'm passionate about science. I feel kids are in need of science in order to make life more interesting. I have gotten upset a lot in the last few years about such a push for ELA and math, when it's science and social studies that are really the things that are really going to interest the kids. And science and social studies have gotten pushed by the wayside. So I want kids to know science because I think that's important, but ultimately, just helping kids grow. In anything, I guess.

Claudia's words reveal her ongoing negotiation between being a “science teacher” and being a “teacher.” Though firmly believing in the value and necessity of science education, and “upset” about its reduced focus in schools, Claudia was primarily committed to helping students mature

and develop. As will be seen later in this chapter, the importance of her content was further minimized as she participated in the work of the interdisciplinary team.

To achieve her goal for students, Claudia's described herself as "firm but fun" in the classroom. Of her students, she stated:

They know there are big expectations in my room. That know that poor behavior is not tolerated and they know... They just know I won't tolerate it. However, once they see that you can be fun and build relationships with them, they rise to that.

The focus on developing strong relationships with students was similarly asserted in her statement that "They know I care. I talk to them about their interests, about any problems they have, just talk to them." Claudia noted "I think I get more invested in kids than some of my colleagues do." These descriptions by Claudia illustrate how she perceives her professional identity as caring and attentive to students.

Claudia's commitment to what she believed was right for students was also evident in the ways she characterized herself. In our conversation, Claudia asserted her willingness to speak her mind when she felt it was warranted: "I'm not one to ever hold back, either. Which is good and bad at times, you know? I don't hold back anything because it doesn't help anybody." For example, Claudia shared a story of requesting her participation in a PBL training that was slated only for ELA teachers and coaches. She felt that, as a science teacher, she too would benefit from this professional development. In fact, this training, in part, was what led her to want to pursue this model of interdisciplinary teaching. Claudia also shared a story of voicing her frustrations with building issues to an administrator, noting that she was very blunt in her statements. Claudia's readiness to assert herself supported her perception that she "is a rule follower, but only to a point." At one point in her first interview, she labeled herself as a "rebel," describing how she deviated from the primary tasks in a recent PBL training to get done work

needed for her team. This label similarly describes Claudia's rejection of the standardization of teaching through department calendars and assignments. She asserted that she did not teach science the same way as other teachers if she felt it was not best for her students: "Asking teachers to be robots is ridiculous..." Taken together, each of these stories and descriptions indicate that Claudia viewed her professional identity as direct, distinct, and motivated to do what she believed was best for students.

Claudia's Role in the Team's Formation

Claudia was actively involved in the team pursuing a project- and interdisciplinary-based focus. This interest stemmed from three experiences: her attendance at a conference for collaborative teams, PBL training, and visits to other schools with STEAM or PBL teams. Claudia shared her initial feelings visiting one of these schools with Allyson: "We spoke to [their] people and their passion was just amazing. What they were doing with kids was amazing. That's what hooked us." Although she had separately collaborated in the past with Allyson or a previous math teacher on the team, she had never done so with social studies or across all disciplines.

Our early discussion of Claudia's goals for the team also revealed her perception of her professional identity. Her comments on the anticipated outcomes for students supported her perception of her professional self as creating "functioning" citizens. Foremost, she mentioned the real-life skills that students would develop, such as "making phone calls, sticking by timelines, being able to collaborate, learning how to diffuse an uncomfortable situation." She believed students benefit from "being asked to think for themselves" as opposed to being "told when, why, and how." While she recognized this can be a challenge for students, she believed her role as a teacher was to prepare them for life outside of school. Interestingly, Claudia's

language suggested a lack of recognition by her colleagues of this important element of her professional identity. Twice during this portion of the interview Claudia referenced other teachers in the building. She commented that “I hope the other teachers will see how beneficial this is for kids” and that students will be asked “to do things that nobody has ever had them do before.” These comments indicate that Claudia views herself as an educator committed to doing what is best for students, even if she did not work in a context that held the same values.

Claudia’s Professional Identity on the Team

Throughout my analysis of Claudia’s interviews and contributions to team discussions, I found many similarities between her professional identity and Allyson’s. Both were instrumental in getting the team to work on interdisciplinary, project-based curriculum; each placed the development of student’s soft skills ahead of content-area requirements; each valued relationships with students and colleagues. Even when assessing the steps each took to support the team’s work, there were similarities. However, despite this likeness, it was clear that these women did not have the same professional identity. Attention to the nuances of how they constructed their identities through their language reveals these distinctions. As will be shown in what follows, Claudia became the *housekeeper*, *macro-planner*, and *advisor* for her team. The construction and positioning of her identity through her language reflected her perceptions expressed during interviews. I will also describe the identity that was noticeably missing from Claudia’s professional identity: *science teacher*.

Housekeeper

Much like Allyson, Claudia used both her actions and language to position herself as a worker. Claudia referenced work she had already completed or would complete dozens of times throughout the team’s planning sessions. In observations and interviews with all of the teachers,

it was clear that Claudia did a great deal of work for the team. This ranged from making phone calls to businesses to creating presentations for Town Hall meetings to working with students on their team logo design. Several times while I was there to observe, Claudia had students in her room and was assisting them while simultaneously participating in the planning session.

Claudia's confirmed this identity as a worker during her second interview: "Allyson and I are always the doers."

However, while it was clear that both women took on many of the team's tasks, there were distinctions between Claudia's work and Allyson's. For this reason, I label this sub-identity not simply as worker, but as *housekeeper*. I do so both because of Claudia's own words and the connotative meanings associated with the term. To be a housekeeper implies caretaking and ensuring that all tasks are accomplished, no matter how small. These tasks may not be viewed as of primary importance, but are necessary and valuable nonetheless. At times, Claudia took on quick yet urgent tasks, such as running to the library to reserve it for an activity or sending an email to other teachers reminding them of a planned field trip. These many small contributions were necessary for their efforts to succeed, but added to Claudia's physical and mental workload. At other times, the tasks Claudia took on had nothing to do with the main project, but were added to enhance an activity or to build morale among the students or the team. She pursued potential volunteer opportunities for the team, organized the students for the school's Halloween activities, purchased shirts and hats for the teachers' Minions costumes, and created a shared parent-teacher conference schedule. More closely related to the primary project, Claudia took on secondary tasks that needed to be accomplished, such as compiling a list of people for student interviews, calling businesses for the walking tour, and filling out student documents for the final field trip. Claudia acknowledged that "In this project, I kind of feel like the housekeeping person. Like I'm

taking care of all the loose ends that aren't necessarily curriculum driven, but those other things that need to be done."

Claudia's language also constructed this *housekeeper* identity. In planning sessions, she referenced tasks she had done (33) or would do (18), putting her only second to Allyson in this regard. More than once, she turned to Allyson to ask her "What can I help you with?" or "Can I do something for you?" This positioned Allyson as the team leader, but also Claudia as her assistant, taking care of whatever needed to be done. Claudia frequently had a to-do list in front of her, making comments such as "Let me write that down and work on that" and "It's on my list. I will conquer that today." This framing of the tasks placed Claudia as responsible for undertaking them, most often in short order. An excerpt from the team's planning session on September 6 illustrates how Claudia's words constructed this identity. This excerpt, though interrupted when the conversation turned to other topics, demonstrates how Claudia positioned herself – and is positioned by Allyson – as a *housekeeper*.

- CLAUDIA: Um... [Ten second pause] So... I have shirt sizes for everybody except for everybody.
 ALLYSON: [I'm so glad you did that. I didn't know you were doing that. I forgot.
 CLAUDIA: I forgot too until last night and I was thinking, um... I have not heard back about the darn posters.
 ALLYSON: Okay.
 CLAUDIA: I emailed them again, but that's what we were going to talk about ...
 ALLYSON: At the Town Hall meeting?
 CLAUDIA: Um, afterwards. On Monday we have Town Hall meeting.
 ALLYSON: [I have to get into this [shared Google calendar]. Alright.
 CLAUDIA: Oh, birthdays. I'm going to call [school secretary].
 ALLYSON: Is [library media specialist] coming to discuss the logos?
 CLAUDIA: Not there.
 ALLYSON: Okay.
 CLAUDIA: That was going to be in class on Monday.
 ALLYSON: Oh, that's in class on Monday.

[Claudia walks over to her phone and calls the main office to get a list of student birthdays. Nathan and Mark enter the room. The conversation changes topic before returning to discussion of the Town Hall meeting]

- ALLYSON: I think we should have the launch be our Town Hall meeting. Like... [turns to Nathan] So a big part of PBL is making sure you have like this big launch, like this big thing.
 CLAUDIA: You've seen our video, haven't you? Like what we did initially? [to Nathan]
 NATHAN: Probably not.

CLAUDIA: I don't mind making a video.

ALLYSON: But what are we

MARK: [There are pretty much video templates, is what they are. And you just put in pictures and videos.

CLAUDIA: Well yeah. He did it on iMovie, which I can do.

[The team has a brief discussion regarding what to include in the video. The conversation then turns to a number of topics (vocabulary introduction in ELA and social studies, volunteer opportunities, a student they will have) before returning to the Town Hall meeting.]

ALLYSON: Um, okay. So Town Hall meeting. What are we going to do? Are you just going to do a video for a launch?

CLAUDIA: Yeah. I'll figure something out.

ALLYSON: Okay.

CLAUDIA: I'll work on it.

ALLYSON: Okay. I feel bad making you do that.

(Planning Session, September 6)

In this excerpt, Claudia referenced four tasks that enhanced the students' experience, but were not integral to the Citizenship USA project: creating team t-shirts, the poster, announcing student birthdays, and a video for the Town Hall meeting. For each of these, however, Claudia inserted comments that she would take responsibility for these second-tier tasks, despite that any member of the team could have done them. In the first segment, Claudia framed her responsibility for the t-shirts as an afterthought, almost forgetting to complete the task. The implication that this task was less important contributed to Claudia's identity as a *housekeeper*, taking care of the forgettable tasks. This sense was similarly present in her next statement regarding her inability to get in contact with a team from another school who had done the poster activity with their students. Though this would have been helpful, it was not necessary to continuing with their work. However, it indicates that Claudia had a "loose end" that she needed to remain concerned with. In the excerpt, Claudia also willingly took on making the video to be shown during their Town Hall launch of the Citizenship USA project. This was a task that any member of the team could have done, something that again enhanced the student experience but was not critical to the curriculum. At the same time, this was not a clear-cut task, but one that would take Claudia

additional time and thought. She stated that “I’ll figure something out,” again positioning her as the *housekeeper* who will sweep up the “loose ends.”

While Claudia positioned herself as a *housekeeper*, she was also positioned by Allyson as such. For example, in response to Claudia’s comment on the t-shirts, Allyson responded “I’m so glad you did that. I didn’t know you were doing that. I forgot.” Allyson’s failure to remember the task suggests its secondary status, while her acknowledgement that Claudia took care of it implied Allyson’s appreciation for Claudia’s housekeeping identity. Similarly, after Claudia stated that she would work on the video, Allyson responded “Okay. I feel bad making you do that.” This again positioned Claudia as a *housekeeper*, taking on tasks that help the team, despite their tedious nature.

In another example that illustrates Claudia’s housekeeping identity, the team discussed the work necessary for the poster activity to occur. Claudia’s words allude to how busy she was, while also positioning herself as instrumental to ensuring that even minor tasks were accomplished.

- MARK: Now are they doing it downstairs? [referring to the administrators]
 CLAUDIA: I think so, yes.
 MARK: That will be cool.
 CLAUDIA: Yeah. I thought about inviting them and then I was like, it just was so rushed, I didn’t get to it.
 MARK: Okay.
 CLAUDIA: Um... Does that work for Wednesday? And then we’re allowing them time to work. I can allow them time in my room to work on their posters.
 ALLYSON: I’m doing I-Ready.
 CLAUDIA: I’ll allow them time in my room to work on posters.
 ALLYSON: Um ...
 NATHAN: [Yeah, I can give up Wednesday too. I can’t do much, you know, with just part of my kids, so we can do posters in my room too. I’ll just need the paper and some coloring supplies. I’ve got colored pencils. I don’t have markers.
 CLAUDIA: [Okay.
 MARK: I have markers if I could just get them back.
 NATHAN: Sure, sure.
 ALLYSON: I have markers too.
 NATHAN: Okay.
 ALLYSON: Um ... Who, do you want to be in charge or who wants to be in charge of explaining the poster activity? [She directs this question to Nathan]
 CLAUDIA: I can.

ALLYSON: Okay. And they are going to do that when? When are they going to do their posters?
 CLAUDIA: Theirs is on Monday.
 ALLYSON: The following Monday.
 CLAUDIA: We'll hang them up on Monday and then, so this is the way I'm envisioning it in my brain.
 ALLYSON: [Sighs] We have
 to hang them all. [Facial expression appears tired.]
 CLAUDIA: They'll all be in there, but we can break them into groups.
 ALLYSON: But we have to hang them up before they get there, is what I'm thinking. Do you know what I mean? Because we can't hang up 120 posters while they're sitting there. It will be chaos.
 CLAUDIA: I don't mind taking my group down to hang them on Monday morning.

(Planning Session, September 16)

This excerpt highlights to the amount of work Claudia did for the team, but also demonstrates Claudia's willingness to take on these housekeeping tasks. Claudia acknowledged her failure to contact administrators, claiming "it was just so rushed, I didn't get to it." This suggests the task was secondary, enough so that it took a low priority for Claudia when she was busy with other work. At the same time, Claudia took on several additional tasks during this conversation. Along with Nathan, she offers to let students complete their posters during her class time. Interestingly, when Allyson directly asked Nathan if he would explain the activity to students, Claudia jumped in to say she would do it. This was not questioned, and the conversation continued. Though this explanation later occurred during the Town Hall time in which all teachers were present, preparing for and carrying out this task added to Claudia's to-do list. Finally, Claudia also offered to hang all 120 of the students' posters. Each of these tasks were ones that any of the teachers could have taken on, yet it was Claudia who spoke up, using her language to take responsibility for them.

Evident in this excerpt is an immediate action taken by Claudia that positioned her as a *housekeeper*: calling the school secretary to get a list of student birthdays. As previously mentioned, this type of action was typical of Claudia, as throughout the planning sessions, Claudia took care of chores that could quickly be crossed off the team's to-do list. Her language also positioned her as such. Rather than waiting until planning sessions were over, Claudia

frequently told the group she was going to send an email, start a shared document, or call a colleague for information immediately. Though these tasks were small, the swiftness with which Claudia took them on suggests she viewed it as her responsibility to do them, contributing to her identity as a *housekeeper*.

Claudia did not shy away from the work that needed to be completed for the team. Some may consider the identity of *housekeeper* as having a negative connotation, as if Claudia, too, was less important to the team. However, this is an inaccurate interpretation. Although the tasks that needed to be completed were not always central to the team's project or curriculum, they enhanced the student experience or were some of the many tasks that had to be completed to keep the team functioning. This work required time and emotional energy that could be dedicated to other things. Nevertheless, Claudia perceived her *housekeeper* identity as necessary. When asked about it, she shrugged and responded: "The housekeeper I think kind of needs to happen... It's got to get done. Let's do it, you know?"

Macro-Planner

Claudia's identity as the housekeeper for the team was complemented by an identity as a *macro-planner*.¹ While sweeping up any loose ends, she also took management of the master plan. She positioned herself as responsible for ensuring the team had a long-range schedule and plan for their activities. During planning sessions, Claudia usually had her own calendar open in front of her. At times when the team used a large, white-board calendar, it was Claudia who filled it in as they spoke. Claudia also used her language in a number of ways to construct this identity, including asking questions, raising considerations, and adding ideas that brought the group's attention to how the activity would fit into the team's calendar.

¹ I differentiate this from a micro-planner, which I consider an identity that focuses on the logistics of specific blocks of time, such as the planning of a Town Hall meeting.

More than any other teacher, Claudia frequently asked questions about when events would occur and clarified steps that needed to be taken to get there. For example, when discussing implementing Town Halls, she asked questions about which day of the week it would be held and how often. She inquired about what periods students would gather in the auditorium and whether dates for certain activities would need to move. When discussing the Citizenship USA project, she asked questions such as “Should we break into groups here, on October 30?,” “Can we do that tomorrow?,” and “Do we go to [off-site location] at the beginning and the end? Or do we go just once?” These types of questions focused on the *when* of activities, constructing Claudia’s identity as *macro-planner*.

The ideas and points Claudia added to the team’s discussions frequently concerned the scheduling of activities. For instance, Claudia suggested potential dates for the ropes course field trip, the poster activity, and a potential community night at the end of the project. Similarly, the considerations Claudia raised overwhelmingly pertained to the broader schedule. For instance, she brought up responsibilities that might interfere with their team planning on superintendent’s conference days and inserted statements that prompted the group to think about adult availability when selecting a day for student interviews. When discussing the scheduling of the Citizenship USA project, Claudia added a number of considerations about the time students would need to create products for their businesses to sell, practice their radio advertisements, and prepare the businesses’ paperwork. Each of these considerations influenced how the team thought about the overall schedule.

The following excerpt exemplifies how Claudia constructed this identity through her language. For part of the planning session, the team discussed a barbeque they were throwing for

their students and parents. Prior to this segment below, they had turned to other topics of discussion. Claudia then interjected to return to the topic of the barbeque:

CLAUDIA: Were we .. I'm sorry. I feel like I'm beating a dead horse here. The 23rd is a Monday. [looking at shared calendar] That's the [historical site] day, which is the day that we talk about our posters. Are we changing it to the 24th? I was just going to include it in the email to Linda.
[Five second pause]

ALLYSON: Okay, sorry. [looks up from her computer] Say it again?

CLAUDIA: We're doing our posters for our piece of the puzzle thing on the 16th. Monday, the 16th.

ALLYSON: [Okay. [Okay.

MARK: Right.

CLAUDIA: And then the next Monday we talked about having our kids hang theirs and we could have them, but that's the [historical site] trip.

ALLYSON: Correct.

CLAUDIA: So are we bumping that to the 24th?

ALLYSON: I don't see why not.

NATHAN: Or do you want to go to Friday of that week?

CLAUDIA: Friday the week before?

ALLYSON: [The 27th ?

NATHAN: No. If we introduce it on the 16th.

CLAUDIA: That's [ropes course field trip].

ALLYSON: [That's [ropes course field trip].

NATHAN: Oh shit.

MARK: That's right.

CLAUDIA: So I think we have to do the 24th.

NATHAN: Yeah.

ALLYSON: I think that's fine.

MARK: Is that when we are doing it?

CLAUDIA: [Or we could do the 19th, but I almost think it might be better after we've ...

ALLYSON: Done our ropes course?

MARK: After [ropes course field trip]?

CLAUDIA: Yeah.

MARK: Okay.

CLAUDIA: So the 24th?

ALLYSON: Okay.

MARK: So the 24th and they are making their posters?

CLAUDIA: They'll make them throughout that week. We'll hang them so they are ready. So maybe while you are gone on the 23rd, oh no, we are all going on the 23rd .

ALLYSON: We are all going?

MARK: No.

CLAUDIA: [Or are we not? No.

MARK: No. Social studies department is going.

CLAUDIA: So we can hang posters on the 23rd and have it ready for the kids to come in.

ALLYSON: Yeah. I'm just going to put in red the things that we need to do. [typing into shared task list]

NATHAN: That might be a short town hall if that is all we do that day.

ALLYSON: Yeah.

CLAUDIA: So we need to make sure we sign out the auditorium for Tuesday the 24th. That's what I'm putting in here [shared task list].

(Planning Session, July 11)

In this excerpt, Claudia repeatedly asked questions to determine the appropriate date for the team barbeque, both suggesting potential dates and considering those raised by others. She did so despite potential annoyance to her colleagues: “I’m sorry to beat a dead horse.” It is clear that Claudia had a firm understanding of other events on the calendar (ropes course trip, historical site trip). She also answered Mark’s question about the schedule, going on to talk through the plan for the poster activity, comparing it to the calendar. Each of her contributions to the conversations positioned her as the *macro-planner* for the team. She ensured that all activities fit into the schedule, adding to the shared calendar and task list. This positioning as the *macro-planner* is evident throughout the planning sessions.

Although not as frequently, the others positioned Claudia as a *macro-planner* as well. One way this was evident was in the number of times that Allyson directed questions about particular dates or the overall schedule to Claudia. For example, she asked – and Claudia answered – questions about dates for the Citizenship USA field trip, when to have the students meet with their business groups or work on aspects of the project, and the schedule for all-school assemblies and workshops. Thus, in these conversations, Claudia’s *macro-planner* identity was further constructed.

For teachers working together, it is unavoidable that discussions must turn to the *when* of activities and events. However, it is not inevitable that one person takes the position of overseeing the team’s calendar. In this team’s interactions, Claudia constructed this identity of *macro-planner*. When asked about it, she acknowledged her tendency to focus on the schedule: “I’m a calendar person, so I have to write it on a calendar so I can visually see it.” Her need to “see” the team’s overall schedule, whether physically written in front of her or in her mind, resulted in this distinct identity in the context of the team’s work.

Advisor

Claudia also presented the sub-identity of *advisor*. By advisor, I mean that Claudia took a key role in guiding the direction of the team's work. Although Allyson was clearly the team leader, Claudia could be considered her right-hand woman, offering her thoughts and suggestions across topics. This identity complemented her *housekeeping* identity. As previously noted, several times during the planning sessions Claudia asked Allyson how she could help her, taking on secondary tasks that relieved Allyson of work and positioning Claudia as Allyson's helper. This is not to say that Claudia's work wasn't integral to the team's efforts, but that the identity she constructed was not one of leading the team, but of a vocal, committed team member. Like any good advisor, Claudia did not appear to hold back on what she thought, assertively voicing her opinions. The dynamics of Claudia's interactions with the Allyson, the inclusion of her comments across a range of topics, and her assertive opinions all contributed to the creation of Claudia's advisor identity.

Data from field notes, interviews, and planning sessions reveal the mutual support provided through Claudia and Allyson's interactions, as well as Allyson's positioning of Claudia as an advisor. Despite Allyson's identity as the *team leader*, it was Claudia she turned to for advice. For example, several times in the early weeks of the school year, she looked to Claudia for advice on how to handle a significant issue with her school email or a difference she had with another colleague. As the year progressed, Allyson vented her frustrations to Claudia and vice versa, often after the rest of the team had left the meeting sessions. Within the planning sessions, it was to each other that they directed the most questions and the other's questions that each answered most frequently. It is important to note that the relationship between these women prior to being part of the interdisciplinary team unquestionably impacted their dynamics and identities

when together. They already had a strong personal relationship, as they were friends outside of school. They had previously done small, interdisciplinary projects together. They were also both integral to the implementation of an interdisciplinary team using model of teaching, sharing similar goals for the work. Their prior experiences thus influenced their interactions and the identities each presented during this study, including Claudia's identity as an *advisor*.

The types of comments Claudia inserted into the team's conversations, as well as the ways these were phrased, similarly contributed to her identity as an *advisor*. All of the teachers raised points or brought up information that needed to be considered before the team could make a decision. Claudia, however, added the most of these considerations, suggesting that she frequently influenced the course of the team's thinking even when not leading the conversation. Claudia did not limit her involvement to only certain matters, but stated her considerations and opinions across a range of topics. She added her thoughts regarding students, school personnel, curriculum, and team activities, indicating her willingness to participate in the team's discussion and work. She did not appear to hold back her views, even raising opposing views simply for the sake of it. For example, she asserted that "I'm going to play devil's advocate" when discussing changing the master school schedule. She also contributed her opinion more than any other teacher, inserting 111 such statements into the team's planning sessions, compared to only 84 by Allyson, 79 by Nathan, and a mere 25 by Mark. Claudia's language was direct and assertive when doing so. She was twice as likely to phrase her opinions as declarative statements (I think..., I loved..., We should...) than to use softening language (maybe, almost, etc.) to qualify her beliefs. The following two excerpts illustrate how Claudia's language constructed her identity as an adviser who was not afraid to say what she thinks:

ALLYSON: We need to get ready for our Town Hall meeting tomorrow.
 CLAUDIA: Yes.

ALLYSON: So I was going to put some pictures up of, in the slide show, the Town Hall meeting 9-23? But it's really going to be 9-24.

CLAUDIA: Yes. Change that.

ALLYSON: [It's really 9-25. So I'm going to put some pictures in there of the [ropes course field trip]. Um, I don't think we need the purpose of the Town Hall meeting because we already talked about that. [Looking at the slideshow on her computer as she talks]

CLAUDIA: I think we need to revisit that. And just say this is why we are doing these, just quickly.

ALLYSON: [Leave it up? [Yup!

ALLYSON: Yup. Sure. Yeah.

MAYA: Do you want pictures from the cookout?

ALLYSON: Oh, that'd be great.

CLAUDIA: Because the first day was kind of crazy.

(Planning Session, Sept. 24)

CLAUDIA: Alright. So should we on Thursday

ALLYSON: [Shoot. We need spelling bee people. Not spelling bee, we need students of the month. Sorry. Go ahead. Finish this up and we'll do students of the month. ... And [administrator] asked me to put together a letter for parent conferences.

CLAUDIA: [Which, by the way, that should have gone out already.

ALLYSON: [Administrator] asked me to draft a letter for parent-teacher conferences on how that should be scheduled, so if anybody has any suggestions, I'd love to hear them.

MAYA: In what way?

CLAUDIA: [I think that's a lot to ask of you.

ALLYSON: I know.

CLAUDIA: Considering what we are doing right now. Thinking that he wanted PBL to put care packages together.

ALLYSON: I know. That's not even our deal.

CLAUDIA: Somebody's got to tell him. That's not PBL!

ALLYSON: Right.

MAYA: That's not PBL.

CLAUDIA: [It's community service.

MAYA: That's community service.

(Planning Session, Oct. 24)

In each of these excerpts, Claudia was confident and candid in articulating her viewpoint. In the first, Claudia both told Allyson what she should do and gave her opinion. First, regarding a slideshow, Claudia directly instructed Allyson to "Change that." When Allyson stated that part of the slideshow should be removed, Claudia expressed her opinion, stating "I think we need to revisit that." She did not command this to happen but was not hesitant in expressing her view. She did not ask for Allyson's thoughts on her opinion and, indeed, Allyson went along with what she said. In the second excerpt, Claudia conveyed frustration about a task that Allyson had been asked to do by an administrator. It is evident that Claudia disagreed with Allyson taking on this

task, talking over both Allyson and Maya to voice this opinion. Again, we see direct language: “that should have gone out already,” “I think that’s a lot to ask of you,” and “Somebody’s got to tell him.” Later in the conversation, she provided feedback to assist Allyson in this task, yet she had already made her displeasure known. This excerpt illustrates this assertive, yet helpful advising identity.

Claudia positioned herself as *advisor* and was positioned by Allyson as such. As shown in the examples above, and evident throughout the team’s planning sessions, Claudia provided suggestions and advice, but was assertive in her point of view and frank in her assessments. This was never contested by her colleagues, indicating her right to do so. Through this language, Claudia constructed the *advisor* identity. When asked about her identity as an assertive advisor, Claudia confirmed my interpretation, yet also appeared to wrestle with the implications of being too direct:

I do think I’m assertive in certain ways... But at the same time... Sometimes I think it helps because it’s like, ‘Okay. This is what we’ve got to do. Let’s do it.’ But then it probably... Like Allyson is not assertive, so I hope that I don’t step on her toes.

Claudia was aware of and acknowledged her *advisor* identity, but her comment also indicates her negotiation with this identity. Although she asserted the importance of this identity, she also recognized it might not be received positively, particularly by Allyson. This suggests, at some level, Claudia had to navigate whether and when to construct or present this identity.

Missing Content Identity

One sub-identity that was noticeably lacking from Claudia’s overall professional identity was that of *science teacher*. Despite Claudia’s strong advocacy for interdisciplinary curriculum and the model of teaching and learning the group was using, the integration of science into the curriculum for the Citizenship USA project was minimal. During Claudia’s regularly scheduled

class some science content was covered, such as lab safety, yet these periods early in the year were frequently taken up by team-related activities, such as making Team Curiosity logo and t-shirts. In the data from the team's planning sessions, Claudia was the least likely to reference her content area or her own classroom.

In her first interview, Claudia articulated, yet minimized, this as a potential concern:

I need to see where my pieces are going to fit in. Because it's new and because it's different. Like my standards are new and different. And, really, this project doesn't have any science in it. So I have to figure out where the pieces are fitting in. If you had asked me two years ago I would have been much more stressed about it. Now, I'm kind of of the mindset like... First of all, we have these kids for two years now, so I feel a little better about that.

Claudia's early concerns were mitigated by her sense that she would have additional time to make up content with students after the project. Later in the study, when asked if this science teacher identity was missing, she simply responded: "Yup." She went on to state "I've done very little, I mean *very little* science." However, she continued to perceive this as something that would change as the year progressed: "I'm not feeling stressed about missing the science piece, because I know I'll get it."

Claudia recognized and acknowledged that her identity as a *science teacher* was not prominent as the team planned and implemented the Citizenship USA project. When asked directly about it, she asserted that this omission would be rectified later on. Thus, Claudia was content with a temporary absence of her content identity, yet her desire to present this identity did not go away. As will be seen in chapter 5, other comments during these conversations reveal a tension she was negotiating of the status of her content identity within the context of the team's work.

Claudia's Shifting Professional Identity

The construction of Claudia's professional identity through her actions and language brought some of her sub-identities to the forefront and subdued others. Her sense of herself as both a *macro-planner* and *housekeeper* was enhanced, while the identity of *science teacher* was muted. Complementing Allyson's *team leader* identity, Claudia constructed a role of *advisor*. The context of participating in the planning and work of an interdisciplinary team was vital to the development (or reduction) of each of these identities, as it was in interacting with the team that these identities became relevant. Of course, this is not to say that these identities were created out of thin air, as if Claudia had not had previous experiences that developed aspects of her *macro-planner*, *housekeeping*, and *advisor* identities. Rather, the new types and duration of interactions with members of this team heightened the development and presentation of these identities. Analysis of Claudia's contributions to the team's planning sessions revealed this ongoing development of her professional identity, while our one-on-one conversations indicated that she had mostly positive perceptions of these changes.

During interviews, I probed Claudia's perceptions of her professional identity, asking questions about how she saw this work affecting her sense of self as an educator. As described above, Claudia was aware of the identities she constructed in interactions with her colleagues: "You've pegged me!" However, despite this acknowledgement of her shifting identities on the team, Claudia's responses suggest the key changes to her sense of self were related to what she saw as the outcomes of this work. During her second interview, Claudia stated:

I feel much better about what I'm doing...I think for a while I was stuck in the antiquated way of, you know, here's our lesson for today. Here's your homework. Let's go over the homework. Let's do the next piece. There's your next homework. And it wasn't beneficial for kids. They weren't walking away with a sense of accomplishment or anything real world...So I think it's made me appreciate more what is meaningful and what isn't.

Thus, despite recognition of the physical and emotional energy expelled to undertake this model of teaching and learning, Claudia valued the outcomes and felt “much better” about herself as an educator. This sentiment was similarly expressed in herself in her final interview, when she noted

I think sometimes you get stuck in a rut. I’ve never been the teacher that did the same thing always. I feel like you have to reinvent yourself. But I think that you do get stuck in a rut sometimes of doing the same-old, same-old, until there is an inspiration to do something different.

For Claudia, both creating and stepping into this new context – interacting closely with her colleagues to plan interdisciplinary curriculum and activities, focusing on the development of students soft skills, framing content knowledge as important but secondary – helped her to get out of a “rut” and away from an “antiquated” way of teaching. Moreover, it shifted her perception of herself to an educator who did what was “beneficial for kids” and “meaningful.” Claudia viewed herself as someone who was constantly evolving as an educator, yet was also aware that it is easy to resist change. The desire to avoid change may be due to the increased workload and mental/emotional investment this context requires. Claudia, however, noted that “It’s tiring, but worth it.”

Profile: Nathan

The newest member of the interdisciplinary team, Nathan generously agreed to take part in the study, jokingly asking who would play him in the film version of the dissertation. Like Claudia and Allyson, he was friendly and approachable, if slightly more reserved. He was articulate in expressing his perceptions and I found myself enjoying the analogies or metaphors he used to express his points, such as describing his teaching as a “magic show” with his version of “tricks” that he hopes keep kids engaged. Several times when the team got off-task during

their planning sessions, Nathan and I engaged in side conversations about something he had read, the sports team he coached, or school issues. During interviews, I appreciated his honesty, particularly in voicing frustrations that had not been raised by others.

Originally a chef, teaching math is Nathan's second career. When he was ready for a change, he considered what to do next and teaching seemed like the right fit, noting of his first practicum experience: "I just knew this was it." He earned a master's degree from a state college approximately one hour from the Springfield School District. After earning his degree, he worked in two other school districts, staying at the second for a decade. His wife, also a teacher, worked in a school district on the other side of Springfield, resulting in a lengthy commute for both of them. To reduce this, Nathan applied for a position at Springfield, starting his employment one year before the study began. In total, Nathan has been a math teacher for 13 years.

Nathan's Professional Identity Prior to the Project

Nathan's perception of his professional identity was evident in his descriptions of his personality, behavior and actions in the classroom, and his goals for students. In Nathan's first interview, he frequently referenced experiences at his previous schools, using these anecdotes to support his points. His comments suggested that he perceives of himself as a facilitator for student learning, as well as a learner himself. At the same time, his content identity as a math teacher was both implicitly and explicitly woven throughout his responses.

When directly asked what it means to be a teacher, Nathan stated

I would probably have said early on in my career like I need to be the expert. I need to be able to anticipate all of their questions. And I need to really be able to lay out the information the way that they pick it up easily, and they internalize it, and then can use it. And I've kind of come around more to the idea of like, I don't want to be up front. I want to be on the side. I want to put the conditions there so they see it, they can experiment

with it and play with it and make sense of it, and then we can go. But I'm still not where I want to be, but I'm getting there.

Similar to Allyson and Claudia, the meaning of teacher had changed for Nathan over the course of his career. Rather than placing himself both literally and figuratively at the front of student learning, his professional identity transformed over time, minimizing an "expert" identity so that learning became more student-centered. Nathan's description suggested he viewed himself as a facilitator for learning, creating the circumstances in which students experiment with and apply their learning. Nathan acknowledged that this transformation is ongoing, reinforcing the idea that professional identity development is a continual process.

Nathan's explanations of his teaching style and interactions with students similarly support a professional identity as a facilitator of learning, both invested in his students and in their learning of the content. Describing himself as "goofy" and "willing to make fun of myself," he shared stories of finding ways to connect with students, even when they were disruptive or having a difficult day. He stated that "I'm going to be tough on what we are doing, but I am not going to be tough on you. So I keep giving you multiple chances to get it. And I never rule you out." Similarly, he expressed that "You've got to figure out where a kid is coming from and then you get to the bottom of it. You know, the fear, anxiety, whatever, because I don't think kids come in and they don't want to be successful." Nathan viewed himself as supportive of his students, regardless of their needs or attitudes. At the same time, he believed he held high standards: "Here's the rigor. This is what I'm going for, but I don't have to beat you up to do it. We can make mistakes and we can continue to grow." He considered this a particular challenge in math, as many students enter the course with "a defeatist attitude" that he worked hard to combat.

Nathan's professional identity as a *math teacher* was evident throughout our early conversations. Unlike Allyson and Claudia, who prioritized soft skills development ahead of their specific content areas, Nathan's responses suggest he perceives of himself as a *math teacher* rather than simply as a *teacher*. In the comments made above, for example, his references to student learning were specific to the learning of math content and skills. This is not to say that Nathan was not interested in developing other skills, but that his math teacher identity was foregrounded. As will be shown, this was similarly evident in comments he made about his goals for interdisciplinary, PBL-based learning and, moreover, in the data from planning sessions.

One clear theme from Nathan's initial interview responses was his willingness to be a learner himself. This was articulated through references to books he had read, math scholars he followed on social media, and comments of new teaching methods he wanted to try. For example, at one point, he referenced research about the brain he had recently read, noting "That stuff is just fascinating to me. And sometimes it confirms what you already do in class and sometimes it is just the opposite." In making this statement, Nathan constructed an identity as a learner, particularly one who learns in order to improve his craft. Nathan's positioning of himself as a learner was significant to his desire to join the interdisciplinary team.

Joining the Interdisciplinary Team

After initially holding an AIS position in the district, Nathan joined the interdisciplinary team mid-way through the year prior to the study. Nathan was drawn to working with an interdisciplinary team for several reasons, anticipating benefits for both himself and his

students. One of these benefits was the opportunity to disrupt the siloed nature of his discipline:

It's the idea that like, no matter what the project is, it's the four of us collaborating and taking down the walls that are artificially put up. Because in the real world, math is not separated, you know? It is all part of it.

Statements such as this one again positioned Nathan's *math teacher* identity as central to his professional identity. His words suggested that his desire to work across content lines was not to minimize, but enhance students' understanding of the application of math. The ability to view math through the lens of other content areas was also appealing to Nathan himself, who previously had limited opportunities to collaborate across content areas: "...part of the attraction of PBL is to see it from that side. Because I don't." Similarly, in discussing what he hoped to accomplish as part of the team, Nathan first discussed the incorporation of math with the other content areas: "I want to see the math integrated into everything else, you know? I want to see my content, those subsets of skills or whatever mixed into it." He also hoped students would see the "real world application" of math:

I want my kids out of 7th grade, like rounded off and knowing that math plays a role. It's not just, I'm not teaching the Pythagorean theorem because it's something some famous theorem. It's when you are a carpenter you can use it, or when you design computer software for video games it needs to be a part of it.

Despite the primary nature of his math identity, Nathan – like his colleagues – also hoped to develop students' soft skills. Describing these as "all the stuff that was traditionally taught at home," Nathan's language suggested that he perceived of his professional identity almost as a surrogate parent, instilling life skills and morals within his students: "It's introductions. It's looking people in the eye, shaking hands, small talk, how to carry yourself, how to speak in public. Politeness. If you see a paper in the hall, you pick it up. Right and wrong."

While he spoke of many attractions to joining the team, he also acknowledged the difficulty of not yet having a shared history with the team or the relationships with the others held: “It was kind of like showing up to your in-laws party, you know, for the first time. And they talk about ‘Oh, Uncle Joe used to do this and do that’ and you are like [shrugs].” Because of this, he stated that he took a more reserved stance to team meetings: “I really wanted to learn from them, to know them, and walk in with just hands up and be like ‘What can I do?’” As will be shown in Chapter 5, navigating the tension between taking a secondary role and voicing his thoughts would be an ongoing negotiation for Nathan. Despite this, Nathan’s early comments indicate an initial enthusiasm to be part of this team: “They are all about celebrating a kid’s success and moving them up.”

Nathan’s Professional Identity on the Team

As the newest member of the team and to this model of teaching, Nathan had the greatest potential for shifts in his professional identity. I was particularly interested in how Nathan navigated these shifts, as this could give insight into how teachers completely new to interdisciplinary collaboration understood themselves in its context. Like the others, Nathan constructed a number of sub-identities through his language in the team’s planning sessions and during interviews. Whereas I found many similarities between Allyson and Claudia, I found several clear distinctions with Nathan’s professional identity. Nathan constructed the sub-identities of *micro-planner* and *experienced rookie*, the latter a complex identity that was in constant negotiation. He also affirmed his *math teacher* identity, his language making his content identity more prevalent than anyone else’s on the team.

Micro-Planner

Nathan's contributions to the team were vital when determining the logistics of key activities, particularly the planning of the Citizenship USA project. Through his language, Nathan constructed the identity of *micro-planner*, in distinction to Claudia's *macro-planner* identity. I give this aspect of Nathan's professional identity the label of *micro-planner* for two reasons. In one sense, this label conveys the attention Nathan paid to the coordination and organization of specific lessons. In another, it reflects Nathan's targeted focus on the team's main Citizenship USA project.

This first sense of Nathan's sub-identity as a *micro-planner* is evident in his language during the team's conversations. His contributions to the discussion frequently concerned the logistics of specific periods of time, such as the team's block time, or the next steps in the curriculum. For the latter, he inserted comments that turned the conversation to the upcoming sequence of lesson topics and who would be teaching each piece. He also asked questions clarifying his understanding of the organization of time, such as asking about the breakdown of activities involved in Town Hall meetings. He also talked through his understanding of the team blocks in ways that revealed his nuanced, procedural thinking. An example of this is illustrated in a discussion from their October 21 planning session. In this excerpt, the team discussed the training for the groups of students with similar jobs in the Citizenship USA project. Each teacher was responsible for one group of students and would then switch groups with another teacher to cross-train students.

- MARK: Do you want to, are you good on the switch or what do you want to do?
- NATHAN: I don't care. We could just say at the half hour mark, but I don't know how long it will take you to settle them and [inaudible] tomorrow or not.
- MARK: What time tomorrow?
- NATHAN: I'm figuring it won't be more than a half an hour.
- MARK: What time will you start?
- NATHAN: Probably I'll give them five minutes. They report to 2nd. We take attendance, then they'll split up. So second period starts at 8:07. If they are in the rooms in 8:09, give them five minutes to get their act together, that's like 8:14. So that's 8:45 roughly. Probably the end of 2nd period, I'd say. If that works for you.

MARK: Okay.
 NATHAN: And we have to figure a drop-dead time for them too.
 MARK: And we have to do both of these? [looking at curriculum]
 NATHAN: If that's not enough, take more time. You call me.
 MARK: We have them until 4th period.
 NATHAN: Yeah. We're not going to go into that. [Turns to Claudia and Allyson, who are having a separate conversation] How long do you think your training is going to take?
 CLAUDIA: I have no idea. Am I switching?
 NATHAN: We are switching at about 30 or 40 minutes in.
 CLAUDIA: Yeah, but who are you switching with?
 ALLYSON: You are switching with me. You are switching with me.
 CLAUDIA: Me?
 ALLYSON: Yes.
 NATHAN: I'm just thinking like, when I finish my second group, how am I going to know to release?
 CLAUDIA: You can call each other.
 NATHAN: Okay.
 CLAUDIA: Right?
 ALLYSON: Yeah, I think, I mean I think so.

(Planning Session, Oct. 21)

In this excerpt, Nathan provided his expectations for the timing of the lesson plan and eventual switching of student groups. He elaborated on his thought process, talking Mark through the logistics of how long it will take for each task (taking attendance, giving students time “to get their act together,” etc.) before they will be able to switch. Interestingly, it was not Nathan who initiated this discussion, but Mark who positioned Nathan as the authority on this decision. Similarly, it is noticeable that Claudia and Allyson did not have authority of this decision, as Nathan was the one to prompt them to even think about the timing of these periods. While Claudia and Allyson answered Nathan’s question regarding knowing when to release students, their comments of “Right?” and “Yeah, I think, I mean I think so.” Suggest that they were unsure of their answers. Overall, through this segment, Nathan positioned himself and was positioned by others as responsible for the logistics of a specific block of time, constructing the identity of *micro-planner*.

While the above excerpt is emblematic of Nathan’s tendency to focus on the details of the team’s block periods, I also give him the label of *micro-planner* due to the topics that Nathan

engaged with in team discussions. His contributions primarily took place when the team was discussing their main interdisciplinary activity, the Citizenship USA project. Although Nathan contributed to the discussions of additional activities, such as the walking tour or team barbeque, most of his ideas, opinions, or considerations pertained to the Citizenship USA project. For example, of the 60 questions Nathan asked during planning session segments, 34 of these pertained to the Citizenship USA lessons and schedule. Only nine were about other activities they did. When he referenced work he had done, 14 of the 23 instances referred to covering Citizenship USA lessons in his own classroom, while only 5 referred to the other activities. Of the 44 instances of Nathan sharing his knowledge with the team, 20 of these were related to the main project, while only 1 had to do with other activities the team was doing. Moreover, Nathan remained far quieter during conversations about other activities than he did during those about the Citizenship USA project. Of the 110 segments of conversation dedicated to discussing the project, Nathan only remained quiet during 11% (12/110). However, of the 61 segments discussing other activities in which he was present, he remained quiet 26% of the time (16/61 segments). Each of these statistics suggest that Nathan views his primary responsibility as addressing the main interdisciplinary project. Rather than a broader conceptualization of what the team's work would look and be like, Nathan directed his attention to a more immediate and small-scale focus. This sense of targeted, concentrated planning constructed the second sense of Nathan's *micro-planner* identity.

In his final interviews, Nathan confirmed my interpretation of these two senses of his *micro-planner* identity. For the first, he acknowledged that Claudia as more of a *macro-planner*, or "conceptual, the big-picture," while he thinks about the more immediate. He added that he tried to think about their plans from the perspective of students: "I'm like, okay, I'm a kid walking in

the room. What am I seeing? What am I expected to do? What is the information given to me? How is it laid out? Because I have to do that for my own stuff.” Nathan similarly recognized his focus on the main Citizenship USA project, as opposed to all of the other activities. When asked about the work that the other teachers did for the additional activities, he noted that

I kind of felt bad about that, because I sometimes felt left out or I was like... They would take over and if it was just easier for them to do that. I had [coaching] going on for part of it, and the other part was just... I don't know. I didn't step in and say 'I'm doing this.'

With this statement, Nathan acknowledged his focus on the primary curriculum and project. It also revealed some of the issues that Nathan navigated over the course of the team's planning: where to put his efforts, when to be assertive or not, and feeling part of the team. The negotiation of this tension will be further explored in chapter 5.

Nathan's *micro-planner* identity was again evident when I asked him how this was going for their latest project.

A little different in the fact that I have much more my own standards I put in. I'm a little pushier about it, I think. I don't want to be pushy, but I'm also kind of insistent on, like, the brass tacks end of it: What's next? What's next? What's next?

His insistence that the team thoroughly organize the “brass tacks,” or immediate, practical details, again constructed the identity of one who focuses on short-term, specific logistics. Interestingly, this comment also reflects another of Nathan's sub-identities – that of *math teacher*. In stating that “I have much more of my own standards I put in,” Nathan indicated that the importance of his content identity. In what follows, this will be further elaborated upon.

Math Teacher

Nathan's identity as a *micro-planner*, particularly in the second sense of the term, was complemented by the construction of his *math teacher* sub-identity in interviews and the team's planning sessions. Far more than for the others, this content identity was prevalent in team

conversations. This was evident in three distinct, yet related ways. First, Nathan's contributions to team conversations about his work was primarily about the math aspects of the Citizenship USA project. Second, Nathan raised concerns multiple times regarding not having enough time for his regular math content. Third, when Nathan solicited feedback from the team regarding students, it frequently concerned their progress in math class.

Nathan's *math teacher* identity was most prominent in his focus on the math components of the Citizenship USA curriculum. In the team's initial planning sessions, Nathan pointed out the connections to math, such as adding, subtracting, and multiplying positive and negative numbers or learning vocabulary terms like debits and credits. In later sessions, he brought up different aspects of the curriculum he would cover in his classroom, such as completing a checkbook register or personal budget. For example, in the following excerpt from the October 15 planning session, he discussed teaching students to use a checkbook and complete a business plan:

- ALLYSON: Okay, um... So in math, you guys are doing checkbooks? Is that Theme Four?
 NATHAN: I think the checkbook stuff was earlier on. But I'll do the checkbooks and I'll do a business plan. A
 ALLYSON: LOkay.
 NATHAN: generic one so that everybody will be exposed to it.
 ALLYSON: Alright. So I'll just put that on our calendar. Checkbooks.
 NATHAN: Theme Four is city spending, personal finance. This week is only two more days. But I'll be to it by the middle of next week.
 ALLYSON: Okay. I'll just put it on, in the middle of... Okay, so checkbooks and business plans?
 NATHAN: Business plan. I might get to the loan application and all that stuff. I just want them to see it one time as a class. And then the first time they see it, it won't be at a group meeting.
 ALLYSON: LYeah. LYeah.

(Planning Session, Oct. 15)

While completing checkbooks and business plans is not the standard curriculum for 7th grade math, each of these allowed students to practice their basic math skills and apply them in a real-world context. Similarly, Nathan agreed to teaching lessons on saving and investing, as well as opportunity cost, because "They are relatively in my power alley or whatever, in my lane." Each

of the instances in which Nathan brought up or answered questions about the math connections contribute to the construction of his *math teacher* identity.

Nathan's construction of this identity in itself is certainly not surprising, as each teacher sought out the connections to their own content areas. For Nathan, however, a content identity was much more prevalent than it was for the other teachers. Following the first two summer planning sessions, the other teachers only occasionally mentioned covering a subject-specific aspect of the Citizenship USA lessons in their classrooms or as their contribution to the team's work. For instance, although Allyson referenced students completing assignments related to the curriculum in her classroom 29 times, this was within the context of 154 other references to work she had done. Thus, although Allyson constructed her *ELA teacher* identity in these moments, it was not presented as a prominent sub-identity because it was muted by the *worker* sub-identity that she constructed. Nathan, on the other hand, was more likely to speak in a way that implied he categorized the math-specific work done in his classroom as his main contribution to the team's work. As noted above, 14 of Nathan's 23 references to work he had done pertained to covering the math-focused Citizenship USA lessons in his own classroom. This focus on the math components of the main project, as opposed to the project as a whole, also enhances Nathan's *micro-planner* identity, as it is a much more targeted understanding of the project.

Nathan also took on other aspects of the project and curriculum that were closely aligned with a *math teacher* identity. Of the four main student jobs, only one was clearly aligned with a specific content area, that of accountant. Nathan oversaw these students whenever they broke out into groups by job placement. Likewise, when the teachers selected which business they would oversee during the mock city simulation at the end of the project, Nathan stated "You could put me in the bank. It makes sense." Again, these are not surprising statements or actions. However,

they construct a content identity for Nathan that was far more prevalent than it was for the other teachers.

A second discursive strategy Nathan used to construct his *math teacher* identity was verbally expressing his concerns over not having enough time for his math content. Despite the math concepts embedded in the team's main project, these did not specifically align with the standards Nathan was expected to cover in the first portion of the school year. Although it never became a main topic of conversation, Nathan made several comments throughout the team's planning time that indicated his frustration. For instance, he raised concerns in the second week of the school year that "I'm already a day behind and trying to catch up" and that he was "giving up class days" for the project. In later sessions he commented that the team's scheduling left him "filling time" with some classes or stating that he wished they could "take a week to do school." These statements, made sporadically but often enough to merit attention, remind the team of Nathan's responsibility for math content, thus reinforcing his content identity. In addition to foregrounding Nathan's content identity, these statements also suggest that he did not see the interdisciplinary project as central to his teaching. This second strategy again placed him in distinction to his peers. Claudia, as described earlier, was very aware of the lack of science standards being met through the project. However, she rarely mentioned science or raised concerns during planning sessions.

In Nathan's second interview, he spoke to the challenge of balancing the team project and his traditional math content:

But I'm feeling at this point like, ugh, I feel really behind as far as how much curriculum I should have covered to this point... This is just, it's so broken up. It's so stop and start, stop and start. Right now we're adding and subtracting numbers. That's like the early curriculum in 7th grade, so that's easy. Positive and negative numbers. In a business application, that's fine. This is kind of an extension. But tomorrow we're doing [student job] training, so no teaching. So my afternoon classes it's review except for the

accelerated kids. Wednesday regular day. Thursday another meeting day. We do business plans. I lose a day. So it's like you lose two days out of five, how are you ever going to...? It's like running a race and you keep taking breaks.

In this excerpt from his interview, he again distinguishes between “his curriculum” and the work students do for the main project, describing a day of student job training as “no teaching.” While I believe Nathan would still consider that day one of instruction for the students, this language suggests that he sees it as extraneous to his primary role as math teacher. In this interview, Nathan also stated that

I'm still a traditional, you know... My state test is coming and I want to do well on it. Which is, you know, not necessarily true as far as I don't have to do well, but there's a part of me that really, you know, as much criticism as the state test gets, the validity or how important it is, it is a benchmark I want to hit. For my own personal pride and for the kids. I want them to do well.

Nathan's acknowledgement of this “traditional” aspect of teaching, as well as his “personal pride” in students doing well on the state test, indicates tension between the collective work of the team and his identity as a math teacher. It also suggests how he perceives himself as a teacher, as students doing well on the standardized test is a reflection of who he is as a teacher. Thus, despite his interest and involvement in the work of the interdisciplinary team, his *math teacher* identity is priority.

The construction of Nathan's *math teacher* identity was also evident in the concerns and considerations raised about particular students. Although all of the teachers talked about students, Nathan's contributions to these conversations were often directly tied to students' progress in his math classes. Multiple times in the planning sessions he sought feedback on particular students from the other teachers, explaining how the student was performing in his course. These concerns often pertained to students in an accelerated math class. This class seemed to be especially of concern to Nathan, as a few parents of students in the class had

expressed concern to him of how the curriculum was being addressed in conjunction with the project. The insertion of these comments and conversations into the planning session again positioned Nathan's identity as a *math teacher*, as they were specific to what was happening in his classroom with students and the content.

Throughout the data from the teachers' planning sessions, it was clear that Nathan perceived his *math teacher* identity as a vital component of his professional identity. During the team's discussion, he presented a number of discursive strategies to construct this identity: his references to the Citizenship USA work done in his classroom, the concerns he raised regarding math content, and in soliciting feedback on students. He confirmed this identity as integral to his overall professional identity in interviews as well, sharing the challenges of navigating the team's work while also preserving his beliefs as a math teacher. This was illustrated in a comment he made in his final interview, when he stated that he wasn't willing to "abandon" the traditional math curriculum:

I don't think that serves the kids well. Because even outside of our PBL project there are still things they have to do. I send them over to the high school in a few years. They have to pass the algebra test. So I'm not willing to take two months off and not do anything for the service of a PBL project.

This statement confirmed that Nathan perceived his professional identity as closely aligned with the *math teacher* identity. This was not a new identity for Nathan during this time, yet as will be discussed in a later chapter, constructing this identity in the context of the team's work created emotional labor for Nathan.

Experienced Rookie

One of the most important sub-identities evident in Nathan's interviews and the team planning sessions is that of an *experienced rookie*. I use this term because of the interesting combination of identities Nathan constructed through his language that suggests one of the

challenges for many teachers undertaking this type of work. Nathan had over a decade of experience teaching at the time of the study. In sharing his stories and knowledge as a teacher, he asserted this experienced identity. At the same time, however, he was relatively new to the school, the team, and this model of teaching. Nathan frequently asked questions, learned from his colleagues, and explained his thinking. He navigated the tension between being competent and knowledgeable with being a newcomer and learner. This negotiation was evident in his interviews and his interactions with colleagues, constructing an *experienced rookie* identity.

In his interviews, it was clear that he viewed himself as a veteran teacher, giving numerous references to previous experiences with students, colleagues, and administrators. He told stories of these interactions as evidence of the points he made. Indeed, even when describing his interest in being part of the interdisciplinary team, he drew on past experiences to illustrate his desire to collaborate with peers, at one point noting that “in the past I’ve been the agitator to do cross-disciplinary stuff.” At the same time, he was drawn to the new perspectives that interdisciplinary PBL would give him: “...we are kind of siloed off. And part of the attraction of PBL is at least to see it from that side, because I don’t.”

Nathan’s substantial experience as a teacher was also something he both explicitly and implicitly raised in conversations with his colleagues. This identity was discursively constructed in three different ways: his references to his old school, his contributions about working with 7th graders, and his comments about managing difficult parents. This first discursive strategy was seen most prominently in the first summer planning sessions. In these sessions, Nathan shared several anecdotes from his time in his previous school. These ranged from explaining how his previous union communicated with teachers to describing the rubric used to determine which students were enrolled in accelerated classes to commiserating about ineffective administrators.

During these sessions and later ones, Nathan also voiced his opinion about best practices when working with 7th graders, noting at one point “I’ve worked with 7th graders a long time” to support his assertion that they will need additional time and support with certain elements of the Citizenship USA project. He also shared team building and icebreaker activities he had done in the past to help students understand grade-level expectations. The final way Nathan presented an experienced identity was in his conversations with the team regarding dealing with difficult parents. In these discussions, Nathan made comments such as “I’ve dealt with a few of those [parents] before, so I think I’ve got an idea” and that he has “...too many years of doing this to take it [criticism from parents].” With these comments, Nathan positioned himself as a veteran teacher who is both knowledgeable and worthy of a required level of respect from parents. Each of these three types of discursive entries into the conversations construct an identity of a teacher who is experienced.

At the same time as Nathan established himself as an experienced teacher, his contributions to the team’s conversations revealed his identity as a new member of the team and school. This was constructed through the types of questions he asked, the tone of his language when giving his opinion, and even in the moments when he remained quiet.

Throughout the planning sessions, Nathan asked a comparable number of questions to the other teachers on the team. The focus of these questions, however, was distinct. In the early planning sessions, Nathan asked numerous questions to help him understand the team’s block schedule system, the logistics of parent conferences, and the characteristics of particular administrators. These questions constructed this newcomer identity, as he had to learn from others about the basic workings of the school and the team. (At the same time, one could argue that even asking these questions reinforced Nathan’s identity as experienced, as he already knew

to even ask these questions.) Nathan also asked Claudia and Allyson to explain particular activities. For example, in the following excerpt from the first planning session, Nathan started a discussion by asking about what would happen in the first Town Hall meetings.

- NATHAN: So the Monday meetings start out the first Monday. And that is the “What is a citizen?” and then we do the gallery walk? Or is that the next week?
- CLAUDIA: [No, I think we do the gallery walk the 16th. Well, they start working on them [the posters] then. And then, because they won’t get it all done that period, I wouldn’t think.
- NATHAN: They wouldn’t?
- CLAUDIA: I don’t think so. Some of them are pretty ... in 3 periods?
- NATHAN: If it is 15, 20 minutes of starting
- ALLYSON: [What if we do, what if we did this
- CLAUDIA: But I don’t mind giving up
- ALLYSON: [Well that’s what I was going to say. What if we even did it, if we did it, introduce it on that Monday, did our piece and then gave them the poster and said, “In English class this week you are going to work on this” or whatever. It’s due by Thursday so that we can hang them. No?
- NATHAN: They see it, it will be fresh.
- CLAUDIA: [But some of these through. Look at these. [shows pictures of some posters from another school on her laptop] These are... Like some of them were just words and some were pictures and words.
- NATHAN: Is this high school?
- CLAUDIA: No, this is middle school.
- ALLYSON: So they are going to put some real time into these.
- NATHAN: Okay.
- ALLYSON: I mean if we make ours really nice, then they’ll see what the expectation is.
- NATHAN: [Yeah.
- NATHAN: That makes sense. Okay.

(Planning Session, July 10)

In this excerpt, Nathan asked questions to help him understand the logistics of what would happen in the Town Hall meetings and even began to elaborate on the timing of the activity, positioning himself both as a rookie wanting to learn and experienced enough to be able to think through how the activity would play out. (The latter aspect also reinforced his *micro-planner* identity.) At the same time, Claudia and Allyson’s explanation of the activity and correction of Nathan positioned him as needing to know more.

This sense of being a rookie was also confirmed by the limited instances of sharing his knowledge of activities other than with the primary Citizenship USA project or on the students they share. Rather, he asked questions about school policies and activities. At one point, he expressed his surprise in learning how challenging navigating these factors could be:

It's funny. I didn't anticipate the hard part is every time we go outside of the building, it is an issue. You know what I mean? I feel like we could be working on, like, fission reactors in here, but as soon as we try to walk out the door...

Nathan's surprise at the additional work necessary to implementing this model of teaching within the context of school policies illustrates the learning he was undertaking during this project.

Another discursive strategy Nathan used to construct his *experienced rookie* identity is the tone of his language when giving his opinion. When sharing his opinion regarding decisions that impacted the entire team, particularly about scheduling of the curriculum or activities, he often used softer language that tempered his opinion. He inserted words and phrases such as "Well...", "I guess...", "I just wish...", or "I would say..." during these discussions. This had the effect of positioning Nathan as either uncertain of his answer or at least willing to entertain other opinions. However, when Nathan gave his opinions about parents or school issues, he used language that was much more assertive. For example, he used phrases such as "How hard would it be to..." (said in frustrated tone) or "I don't care. I'm not touching it." These types of statements were more forceful, expressing his confidence in his opinion. This distinction between how he expressed his opinion with team decisions versus issues that were outside of the context of the team revealed how Nathan navigated the dichotomy of the *experienced rookie* identity. Softening his language when giving his opinion on decisions that impact the interdisciplinary project or activities presents an identity that is willing to learn from others. While, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, this presented identity may hide deeper frustration, this

language nevertheless reflects a rookie status. On the other hand, the more assertive language used when dealing with issues that were less directly tied to the team's work demonstrated that he had the knowledge and experience to make judgments on these outside factors.

The final way that Nathan balanced this dichotomy of the *experienced rookie* identity was not through this language, but through his silences. Nathan remained quiet during conversations far more than Claudia and Allyson, although less than Mark. In his initial interview, he stated that his colleagues were just getting to know him, being warned by his wife to "Go easy. Don't go full personality, because I can bluster with the best of them." This mindset may have contributed to his desire to stay quiet during the meetings. However, it is interesting to note which topics Nathan remained quiet during. Though he participated in the vast majority of the conversations about the Citizenship USA project, he was frequently quiet when the discussion turned to some of the additional activities or when it became off-task. When asked about this, Nathan agreed that he purposely remained quiet when he felt the team was deviating from focused planning. He noted that he thought his teammates also wanted to get focused, but as the newcomer he was particularly hesitant to say anything:

I think nobody wants to say anything because nobody wants to be the person who says 'I don't have time to talk about your kids or your personal problem with this one student. We need to plan out the overall stuff.' And, how would people handle it? I don't know. You know I've only known them for a year, so I don't want to mess up our relationship. If we'd been working together for ten years, I'd probably say, 'Hey! Can we knock this shit off? We have to plan.'

In this statement, Nathan acknowledged that his newcomer status limits his ability to speak up at times for fear it would "mess up" his relationship with the team. By keeping quiet, therefore, Nathan positions himself as a rookie. At the same time, his frustration over not focusing on particular topics of conversation suggests that of an experienced professional who knows the

work that needs to be done. The ongoing tension between these two aspects reflects the dynamic nature of identity.

Nathan's Shifting Professional Identity

Analysis of Nathan's language and actions as member of the interdisciplinary team revealed how he constructed his professional identity within this new context. He took on the role of *micro-planner* for the team, while the *math teacher* identity was prominent throughout the conversations. Nathan brought his experience and knowledge to the team's discussions, yet had to navigate being new to the team and this model of teaching. The ebb and flow of each of these identities suggests shifts in his overall professional identity. However, Nathan's perception of himself as an educator did not change, despite acknowledgement that the context of his teaching was very different than he was used to. Unlike Allyson and Claudia, who acknowledged that this type of work shifted their perceptions of themselves, Nathan did not yet see himself as changed by this work. This is not to say that his identity had not shifted, as this is clearly illustrated in the evidence above, but that he had not yet consciously accepted a new understanding of his identity.

In his first interview, Nathan shared that at his previous school, "there were years where I was really excited to do this project or this cross-curricular thing and there would be just the two of us, you know? I'd get ticked off at my department because they'd be like, 'You can't do that because we have common tests.'" As noted previously, he shared that "in the past I've been the agitator to do cross-disciplinary projects." These statements suggested that he perceived himself as the one pushing for change. However, by his second interview, he made several comments that indicated he was re-thinking this desire for change, including those below:

I've gained some perspective into what PBL is and what's required, because I wouldn't have thought it was this much. [laughs] If you said on paper you are going to meet this many times, do this many things? It's different living through it. But I'd say it was the same as the first year I coached. People said, it was a lot of that commitment stuff. I

said, yeah, right. And then you get in the middle of it and you are like [eyes wide open, indicating surprise].

I'd say it's too early to tell right now [how this has impacted his sense of his professional identity]. I really need to see it played out. It's too early. And when we come out the other side, I think we'll have a bigger long picture of what worked and what didn't, and what could have been better. But right now I'm too much in the thick of it. I'm halfway through making the soup. I don't know what it's going to taste like.

Understandably, self-reflection can be a challenge when one is “in the thick” of new experiences, and recognition of change can be daunting. Thus, acknowledgment of a shift in one's professional identity may not come until a later time. Nathan's descriptions above, however, illustrate his new and growing understanding of what the work of interdisciplinary teaming and PBL entails, and well as what new meanings he may have for himself in the context of that work. While he previously saw himself as one “excited” and an “agitator” for this type of work, here he recognizes that this may have been mistaken. Nathan also shared during this interview that he was unsure if he would want to continue using this model of teaching in the future, a sentiment reinforced in his final interview. This may indicate that a substantial, permanent shift in professional identity might be difficult without other factors that ease the tensions that arise from navigating this identity development. These tensions will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the individual professional identity development of three participants, Allyson, Claudia, and Nathan, was explored. For each participant, a brief biography, description of their initial perceptions of their professional identities, and involvement in the team's formation was provided. Prominent sub-identities for each were then described, examining how the teachers' own words and positioning, as well as the words and positioning by others, constructed these sub-identities. At times, some aspects of their professional identities were

enhanced by their involvement in the team, these sub-identities coming to the forefront of their overall professional identity. At other times, these sub-identities were more muted.

For each of these teachers, the new context of their work - the model of teaching and learning, interactions and decision-making with a team, and a focus on interdisciplinary curriculum rather than their own content area - influenced how they constructed their professional identities, positioned themselves, and were positioned by others. They each used a variety of discursive strategies to do so. These range from choices over when to speak or not, to word choices, to the topics and considerations they raised, to the questions they each asked.

The findings described in this chapter provide insight into individual teacher's professional identity development. They also lay a foundation for another aspect of identity development that will be explored in the next chapter: the tensions teachers have to navigate as they participate on an interdisciplinary PBL team. These tensions, such as those over authority, primary content versus interdisciplinary curriculum, and the value of their work, must be managed by teachers as they undertake this work. As will be seen, these too impact how a teacher perceives and negotiate his or her professional identity.

Chapter Five

Navigating Tensions

As teachers work in the context of an interdisciplinary PBL team, there are invariably decisions to be made about curriculum, pedagogy, and responsibilities. The interaction necessary to make these decisions requires a negotiation of identities, as each teacher asserts or subdues their understandings and vision of the work, affirms or reconciles their perceptions, and positions themselves or others. In the previous chapter, I described this identity construction for three individual teachers: Allyson, Claudia, and Nathan. Multiple identities were constructed during the teachers' interactions with each other, some noticeably foregrounded while others were minimized or temporarily suspended. Despite the teachers' distinct professional identities, the findings from data analysis also showed commonalities that influenced their individual negotiations of identity. Primary among these were tensions that emerged as they each navigated their interactions with the others, including perceptions of authority, inclusion of individual content areas, and the value of their work.

Although there is use of the concept of *tension* in the literature on teachers' professional identities, such as those new teachers experience (Pillen et al., 2013) or those navigated by teacher educators (Hinman et al., 2021), I did not find this term specifically used in any of the literature on experienced teachers in the field. Moreover, nowhere in the literature did I find this term defined, the studies leaving it instead to the reader to assume what was meant by it. For the purpose of clarity in this dissertation, I draw on the definitions of *tension* provided by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Foremost, Merriam-Webster (2022) defines tension as “a balance maintained between opposing forces or elements.” As will be seen, a number of issues arose in which the teachers held different understandings or opinions. The individual teachers balanced

their own views with those of the other teachers, often making compromises they would not normally have to make, sometimes stretching far out of their own comfort zones to maintain team harmony. Throughout, they both consciously and unconsciously determined their own next words and actions, managing team dynamics. It was in the navigation of these tensions that their identities were negotiated. Indeed, I purposely use the word navigate as it implies both action and a journey, each of which reflects the active, ongoing nature of identity development. Some identities became prominent, while others were subdued.

As the findings will show, at times this navigation resulted in Merriam-Webster's second definition of tension: "mental and emotional strain," as the teachers worked to reconcile the reality of the work with their perceptions of the way it - and they - should be. Thus, while in one sense they were externally negotiating with others in that they were discussing, presenting points of view, and coming to a consensus, an internal negotiation of identities also occurred. Although it is not quantifiable, the teachers' words indicate there was a range in the magnitude of how each experienced these tensions, what I will refer to as *intensity*. At times, some of the teachers were able to successfully reconcile a tension, suggesting they experienced weaker intensity of the tension. At others, the intensity appeared greater, the teacher struggling to accept or accommodate factors of this new context. As each teacher managed the anticipation, excitement, frustrations, relief, and other emotions felt throughout the interactions, their sense of themselves was inevitably influenced.

It is also important to note a third definition of tension provided by Merriam-Webster: "a state of latent hostility or opposition between individuals or groups." To be clear, no ill will or hostility was visibly present in the planning sessions for this team (as will be further discussed

later in the chapter). However, the potential for a more open or active acrimony could certainly be a factor for some teams working in this context or as time progressed.

This chapter describes four of the tensions, including those over authority, differing visions, balancing content, and their sense of the value of their work. For each, I will provide a brief description of the tension. This will be followed by evidence of this tension in the language of each of the participants, as well as indicators of how they were navigating it. Rooted in this evidence, each section will also include my interpretation of the effects of this navigation on the construction of their professional identities.

Authority

The most evident area of tension present in the data, perhaps not surprisingly, was over issues of authority. Like Alsup (2018), I define authority as “the ability to make choices without hesitation or repercussion” (p.14). Anytime one person has to work closely with another, tension can form over decisions being made, actions to take, or the division of work. With this team, it was no different. Prior to their participation on the team, the teachers were primarily on their own to make decisions about classroom lessons and practices. In this new context, however, this was no longer the case as all teachers had input into lessons and activities related to the project, creating a space in which individual authority could be asserted, tempered, or challenged. Rather than constructing the identity of *leader* or *expert* as they would in their own classroom, they could construct new identities, such as *subordinate* or *team player*. Therefore, how each managed this dynamic has implications for their professional identity.

It is important to note that this tension over authority was not a blatant one, where one or several members of the team openly argued, but was much more nuanced in the way it appeared in the data. Each team member actively worked to maintain harmony with the others. The

teachers asserted that all members of the team had an equal voice in the decision-making, yet also made comments that indicated a hierarchy of authority. They each made remarks of appreciation for the team, but also voiced the difficulty of giving up control to the group. At times, navigating this tension created feelings of concern and frustration, yet these emotions were rarely presented during their planning sessions. As will be described, the emotional labor of presenting a *team player* identity to the others while remaining quiet on their true feelings also has consequences for their professional identity development.

Equality of Authority

One of the most interesting aspects of the team's interactions was the fine line each teacher appeared to be making between maintaining a respectful sense of equality while also asserting their own opinions and influencing the final decisions being made. As previously noted, the team did not have a predetermined team leader who made final verdicts. Indeed, the team never held a conversation prior to the school year to determine how decisions would be made. This could suggest they saw themselves as equals in the decision-making process with each person having the same authority as anyone else. Each voiced in their interviews that they felt they could openly share their ideas and views. As Nathan stated in his final interview:

I think the nice part about these [team meetings] is that everybody's opinion is respected. Nobody is shooting somebody down for nothing...which I think is the big strength of a good team. Everything that comes up on the table at least gets considered.

Claudia noted in her final interview that she saw everyone on the team as equals, stating "We all have a say in decision-making for our students. We all have things we need to accomplish, and each person's curriculum is just as important." Mark similarly commented, "I see them as equals. I see them as different personalities, but they're all equals." Certainly, the absence in the

data of any of the teachers displaying strong opposition reflects this sense of equality and desire to be respectful of each other's perspectives, opinions, and content needs.

Hierarchy of Authority

Despite this harmony, however, the data shows a clear hierarchy in authority. As described in Chapter 4, Allyson both positioned herself and was positioned by others as the *team leader*. Her voice was actively present in nearly every discussion, often as the one to introduce new topics, raise work needing to be done, and answer questions. Although Allyson solicited the opinions of her colleagues when decisions needed to be made, she was also prepared with her own ideas for solutions or answers. Allyson, Claudia, and Nathan all regularly gave their opinions when it came to decisions the team needed to make (39, 41, and 27 times, respectively), yet it was most often the ideas or actions expressed by Allyson and Claudia that were followed through on. For example, decisions about how to organize the student interviews or walking tour were primarily those advocated by the two women. At the other end of this spectrum was Mark, who only gave his opinion in team decisions 10 times throughout the data. Thus, while each teacher expressed sentiments that everyone on the team were equals, in reality they did not have the same influence over decisions that were made.

Recognition of this tension over authority was also present in the teacher's interviews. The teachers spoke of grappling with when to voice their opinions and when not to, navigating the dynamics of decision-making within the team. Despite Allyson and Claudia being the most influential over the decisions that were made, constructing *team leader* and *advisor* identities respectively, they both articulated the challenges of sharing authority with the other team members. For example, in her third interview as the team planned their next project, Claudia commented:

I think there are definitely times where I feel I need to speak my mind. And there are times where I feel I need to bite my tongue. So, it just depends on the scenario. Like, there's a huge part of me who wants to be controlling about this [the spring project] because I want the science to be right, but at the same time I have to think about myself and say 'You can't! When are you going to do all of that?' So I have to let other people do their part, which is a little hard for me. Not a little. It's hard for me.

Claudia clearly wanted more control over decisions, yet also recognized the need to share the workload in order for the project to happen and to not become overwhelmed by the work. At the same time, she acknowledged the challenges of relinquishing control to others. While she told herself that she had to "let other people do their part," the anxiety in doing so was demanding.

Allyson also recognized the discomfort of relinquishing authority to the others:

I'm a little bit of a control freak, so asking other people to take part in things pushes me out of my comfort zone. And also trusting the rest of the team to say, like, you're going to do this, then I'm done and I just have to trust that you are going to take care of it. And even if it's not organized the way I want, it's going to be fine.

In this statement, Allyson expressed the challenge of giving up authority to others, noting the emotional effort it took to both give up control and be alright with things being done differently than she would do them. Moreover, Allyson's assertion that she must trust the other members of the team to take care of things reveals a component of this tension over authority: not only must one suspend their own opinion, but also have faith that their colleagues will make appropriate and palatable decisions.

For both of these educators, issues of trust and a willingness to lessen their authority had to be navigated. Thus, the *team leader* and *advisor* identities that were clearly constructed and presented were not automatic or autonomous, but in conjunction with other identities, particularly that of *team player*, an identity that is willing to listen to and respect the ideas and work of others. The teachers' statements indicated the navigation of this tension - and identities - was not always

comfortable, but one they were willing to engage in, suggesting they experienced a weaker intensity of this tension.

Mark's statements during interviews indicate that he navigated this tension over authority to a greater degree of intensity. Given the limited instances of voicing his opinions on team decisions during planning sessions, Mark rarely took on an authoritative identity during the study. He was by far the quietest, yet the most veteran, member of the team. His interviews, however, revealed that he at times held different views from his teammates, but was hesitant to voice them. For example, in his second interview, he explained that he felt students would have difficulty brainstorming in one of the team's activities. Although he mentioned his concern to the team during a planning session, he acknowledged in the interview "It was a squeak." Similarly, in interviews he frequently conveyed concerns about the scope of their projects, but when asked about sharing these thoughts with the team, he responded "I think I brought it up maybe once or twice and maybe I'm not assertive enough." Mark recognized that he often let the others decide, frequently noting that he was very "flexible" and would go along with what the others determined was best. While Mark may not have always preferred the decisions that the team made, his words suggest that he saw himself as a *flexible subordinate*, someone who was willing to suspend his own authority for the good of the team. He also viewed Allyson as the team member with the most authority, commenting at one point about voicing one of his concerns about the team's decision, but adding "but Allyson wasn't there," as if she must be present for decisions to be made by the group.

The challenging dynamics of negotiating the tension over authority are perhaps best exemplified by Nathan, as he expressed several ideas that reflect the complexity of a teacher's professional identity: a sense of authority based on experience while also being new to this particular context, a willingness to defer to others while also frustration over deferring to others, an

assertion that all opinions were welcomed while also feeling as if all opinions would not be welcomed. All of these were true at points during the study, many at the same time.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Nathan constructed the identity of an *experienced rookie*. It was clear from early conversations that Nathan was proud of his experiences in the classroom, as they had shaped him into the teacher he was at the start of this study. This positioned him as a veteran teacher, on par with his colleagues. He expressed that he was able to openly share his ideas and views when the team was making decisions. At the same time, however, his words indicate he also placed himself in a subordinate role and did *not* always feel he should share his views with the team. While these two aspects are seemingly contradictory, they reflect the ongoing tension around authority that Nathan had to navigate.

As the newcomer to the team, Nathan recognized early in the study that he would be giving up some control to his colleagues, entertainingly comparing the team to *The Beatles* in his first interview:

I think it's the Beatles: John, Paul, George and Ringo. And I don't know if I'm George or Ringo at this point, but Allyson and Claudia are like the two at the top. They take different turns driving home where we need to go.

It is evident that Nathan viewed himself as subordinate to the women, secondary in decision-making and authority yet still an important member of the team. He later noted "I just want to kind of be that support... I think I need to be Ringo. I need to just hit the drum and keep moving us forward." However, despite this initially positive perception of himself as integral to the team in keeping them on track and "moving forward," Nathan's feelings of distress at actually being in this position as the team worked was conveyed in his third interview. While he still asserted that he could express his opinion, his comments show that he limited sharing his thoughts and was not

necessarily happy with the outcomes of decisions. For example, when asked how he felt the planning for the next project was going, he stated:

I've never been... good at hiding how I feel. If I don't say it, you can see it on my face. I don't play cards, because they can tell. But I also don't want to be blunt about it. There's no point in criticizing.

While Nathan stated that he could not hide his feelings, he also admitted that he didn't want to "be blunt" or criticize, indicating that there was more that he was not voicing to the group. This suggests that he had to negotiate where he inserted his opinion on decisions and where he did not. In this final interview, he made several comments indicating his uncertainty about decisions that were made by the team. For example, when discussing the spring project, he made the following statement:

I just don't see. They [Allyson and Claudia] keep telling me it is going to take a long time for kids to do things, and I don't see it. But... I've never done this on this kind of, where it's an open-ended process, so maybe they're right and I'm wrong. I don't know. I don't have any call on that.

Although in the same interview Nathan asserted that "everyone's opinion is respected" and that "everything that comes up on the table at least gets considered," it is clear from his comments above that he had doubts about the decisions made by the team. Moreover, he stated that "I don't have any call on that," indicating a lack of authority over final decision-making. As someone who previously was primarily the sole authority over decisions of what happened in his classroom, these doubts over the decisions made by others and sense that he should limit sharing his thoughts clearly caused Nathan stress.

In the hierarchy of authority for this team, Nathan may not have had the least authority, but his words suggest he dealt with the greatest intensity of the tension over authority. He often presented a *team player* identity, sometimes doing so despite his uncertainty over the actions the

team took. In a sense, Nathan suspended his identity as *authority* or *leader* as he navigated this tension, waiting to see how things went before determining whether or not to assert himself.

Implications for Identities

All of the teachers on this team navigated the tension of authority. While they all asserted that they saw each other as equal participants in decision-making and were considerate of each other's opinions and suggestions, each also grappled with their own participation in and control over final decisions. There was a hierarchy of authority, from Allyson's *team leader* identity to Mark's *flexible subordinate* identity. Their professional identities to each other may have presented as *team players*, considerate and attentive, yet the data show that each struggled with having to relinquish authority to the team as a whole. The negotiation of this tension resulted, at times, in frustration or concerns that each tempered for the sake of the team. When teachers perform their identities in particular ways to "mask" their emotions, it has the potential to develop an identity that is fractured between the identity they present and who they see themselves to be (Hargreaves, 2001). Although none of the teachers in this study stated that they were not the identities they presented to the others, the frustrations each expressed in interviews - but not in conversation with each other - suggests they were experiencing emotional labor. This labor could eventually impact their perceptions of themselves as educators as they try to reconcile competing views of themselves. Additionally, this emotional labor necessary to navigate shared decision-making may lead to burnout (Yilmaz et al., 2015).

Differing Visions

A second area of tension evident in the data was that created by differing visions of the scale and scope of the team's work together. Each teacher entered this work with an understanding of what they believed interdisciplinary PBL should look like, yet their interviews revealed these

visions were not aligned. As will be described in this section, two of the teachers, Allyson and Claudia, perceived of the team's projects as quite extensive and large-scale, with a radical shift from "the way they had always done things." While the other teachers were clearly open to shifting their practices, their visions were much more modest, as they saw greater value in smaller projects that involved fewer teachers and disruptions to the standard schedule. These differing visions were not competing ones, in the sense that the team argued over which to take. Nevertheless, it created a context that each teacher had to manage as they interacted with each other. For Nathan and Mark, whose visions were not being met, the intensity of this tension was much greater. As with the tension over authority, these teachers constructed *team player* identities were to manage this tension. The data also showed additional identities that developed as the teachers engaged with the dynamics of this tension.

Visions of Interdisciplinary PBL

In the teachers' initial interviews, each described their understanding of interdisciplinary PBL and what they hoped to accomplish during the coming schoolyear. For Allyson and Claudia, their perceptions reflected prior PBL training and models they had seen in other schools. These models took an "all in" approach. This included choosing projects that asked students to solve real-world problems over the course of weeks, integrating all content areas into projects, shifting schedules to allow students to meet frequently as a whole group or in project groups, and facilitating interaction between students and community experts on the project topic. Thus, this vision of their work was extensive in scope and scale.

Nathan and Mark, however, had a vision of interdisciplinary PBL that was quite different. Though enthusiastic about the team's work, they envisioned projects that involved only two or three content areas and were able to most often be completed within the standard schedule. In

these first interviews, both expressed their excitement for interdisciplinary projects. For example, Nathan commented that he liked “the idea that, no matter what the project is, it’s the four of us collaborating and taking down the walls that are artificially put up” between content areas. He also expressed his attempts in his previous school to collaborate with teachers in other content areas, although his examples only described work with one other content at a time. Mark, too, expressed his excitement at “being able to collaborate with one another.” In the next breath, however, he stated:

And I, the part where I’m hesitant, is that it’s being sold into one mold and one approach about it. And I get that I have not been through the training, and I’ve heard different people say different things, but how we are approaching it... the girls are approaching it in one way, and I think it’s fine, it’s productive, but we really need to hone and tone things.

Mark then went on to describe that his ideal collaboration would include “working at times with just one or two teachers, not necessarily the whole team. And it doesn’t have to be everybody all the time. Because that’s one of the things I have a hard time with.” Thus, even at the beginning of this study, it was evident that both Mark and Nathan had a different vision of the team’s work than the other team members.

Throughout this study, the majority of the team’s efforts focused on the Citizenship USA project and supplementary activities, such as the job interviews and walking tour, that supported students’ “soft skill” development. This regularly brought the students together as a whole group or into their project groups, brought the students into the community and vice versa, and required the teachers to balance their other content curriculum with the team’s efforts. The reality of the team’s work was quite extensive in scale and scope, fitting one vision rather than the other.

Misaligned Visions

The tension created by these misaligned visions became evident in later interviews. Again, it is important to note that this was not a tension between the teachers, in which there was open disagreement or hostility. Rather, it was a more subdued and internal tension, as those whose visions were not being met grappled with navigating between their desire to do interdisciplinary work with undertaking the team's current model of it. As it was Nathan and Mark whose language provided evidence for this tension, it is they who I focus on.

In each of his interviews, Nathan made statements that expressed his appreciation for interdisciplinary PBL and of the work the team was doing, but also his desire to do things differently. For example, in his second interview, Nathan again shared his experiences with attempting to work across content lines at his previous school. He also praised the team for building soft skills and "things that have nothing to do with the curriculum that are still pretty important." However, he also felt that the team could accomplish the same things if they had "cross-disciplinary units instead of this bigger idea." He asserted that he could have completed the content of the Citizenship USA project with only Mark, an idea that was reiterated in his final interview. By this third conversation, he also expressed concerns over initial plans for their next project: "I think if we as a team didn't do a big overarching project, if we did small projects, I think it might be easier and maybe have more impact? I don't really know. At least content-wise, you know?" On the one hand, he expressed his interest in their work and stated that he enjoyed being part of the team, as they "strive to do something extra," yet he also shared his doubts about the teams' decisions of which model to use and even his own uncertainty over what he was feeling. For example, in sharing his concerns over their next project, he noted "I've never done this on this kind of thing, where it's an open-ended process, so maybe they're [Claudia and Allyson] right and I'm wrong."

Nathan's words throughout the interviews suggest a continual vacillation between open-mindedness and skepticism, enthusiasm and doubt, being a team player and disagreement with the team. This demonstrates the challenges of participating on an interdisciplinary team, but moreover, the complex dynamics of identity development in that context. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Nathan's words constructed various identities - *challenger of the status quo*, *team player*, *skeptic*, *veteran*, *novice* - each of these identities presented through his words at various points in the interviews. In navigating the tension over having a differing vision, Nathan took on the effort to reconcile these at-times competing identities.

Mark's comments during his later interviews similarly suggested this effort as he, too wrestled with expressing his desired vision while also sharing his support for the work that was actually happening. During his second interview, for example, he described wanting a more focused model of PBL, yet smiled and chuckled in his next statement:

They [Allyson and Claudia] took is over and made it woof! [moving hands as if to show something exploding in growth] Like this. And I'm like, wow! It started with this [hands together] and then went boom! [explosion movement again]

He went on to say he admired Allyson and Claudia for being able to do a "phenomenal" job of "pulling it all together," but also mentioned that doing so made them stressed. Later in the interview, he expressed concern over the sustainability of the team's efforts, worried that they would not be able to keep up the pace and amount of work entailed in planning for the projects: "We could back off on some of these things and not make it so grandiose," laughing as he noted "It's almost like we are PBL on steroids." He believed the team would be open to doing smaller projects, perhaps with just two content areas, which would also keep them from being "overwhelmed." In his final interview, Mark again expressed his admiration for the team's work, but also his desire to scale back their projects. For example, he commented "My concern has

always been grandiose [opens arms widely] versus [moves his hands together]. It's like, just ELA and Social Studies. We could have a, let's do a two-week project."

Mark consistently stated his desired vision as differing from their current model in interviews, yet he rarely raised his viewpoint in team planning sessions. At the same time, he spoke highly of the work they were doing and of his colleagues. This dichotomy suggests the tension he navigated this tension by participating in the team's work, opening new avenues for identity development. Mark's comments in interviews presented multiple identities: *team player*, *skeptic*, *enthusiast*, *quiet critic*. This further shows the complexity of identity, as sub-identities can be inconsistent and potentially conflicting, yet still present.

Considering their positioning on the team, it is perhaps not surprising that both Mark and Nathan would feel a tension over differing visions. As previously discussed, Allyson and Claudia were more influential over the team's decisions, resulting in work that more closely aligned with their visions. At one point during her second interview, Claudia even expressed that "Our vision is really what is happening right now." While neither therefore had to navigate this tension, the data suggests that, on some level, both were aware that the others might be. For example, at one point in her second interview, Allyson described the efforts she saw each team member contributing to the team. After mentioning that Nathan hadn't recently volunteered to take on certain tasks, she softened her tone and stated "But he hasn't been trained in PBL. He hasn't gone to any of the schools to see how PBL works, so I don't think it's his fault. I just don't think he gets the vision of it all yet." Similarly, in a conversation about planning as a team, Claudia commented that she wasn't sure if the others "see the big picture of this yet" because of limited experience with PBL. This is not to say that either teacher was blatantly ignoring what Nathan

and Mark wanted, but that they anticipated the others would eventually adjust their visions to the model the team was using once they had more experience with it.

Implications for Identities

In choosing to participate on the interdisciplinary PBL team, each teacher took the first steps toward achieving a particular vision. For the teachers on this team, however, those visions were not aligned. The data described above indicates that the teachers whose visions were not being met constructed various identities as they worked to reconcile the reality of their work with their prior vision, such as *skeptic*, *team player*, *quiet critic*, or *enthusiast*. The tension created by these differing visions opened new opportunities for identity development for these teachers, opportunities that might not have been available outside of this context. These identities are not necessarily brand new but may become more prominent given the new context. The negotiation of this tension - and these identities - may potentially contribute to who each of these teachers in the future see themselves to be, as they work to reconcile the identities that were foregrounded through this work.

As noted in a several studies, the importance of collaborative groups sharing common beliefs, goals, and visions is paramount for that collaboration to be effective and successful (Hord, 1997; Westheimer, 1999; Leonard & Leonard, 2005). Given the data from this study, I would add that aligning visions is about much more than simply agreeing to the same goals or the means to get there. Rather, it is necessary to consider the identity development of each team member as they engage with the process of aligning visions and the tensions that might arise. As noted previously, to construct and present identities often requires emotional labor. Teachers navigating the complexities of identity development may need additional support as they

undertake the effort to accommodate, reject, or at least make peace with sometimes conflicting identities.

Balancing Content

A third area of tension evident in the data was that navigated by each teacher as they attempted to balance their own content area's curriculum and standards with the team's interdisciplinary project and activities. Whether embedded in the project or completed outside of it, all of the teachers were responsible for meeting state and district standards. Three of the teachers also had to prepare students for state exams later that year or the following. Prior to participation on the team, each teacher was able to dedicate their full classroom time to focusing on these standards and curriculum, making their own decisions about what steps needed to be taken to meet those standards. Joining the interdisciplinary team, however, shifted the context of their work, impacting the inclusion and amount of time each teacher was able to specifically dedicate to a standards-based curriculum in conjunction with the team's primary project and supplemental activities. For each teacher, this created questions about how their content and curriculum would fit within the overall team's work. The data indicates that the teachers had to navigate this tension, balancing their content responsibilities with project ones, influencing the foregrounding or backgrounding of their content identities.

As illustrated in Chapter 4, navigating this tension can result in different outcomes. For example, as previously described, Nathan constructed an identity in which his *math teacher* identity was far more prominent than it was for the others. During team planning sessions, he was far more likely than his peers to focus on areas of the Citizenship USA project that were related to his content area or raise concerns about not having enough time for math content. Claudia's *science teacher* identity, on the other hand, was almost absent. This was something she was

cognizant of and planned to rectify. Hence, the level of intensity of this tension varied but was something they all had to manage. Given these findings, I was particularly interested in exploring this tension further in the data. This section builds on those findings, exploring the commonalities and differences in how the teachers navigated the tension. More so than with the other tensions, the data from this study also suggests strategies the teachers used to alleviate this tension. These strategies will be discussed in what follows, as well as the implications for identity construction and presentation.

Initial Perceptions of Balancing Content

In the teachers' initial interviews, all conveyed their responsibility to make sure they covered their content and helped students meet the required standards. For example, Mark expressed that he wanted to make sure "to do the right thing, the expectations of the state and those things." Nathan similarly shared that he "voiced that early on, that whatever we do it has to, I have to be able to get some content done." As noted in the previous chapter, in the first weeks of planning, Claudia "very much felt the need of getting it [the plan for the project] on paper and mapped out. I need to see where my pieces are going to fit in." Allyson expressed hope that the team would have time to examine everyone's standards and how they aligned, sharing that she and Claudia had begun to do so but had not finished.

Despite these pressures, the teachers were optimistic that this would be manageable within the new context of their work. Claudia continued her comment above stating "we have these kids for two years now, so I feel a little better about that." Nathan similarly seemed confident, stating:

But I'm lucky in the fact that I know 7th grade so well. Like when we started to go over the Citizenship USA stuff I was immediately able to say 'Ok, I can do this, this, and this. Fit it in with what we're doing and it will be a piece of cake.'

In these early interviews, the teachers were both aware of the pressure of their content-area responsibilities and optimistic that they could rely on their experience to determine how to “fit it in.”

Varied Intensity of Tension

Once the school year began and the team became actively engaged in implementing the project, it became apparent that their feelings about balancing their content with the interdisciplinary project began to shift. All felt the pressure to attend to their own curriculum, yet the level of intensity of this tension varied among the participants. As described in Chapter 4, Nathan’s *math teacher* identity became prominent in team planning sessions, part of which was constructed when he voiced his concerns over addressing his content standards. At the other end of a spectrum was Claudia, whose *science teacher* identity was subdued, something she acknowledged yet felt she would be able to remedy. The intensity of this tension over balancing content with the team’s work was quite high for the former, much lower for the latter. On a continuum of intensity, Allyson and Mark fell somewhere in between these two. Each shared concern of trying to integrate their content and curriculum with the project, constructing their content identities in the process. As I have already discussed Nathan’s and Claudia’s content identities in detail in Chapter 4, I will focus primarily on Allyson and Mark in this section. However, for all of the teachers the intensity of this tension shifted over time, perhaps due to the common strategies used to mitigate this tension.

In planning sessions, Allyson mentioned her own classroom and content numerous times. As described in the last chapter, Allyson constructed the identity of *worker*. Referencing work with her own content and in her classroom contributed to that construction, simultaneously foregrounding her content identity of *ELA teacher*. In our second interview, however, Allyson

did not raise her own content area until she was directly asked about the integration of her standards. Her response indicated that she, too, was navigating this tension, but had found a means to minimize it. In response to my prompt, she shared her anxiety that she was “a little bit” concerned, going on to describe the desire by the building leadership to move toward common assessments with other English teachers: “How am I supposed to have a common assessment with somebody who is reading *The Outsiders*? I don’t know how that works.” She went on to say:

Yes, I want the kids to read *The Outsiders*. Yes, I want them to do research. But when it comes to life skills, I think they need to be able to write an email more than they need to be able to write a short response to a test question.

Though Allyson was anxious about the pressure to cover her content standards, she mitigated this tension by highlighting a life skill she was teaching that she believed was more important. Later in the interview, however, she noted that in their next project she would have to make sure the English standards were addressed “because I’m very worried about my curriculum and making sure that if I’m not doing certain things [in one project], I’m covering my standards elsewhere.” Despite rarely mentioning her content during the interview without prompting, Allyson was clearly concerned about it. Her language did not construct a prominent content identity, yet it did indicate that she was navigating this tension. This vacillation between not focusing on her curriculum to minimizing its importance to being “very worried” suggests she was attempting to reconcile competing pressures.

It is also important to note that Allyson looked to the next project as the place where these standards would be met. This strategy of speaking to future opportunities to address content is one that was shared by her colleagues, relieving the constraints of the moment, possibly a coping mechanism for navigating this tension. Claudia used this strategy in her first interview,

mentioning that they had the students for two years, which made her “feel better about” getting her curriculum in. Even Nathan, despite sharing his concerns of being behind where he should be at that point in the curriculum, commented: “I’ve got another year to catch them up. So I should be alright.” This strategy of relying on future time to address content was present in later interviews as well.

Unlike Nathan and Allyson, Mark’s content identity was less present in planning sessions. For example, in all of the planning session data, there are no examples of him sharing concerns about his own content. Additionally, out of his 59 references to work he had completed for the team, only 22% were connected to a subject-specific aspect of the Citizenship USA project. Thus, while it wasn’t completely absent, Mark’s *social studies teacher* identity was not pronounced. However, it was far more prominent in interviews, where he frequently referenced his content, whether directly prompted by the interview question or not. In his second interview, he perhaps best described the challenges and dynamics of merging the team’s work with his own content. Although excited about the work the team was doing and its real-world application, he also expressed that he had given up some of his curriculum to do so. When asked his feelings on this, he stated:

But I feel like I’m on a fencepost between, you know, between getting through the curriculum... and I understand that’s important. A key thing that I keep in mind and I’ve already used it before: flexibility. I will chunk whatever I have to in order to be successful in the spring and everything, trying to get through things. So I do feel like I’m on a fencepost.

Mark’s language makes it easy to picture how he or other teachers working in a similar context may feel. They walk a line between their content and their team’s work, “on a fencepost,” at times torn between which takes priority, having to navigate this dynamic. This has implications for their identities as well, as which takes priority: their content area self or their team self. For

Mark, the key to navigating this was flexibility, a consistent theme in his interviews. In this case, that resulted in his plan to “chunk” his curriculum, meaning organizing the curriculum in a way that he could get through key standards in an efficient manner. Relying on flexibility may also alleviate some of the intensity of this tension.

By their final interviews, each of the teachers had several months of navigating the tension of balancing their own content curriculum with the team’s interdisciplinary work. In these interviews, as we discussed the outcomes of the project and the planning for their next one, all of the teachers’ content identities were present. Three commonalities were evident in these interviews of how they spoke of navigating the tension: how challenging it was, the pressures to make sure the students were prepared for high school, and the reliance on the future project to address content standards that have not yet been met.

“That was hard!” exclaimed Allyson when I asked for her thoughts on balancing her content with the team’s work. Mark felt that he had given up curriculum “big time,” adding “We’ll see how it goes this spring.” Three of the teachers, Allyson, Mark, and Nathan, also spoke of the pressure to ensure that students were prepared with the skills and content they would need in high school. Mark, for example, stated:

We do need to get through history. And I know that there are things that they’ll say, like drop this or drop that, but I have a hard time understanding what to drop and what to hang on to. And, then again, do I have to run up to the high school and find out what’s on the test? What do you need? And that’s happened in the past.

This inclusion of a statement that “we do need to get through history” and the need to prepare the students with the content needed for high school - even if it was only that material they would be later tested on - reflects the pressures he felt to meet content-area requirements, contributing to the tension over integrating content with the interdisciplinary project.

Similar to earlier interviews, the teachers made assertions that suggested a strategy to minimize this tension: statements that showed a reliance on future opportunities to make up any deficits. Allyson commented “I am so thankful that I’m going to have these kids again, because I would have been sending them to high school without teaching them research.” Nathan similarly remarked “Because even outside of our PBL project there are still things they have to do. I send them over to the high school in a few years. They have to pass the algebra test.” Later in the interview, however, he noted “Anything I don’t get to [this year], because I’m looping, I’ll have these kids next year. I can start right out with anything I missed.” For these teachers, the recognition of their responsibility to prepare the students for high school and its accompanying pressure was somewhat alleviated by the opportunity of another year with them.

This sense that there would be time in the future to make up content standards was also evident in another commonality between the teachers: their assertion that the next project would address their content needs. At the time of their final interview, the teachers had begun to plan their next major interdisciplinary project. When describing the challenges of balancing content with the team’s work, all expressed confidence that their content standards would be better addressed in the next project. Claudia, for instance, explained that “It will be very science-oriented, so I feel good about that.” Nathan explained “This one I’ve had a lot more impact and I think I’m ready to go. It’s more of a science focus, as you know, so the math side of it is more statistics.” Mark, despite still maintaining some reservations about being able to address all of his curriculum, shared an example from the next project of students working with the local historical association on a particular aspect of the project. “It doesn’t go chronologically [in their study of American history], but it’s like, I’ve got local history in the project. And they have a little bit of history to share with their information.” He also noted that balancing his curriculum with the

team's work was "better because of the example I just gave you," indicating his similar reliance on the future project to mitigate this tension.

Allyson was the most enthusiastic in our discussion of the next project, likewise commenting on its inclusion of her content standards:

Well I think the plan is awesome. And I think it has a lot more standards in it than our previous project, which that is exciting to me because the last time the kids got a lot of real life, real world experience that were super important and helpful and looked good for them in the long run, but this one has that and is was heavy and rich in the standards. That I am really excited about.

Implications for Identities

It was clear from the data that all of the teachers on the team experienced the tension of balancing content with the interdisciplinary project and its accompanying activities. For secondary level teachers, educators who are often described by their content identity (*math teacher, science teacher*, etc.) this may be a particularly difficult tension to manage. The construction and presentation of their content identities, however, varied from teacher to teacher. On one end of the spectrum, Nathan's content identity was quite prominent; on the other end, Claudia's was suppressed. Allyson and Mark also navigated this tension, constructing their content identities in particular spaces, the former more so in planning sessions, the latter in interviews. While there were differences in the intensity of this tension for each teacher, there were also commonalities, particularly the assertion that they would be able to address any deficits in the next project or in time they would have with students the following year.

Given the tensions over authority and differing visions, as well as the initial involvement (or lack of) in the team's formation, it is perhaps not surprising how each of these teachers navigated the tension of balancing content. Claudia and Allyson, who were actively involved in the formation of the team, held the most authority over decisions, and whose visions of

interdisciplinary PBL were most closely met, expressed concern over the challenges of including their content standards, but were overall less vocal about expressing these concerns. Nathan and Mark, later additions to the team and who had less authority and alignment of their vision, had greater reservations about the possibility of adequately addressing their content. Nevertheless, they too expressed that the next project and later time with the students might alleviate this problem, suggesting a refusal to completely dismiss their ability to successfully balance curriculum with involvement in the interdisciplinary team.

Value of Outcomes

The data from this study made evident a fourth area of tension navigated by each teacher: that over whether the value of outcomes outweighed the time, effort, and changes to their practices. Each teacher willingly participated in this new context, each voicing hopes for the outcomes of their work, but also acknowledging its challenges, particularly in terms of the time and effort. All of the participants were veteran educators with an understanding of teaching based on years of experience and therefore a foundation from which to compare this work to their previous. This comparison allowed them to see strengths or flaws in what they were doing, mentally weighing each to calculate its impact. In interviews, all of the teachers made statements that indicated they either consciously or unconsciously were grappling with the question of *Is this worth it?* Although the teacher's descriptions showed differences in their answer to that question, it was nevertheless clear that it was a tension they all navigated. Further, their answers have implications for their professional identities, as the statements they made suggest their sense of themselves as educators was influenced by their perception of the value of their work.

As with the other tensions, the outcomes and intensity of this tension varied among the teachers. Toward one end of a continuum, Allyson and Claudia made statements that clearly

indicated that they believed their work was worth the effort and of great value. Further along this continuum, Mark was enthusiastic about the work the team was doing and saw many benefits, suggesting that he found value in what they were doing, but also commented that it “works for right now.” As will be described, Mark was more reserved than Allyson and Claudia in fully endorsing their efforts. Still further along this continuum, Nathan was the most hesitant in concluding that their work was worth it, waiting until he saw the longer-term outcomes. This is not to say that he did not find value in what they were doing, but that he was not yet sure if the benefits outweighed concerns he had. These variations will be explored in what follows.

Varied Intensity of Tension

Of the teachers on the team, Allyson and Claudia were the most content with the outcomes of their efforts, suggesting they faced the least intensity of this tension. Throughout their interviews, both women made statements that acknowledged the amount of effort the team’s work meant for them, peppering our conversations with comments such as “a lot of work,” “stress” or “exhausting.” However, it was clear they were also proud of the work they were doing, expressing their efforts were “worth it” because students were learning the soft skills they had intended them to.

For example, Allyson, despite numerous times mentioning that she was “stressed,” described feeling that she was a better teacher in numerous ways:

I’m getting them ready for their future. And letting them know that I care about them. That it’s more than just, it’s more than just English class. I feel like I have better relationships with the kids than I have in past years with my 7th graders.

She also expressed her pride that “I’m already very impressed that kids can introduce themselves. I had kids shaking hands with their left hand before... They’re going to be able to hold their own with these job interviews on Thursday, already, for the most part.” This

enthusiasm for students' soft skill development aligned with her goals for them, despite many statements made about the amount of effort involved in this type of teaching. At this point in the project, Claudia similarly shared:

I love what we are doing. I think it's really cool. I think that what we are doing for kids is the right thing. The way that we're doing it is the right way. It's exhausting. So that, you know, takes a toll, but... The outcome to me is worth it.

Both teachers described skills and behaviors they had initially hoped their students would achieve, ones that were attributes they believed would make the students successful in the future and that had real world application. Voicing these successes in their interviews indicates their sense that these achievements outweighed the challenges of their work.

Interestingly, Allyson and Claudia made statements that their perceptions that it was "worth it" was reinforced by outsiders. For example, Claudia shared:

Our vision is really what is happening right now. Like, we wanted to start with them in 7th grade so we could teach them early and not get... Once they've been on a different team that has completely different expectations, and then they come to us and we're trying to teach them all this collaborative, community stuff. And they don't have it. So being able to start them the way we want them in 7th grade is awesome. And we are already even, somebody made a comment this morning 'We noticed the way they came in this morning is totally different.' They were going in and they were sitting down, whereas last year it was like mayhem.

Allyson also commented about outsiders' perceptions of their work, again reinforcing a sense that she saw all of the hard work as valuable. For example, she shared her excitement that "We were in the newspaper. We were on [local media website]. We've hit some really good PR." The inclusion of these statements of validation for their work by outsiders suggests that both feel the tension over the value of what they are doing, but that it is not just them that sees the value, it is others as well. [Of note here is not only this validation, but the teachers' awareness of the other's perceptions of the team. As will be explored further in Chapter 6, at times, these perceptions were not fully positive.]

By the end of the project, both of these educators made statements that indicated they very much felt the value of their work. As already discussed in Chapter 4, this sense that the team was helping students develop “real world” skills influenced how Claudia felt about herself as an educator:

I feel much better about what I’m doing...I think for a while I was stuck in the antiquated way of, you know, here’s our lesson for today. Here’s your homework. Let’s go over the homework. Let’s do the next piece. There’s your next homework. And it wasn’t beneficial for kids. They weren’t walking away with a sense of accomplishment or anything real world...So I think it’s made me appreciate more what is meaningful and what isn’t.

For Allyson, the gratification she gained from participating in the interdisciplinary team outweighed any anxiety or stress it caused: “I think I’m a lot more motivated when I’m doing this. I feel more connected to my peers. And I think I just love the planning of PBL.” She later added:

I don’t think the stress is that different. It’s a little bit different stress, but it’s like a tradeoff. I think because I enjoy the curriculum and I enjoy the conversation so much, I think that it balances out the stress I feel when I’m by myself and trying to figure out things on my own. That, I think is actually more stressful to me.

Allyson’s acknowledgement of the stress of working within this context was alleviated by the enjoyment that came from it, indicating that she had successfully managed any internal tensions over the value of her efforts.

Allyson and Claudia clearly felt the demands of this type of work, yet resoundingly supported its value. Mark was similarly enthusiastic about being able to accomplish some of the goals he had in mind at the start of the project, but indicated that he was unsure of the sustainability of their efforts. For that reason, I place him further along the continuum, the intensity of this tension greater.

At the midpoint of the project, Mark voiced his excitement at the knowledge and connections the students were developing:

I don't know if it's just the project, because it is... building their own mock city and stuff like that. That's exciting! But also to be able to actually make those connections in their community. And to hear from parents that are saying "Wow!" It's like, you know, 'This is what they need!' They need to know money doesn't fall from the sky and all this. And the kids making those connections. And again, making the connections and seeing in students the light go off, 'Wow! We are doing this in English' or 'Wow! We are doing this in math.' And that to me is a lot more than 'Oh, I got an 80 on a test, a 90 on a test.'

Mark's comments that students were making connection with the community aligns with one of his original goals for their work. Like Claudia and Allyson, he also shared validation for their work from an outside source, in this case a parent. Mark's final sentences in this excerpt indicates that he found greater value in the work they were doing than if they were simply focused on outcomes related to standardized testing. This was reinforced by a later comment he made: "I definitely feel more positive about how things are going compared to the past. I think we're on to something."

At the same time, however, Mark expressed some hesitancy about their efforts. As described earlier in the chapter, Mark's vision of interdisciplinary PBL was on a much smaller scale than that which the team was implementing. When asked for his thoughts on how he thought things were going, he commented "It's still early" and "It works right now if you want to call it working. It's functional now, yes." These comments suggest that while Mark did find value in their work, he was unsure of the sustainability of that endeavor. This also suggests he was withholding a full endorsement of their efforts, reflecting a greater intensity of this tension as he grappled with whether it was worth it.

These sentiments were similarly expressed in Mark's final interviews. While, as described earlier, he still wanted a more focused version of interdisciplinary PBL, he also made a statement that suggests he saw great value in what they were doing:

I constantly have people coming up to me saying 'Why are you doing this when you are this far in your career? You only have so much left. You are supposed to be putting on the brakes. Don't get out of the chair. Sit in your rocker.' And it's like, no. It's like I can't. I think I want to do what's best for students, even though they're not always motivated. [laughing] It's like, I want to do what's best for them, you know? So I think that's... It's the right thing to do, because I think the underlying principles of PBL are good things, as far as having people working together, communicating with one another, having their paw prints on the work, and owning it.

This statement also illustrated how Mark perceived his professional identity as he participated with the team. Even though he was not far from retirement, he still "wants to do what is best for kids" and not "put on the brakes," resisting a stereotype of veteran teachers who only give the minimal effort in their final years. Rather, this statement helps construct an identity of an *engaged, motivated educator*.

Similar to the other tensions, Nathan's statements indicated he felt the greatest intensity of the tension over the value of their work. While he certainly did not make any statements that suggested that he saw the team's work was ineffective or pointless, there was evidence from his interviews that he very much wrestled with whether the benefits outweighed other considerations. As described in Chapter 4, Nathan made comments in his first interview that he was "excited" and an "agitator" for this type of work. Yet during his second interview, he shared:

I've gained some perspective into what PBL is and what's required, because I wouldn't have thought it was this much. [laughs] If you said on paper you are going to meet this many times, do this many things? It's different living through it.

This implies he was rethinking his initial perceptions of the work and possibly himself as an educator in this context.

Like Mark, Nathan desired smaller-scale projects, yet this was not the actuality of what the team was doing:

I'm feeling like this is becoming more time than it's worth. I feel bad saying that because I don't want to make that kind of judgement so early in the process. And I know we're building soft skills and extra things that have nothing to do with the curriculum that are still pretty important, but it's almost like we could accomplish the same thing if we had just cross-disciplinary units instead of this bigger idea.

Nathan clearly stated that the outcomes of the team's work were taking "more time than it's worth." However, this excerpt also suggests that he struggled with negotiating this tension, feeling "bad" about "making a judgment," wrestling with his own doubts. He believed the same outcomes could be reached with a more modest model of interdisciplinary PBL, one aligned with his desired vision for their work. However, the inclusion of the words "but it's almost like" diminish the intensity of this assertion, as if he held some reservations with his own views.

This uncertainty, evidence of Nathan's negotiation with this tension, was also present in his final interview. When asked his thoughts on continuing his participation on the interdisciplinary team, Nathan stated that he still wasn't sure, sharing:

And honestly, I want to see, I don't want to do it just to do it. I want to see results. Because if we get to the end and we've got about the same thing happening and I had just had a regular class, then why are we doing it?

As in his previous interview, Nathan again suggested that similar outcomes could be achieved through other means, indicating that he still did not see their efforts as worth it. He wanted to "see results," meaning evidence that the value of student achievement outweighed the changes the team had implemented and all of the work that those changes entailed. When asked how he would assess the results, Nathan responded:

I don't know. It will be tough. It really would be hard to leave these people, because they are great, nice people. And when you find a group of people who want to strive to do something extra? That doesn't happen all the time.

In this statement, Nathan indicated that one measure of whether the work was worth it was not just in student outcomes, but also in a personal one: working with people that he enjoyed and who were willing to challenge themselves. Taking this factor into account complicated his perception of whether his own participation on the team was worth it, suggesting it is an additional factor for consideration with this tension.

More so than with any of the others, Nathan's comments in his interviews highlight the challenges of navigating this tension. A teacher can be interested in interdisciplinary PBL and want to "do something extra," constructing the identity of a *motivated educator*, yet find that the reality of the work can lead to great uncertainty. When combined with tensions over authority, differing visions, and balancing content, the intensity of navigating this tension may be too great to overcome. This may be true for Nathan, who was unsure if he wanted to continue to participate as a member of the team. Although Nathan did not feel that he had changed as an educator, this does not mean that his identities did not change. Rather, this acknowledgement may come when a decision is made one way or the other as to whether the value of outcomes was worth it. It is then that he may end his participation on the team, returning to an educator identity that he was more comfortable with, or there is acceptance or further development of the identities constructed in this context.

Implications for Identities

As with the other tensions described in this chapter, the teachers' navigation of the tension over the value of their outcomes of their work was constantly in progress. For Allyson and Claudia, there was a sense that they had come to terms with this tension, viewing their work as worth its challenges. Further, they perceived of themselves as better educators because of the outcomes achieved. For Mark, despite some hesitancy to fully affirm that the outcomes

outweighed the means to achieve them, his statements suggested he perceived of himself in positive ways due to this work. He rejected a view of himself as a veteran educator who was coasting to retirement, instead presenting himself as engaged and motivated. The most speculative of whether the value of their outcomes were worth the time, effort and changes to their practices, Nathan's comments give insight into the uncertainty that can come with this work, potentially resulting in identities that are not embraced.

The findings described above also contribute to an understanding of the emotions teachers undertake as they work in this context. The results of the ongoing mental calculations over whether their work is "worth it" can have a range of results, from pride and greater job satisfaction to doubt and frustration. This undoubtedly has an impact on who the educator will see themselves to be within this context, confirming some identities while challenging others.

Conclusion

This chapter explored four tensions that teachers navigate as they participate on an interdisciplinary PBL team: over authority, differing visions, balancing content with the interdisciplinary project, and the value of their work. For each, a brief description was provided, followed by the evidence of this tension in the language of each of the participants. I then shared my interpretation of the effects of this navigation on the construction of their professional identities.

Previously siloed in their own classrooms, participation on an interdisciplinary PBL team provided the new context in which these tensions could arise. The data indicates that all of the teachers navigated these tensions, but the intensity and outcomes for each varied. For Allyson and Claudia, who held the most authority and whose visions of interdisciplinary PBL were being met, these tensions were manageable. For Mark and Nathan, the challenges of navigating these

tensions appeared greater, both educators at times expressing uncertainty or reservation. With less authority, divergence from their vision of interdisciplinary PBL, and concerns over the inclusion of their content, they found many benefits of their work, but were hesitant to give it a full endorsement. The data also suggests that all of the teachers used different strategies to alleviate this tension, such as relying on future time with students to be able address their concerns of the moment or consciously suspending their judgements until a later date. In navigating these tensions, the teachers constructed a variety of identities, foregrounding some and minimizing others. At times, they also took on the emotional labor of presenting a *team player* identity, despite internal frustration or doubt. These tensions reflect the complexity of identity development. For these teachers, this identity work was ongoing and active in part because they were constantly navigating these tensions.

The teachers on this team constructed numerous identities as they navigated these tensions. Despite the negative connotation of the word tension, there was no evidence that doing so resulted in open hostility or animosity toward each other in planning sessions. Rather, the teachers were cooperative and understanding of each other, maintaining team harmony. Indeed, the data showed that each member of the team worked to create another new identity, that as a *team maker*, contributing to the collective identity of the team. The team was not one that was created solely through their actions, but through the language each of the teachers used. This collective identity will be explored in Chapter 6.

Chapter Six

Team Makers: Constructing a Collective Identity

As described in the previous chapters, the teachers in this study constructed and presented various identities as they participated on an interdisciplinary PBL team. In the shift from working primarily on their own to the more intense and sustained collaboration of the team, each navigated various tensions that influenced their identities, including those over authority, differing visions, balancing content, and their sense of the value of their work. Working in the context of this team, some identities became prominent, others minimized, and wholly new ones created. The teachers on the team referred to themselves, and were referred to by others, as the “PBL team.” This use of the word *team* aligns with the definitions used in the literature, such as those who have a common commitment and mutual accountability (Katzenbach & Smith, 2006) or those that “identify themselves as a team” and “are committed to a common purpose and task and are interdependent on their tasks and outcomes” (Vangrieken et al., 2015, p. 25). It also indicates that they saw themselves as having a collective identity, defined in sociology as “the shared definition of a group that derives from its members’ common interests, experiences, and solidarities” (Whooley, 2007, p. 586). A collective identity is facilitated by creating a sense of belonging, building interpersonal relationships, and strengthening bonds between team members.

To construct a collective identity as a team, what I will refer to as their team identity, each individual must contribute to that construction. Moreover, a team is created not just in each members’ actions, but their interactions. Each member does not simply voice their opinion or complete certain tasks for the team to be a team, but uses their language to form the relationships that contribute to a collective identity. Each team member has the ability to improve to the

entitativity, or degree to which the team is a tightly knit group, “the ‘teamness’ of the team” (Vangrieken et al., 2013).

For all of the teachers in this study, a frequently constructed identity was that of *team player*, presenting them as someone who was willing to listen to and respect the ideas and work of others, going along with team decisions. This likely contributed to the collegiality of the team. Findings from this study, however, show that the teachers did not simply rely on the *team player* identity to create the team. Rather, each of the participants on the interdisciplinary team used their language to construct another identity, that of *team maker*, this identity making a collective identity even possible. I use the term *team maker* to refer to an identity that actively formed and shaped the connections between team members, uniting them into a team. In the topics they raised, questions asked, suggestions offered, and empathy expressed, the teachers’ words created a colleague embracing their relationship with the others. Moreover, their frequent and consistent use of first-person plural pronouns such as *we*, *our*, and *us* - rather than more individualistic language - contributed to the creation of the team as a singular entity.

The chapter that follows describes the numerous ways the participants constructed their *team maker* identities, tightening the between-member bonds that ultimately created their overall collective team identity. While any one of these strategies alone did not create a *team maker* identity, their frequent and aggregate use effectively did. I will first describe three ways that the teachers used their language to build relationships: taking an interest in each other, making personal remarks, and using humor. I will then describe how the teachers used their language to distinguish the team from outsiders. In both planning sessions and interviews, they used language that indicated they saw themselves not just as individuals, but as a singular entity, one that collectively managed dynamics with parents, other teachers, and administrators.

Taking an Interest in Each Other

One of the goals of all of the participants on the PBL team was to have students develop the 21st century skill of collaboration. This skill includes a multitude of others, with problem-solving, communicating clearly, and active listening among them. Interestingly, although this was never something that was specifically mentioned by the team members, they were in fact attempting to do the same thing they wanted from their students: to successfully work together to accomplish a goal. Like their students, they too employed the skills necessary for effective collaboration. Unlike their students, who worked in small groups for relatively short periods of time, this team of teachers worked together for the entirety of the year - and most likely would beyond that. As such, an additional aspect of collaboration that was advantageous for the team to develop was increasing their knowledge and understanding of each other. This had the potential to help them understand each other's perspectives, find commonalities, build rapport, and work more efficiently as a team. This, like the other collaboration skills they desired for their students, was not something the team explicitly discussed, yet the findings from this study show the team actively engaged each other to strengthen their knowledge and understanding, and thus their bonds.

One way the team increased this familiarity was in taking both personal and professional interest in each other, evident in many of their questions and statements to each other. In this section, I will discuss how their conversations were used to express this interest. Each of these instances deepened their interpersonal relationships, which ultimately served to make them a stronger team. Therefore, each participant's use of these strategies contributed to their own *team maker* identity. The first portion of what follows will explain how this was accomplished with topics related to the development of the project and curriculum planning, such as the teachers

asking for each other's opinions or demonstrating that they were engaged in what others were saying through active listening. The second portion will explain how this strategy was used in conversations unrelated to the project, but that allowed a team member to either build or highlight a connection with another through sharing suggestions, showing concern, supporting one another, or showing empathy.

Project and Curriculum-Related Interest

One common aspect of a group of people being a team is that they make shared decisions. As previously discussed in Chapter 5, the amount of authority over decisions each individual team member has may vary, yet it was still an expectation of the team that all had some sort of input. One way the individual teachers ensured that their colleagues were able to voice their opinions was to actively ask each other for their thoughts when making decisions about the project, curriculum, or other school events. In doing so, the teachers facilitated a sense of belonging and respect for each other.

In Chapter 4, it was discussed at length how Allyson constructed the identity of *team leader*. She was the most likely to introduce and lead the team's conversations, particularly those focused on the project or related activities. However, her style of leadership was democratic, as she frequently solicited the opinions of her peers to decisions that needed to be made. Indeed, this was coded 49 times in the 309 segments of data. Allyson was clearly interested in hearing and considering others' participation in the decisions, but she was not alone. Claudia (21 instances) and Nathan (18 instances) also asked for the others' opinions a significant number of times. Though far less than Allyson, it is important to note that Allyson was far more verbal in the conversations in general. For Nathan and Claudia, their participation in the conversations tended to be expressing their opinions, raising considerations the team needed to think about, or

asking questions. However, they too used the discursive strategy of asking for others' opinions, demonstrating their interest in the others' views.

An example of this is provided below. In this excerpt, the team was discussing an activity (MAPS training) in which the students learned the particular aspects of the jobs they would take on for the project. Nathan shared an idea he had for this, asking the others for their opinion on it:

ALLYSON: That's the MAPS training, right?
 CLAUDIA: That's MAPS training, I think.
 NATHAN: I thought that was an additional ... activity.
 CLAUDIA: [It may have been. I've got to look.
 NATHAN: On the MAPS training do we want to cross train, like the owners and the accountants? Production and sales?
 ALLYSON: Cross train them?
 MARK: That, that makes sense
 ALLYSON: [To do them in two different things.
 NATHAN: I would think we'd want the owners to be able to handle accounting.
 MARK: Right.
 NATHAN: Depending on who shows up that day and if we have time.
 ALLYSON: [That's a good idea.
 MARK: That makes a lot of sense.

(Planning Session, October 10)

While Nathan had a suggestion for how the team should approach this activity, he shared it, opening it up for the others to consider and respond to. He also used the word *we* twice (“...do we want to cross train...,” “I would think we'd want...”), indicating he saw this as a team concern and decision. The others confirmed his idea as one that they agreed with as it “makes sense” and is “a good idea.” In this particular conversation, the teachers were all in agreement, sharing the same opinion. This was certainly not the case in all of their conversations, with a variety of considerations and suggestions given. However, in either case, the teachers asking for each other's' opinions showed their interest in what the others thought and sent the message that they saw themselves as a team.

In addition to asking for each other's opinions, each of the teachers used verbal or physical methods to demonstrate that they were actively listening to each other. When not making too

many statements themselves, showing that they were actively listening displayed an interest in what the others had to say. This engagement is important to the creation of a sense of team, as it shows respect for others' ideas, opinions, and self. It can, at times, also demonstrate agreement. In actively listening to their colleagues, each teacher helped create a context in which team members felt heard by each other, a factor that can strengthen their comfort with each other or ease times of disagreement.

In many of the discussion segments, one or more of the teachers might not have been actively involved in adding opinions, ideas, or considerations, yet it was clear they were paying close attention to the conversation. Sometimes, this was through their nodding along in agreement, making facial expressions that suggested their feelings on the topic, or laughing at comments made by others. The teachers also used their spoken language to demonstrate their engagement with the discussion. One of the most prominent ways they did this was through inserting utterances such as “mm-hmm,” “yup,” or “okay.” The data is littered with instances of the teachers doing this when they spoke very little or not at all otherwise in that segment of the conversation. In Chapter 4, it was described how frequently Allyson used this type of overlapping talk to show her involvement with the others, often using it to show her approval of what they were saying. The teachers also inserted a simple comment or question, sometimes finishing someone else's sentence. For example, the following is extracted from a long discussion about scheduling of different activities within the project. Here, Allyson was explaining to Maya when the MAPS training would occur:

ALLYSON:	Yup. It's called MAPS training. That stands for management, accounting,
MAYA:	Accounting
ALLYSON:	production and sales.
MAYA:	Yup.
ALLYSON:	So they learn, basically, um
NATHAN:	= How to do their jobs.

ALLYSON: Yeah.
 MARK: Individual jobs, yeah.

(Planning Session, October 15)

Although Nathan had not said anything else throughout this portion of the conversation, which lasted several minutes, here he completed Allyson's thought. This showed he was actively listening to the conversation, engaged with it mentally if not verbally until this point. In doing so, he was still participating in the team's discussion.

All of the teachers demonstrated active listening throughout the data, Nathan with 19 instances, Claudia 21, and Allyson 24. Interestingly, Mark had the most discussion segments coded with this label, at 44 instances. Mark was the quietest of the teachers, yet his use of this strategy to show his engagement with the conversation worked to show that he both saw the others' words as important and that he saw himself as part of the team. A good example of this is shown in the excerpt below. Nathan was not present for this portion of the planning session as the others discussed scheduling of different aspects of the project.

CLAUDIA: Oh, so that's what I was going to say is. So once we get here, so if in ELA next Tuesday you introduce them to some radio advertisements, like... Other than the math test, which we could still discuss getting all done in one day perhaps, but like... How about, um... Should we break into groups here, on October 30th? [pointing at calendar]

ALLYSON: That's Nathan's test.

CLAUDIA: I know. I'm saying we could still discuss getting that done in one day if we needed to.

ALLYSON: Yeah. [Four second pause] We could. I can, I can do the radio advertisements later on.

CLAUDIA: [And the
 broadcasting could get together and talk about... the radio advertisements. The...]

ALLYSON: How they are going to speak, practice their voice.

CLAUDIA: Or... the web news. And I'm just throwing that out. We could do that here [pointing to different date]. Are we basically after this done with our essential lessons then? Because you did Theme Five already.

MARK: Mm-hmm.

ALLYSON: After what? After what day?

MARK: Theme four?

CLAUDIA: Theme four.

MARK: Mm-hmm.

CLAUDIA: So we just need to do .. particulars after that.

ALLYSON: [Maybe that's when we do productions. Maybe that's when they make their stuff.]

CLAUDIA: But... Did they give us an idea of what we were doing this date? I feel like they said something... [Starts to look through her emails]

(Planning Session, October 24)

Claudia, the *macro-planner*, led the conversation about scheduling. As she and Allyson went back and forth about this topic, Mark quietly listened but did not contribute any ideas or opinions to the conversation. However, in inserting “mm-hmm,” as well as asking the question about what theme their lesson corresponded with, he demonstrated that he was actively listening. This is one of many examples of Mark using this discursive strategy, acknowledging the ideas of the others, giving his approval of their ideas, and contributing to the sense that they were deciding these things together, as a team. Mark, or any of the teachers when they used this discursive strategy, contributed to the creation of the team as a whole, constructing their own *team maker* identity in the process.

Professional and Personal Interest

Throughout the data, there were also numerous other instances of the teachers taking interest in their colleagues in ways that were fully unrelated to the project or its complementary activities. These other occurrences, including exhibiting interest in their colleagues’ content areas, expressing concern for each other, offering help, and simply showing appreciation, strengthened their interpersonal relationships. It did so by allowing the speaker to show that they were thinking about, respectful of, and invested in their colleague. These exchanges therefore bolster the connections between team members, effectively increasing the cohesiveness of the team.

Beyond discussing the project and corresponding activities, the teachers made various statements that demonstrated that they were also thinking about their colleagues’ roles as content area teachers. This was evident in numerous ways, such as describing something they read that related to a team member’s content, sharing information about a website or article that their

colleague might be interested in, or asking about the content-area conferences and professional development each had attended. As these teachers had previously been siloed in their own classrooms, this type of sharing and inquiry suggests that they were actively working to connect with their colleagues, deepening their knowledge of their colleagues and their work while also demonstrating their desire and willingness to have these connections. Several of these instances allowed the teacher to provide support for their colleague. For example, the following exchange occurred upon Nathan's return from a math conference:

NATHAN: So I forgot, I have something for you from my conference.
 ALLYSON: Oh.
 NATHAN: There's a [organization that provides shared services to school districts] south of here. I don't know what region that covers. There was a team of people in there that took the power standards, the ones that are tested the most on the state test. And then took the state released test questions, and put together benchmarks assessments for every grade with those questions.
 ALLYSON: [Yup.
 ALLYSON: Yeah? I'll take it. [laughs]
 NATHAN: [Grades 3-8 math and English.
 ALLYSON: Wow!
 NATHAN: I know. Like a huge amount of work.
 ALLYSON: Yeah! Wow.
 NATHAN: But they said they distributed it out and use it as benchmark assessments, so, you give it to the kids, it's like 15 questions. They're like oh, they can't do this standard and this one, and that's
 ALLYSON: [Yeah.
 NATHAN: what they hit.
 ALLYSON: Okay. That's good. Because, um, I just talked to [Asst. Superintendent] because we have benchmarks, but they're not prioritized standards, and I don't even know like...
 NATHAN: [Right.
 ALLYSON: They're just all the same standards.
 NATHAN: And they actually included all the data analysis part of it so you could look at it if you want to.
 ALLYSON: [That's awesome!
 ALLYSON: That's awesome. Yes. I will take it for sure because, I told, [Asst. Superintendent] doesn't want us to change anything now because... [sighs] just because. And so, but... It's like the long term plan.
 NATHAN: [It's a link to his site
 and he calls it the three tools. One of them is those benchmarks they made. One of them is all of the released questions. And the third one is [inaudible]
 ALLYSON: Okay.
 NATHAN: I wasn't even there for the presentation because I was at the illustrated math one, but I found it, they put everything on a shared google drive. I was like "O:::h. This is awesome!"
 ALLYSON: That's awesome.

(Planning Session, November 19)

This is a typical example that illustrates how the teachers took interest in their colleagues as content area teachers. Here, Nathan recognized how he could support Allyson as an ELA

teacher, sharing with her pre-made benchmark assessments that were provided to him at his conference. If they were not a team, this most likely would not have happened. Moreover, there was no requirement even as a team member for Nathan to share these materials, yet in doing so he expressed interest in helping Allyson with her content area needs.

Another way the teachers contributed to a sense that they were a team was in taking an interest in how each other were doing, showing concern when someone faced a particular problem, often offering suggestions or to help. Sometimes this pertained to personal topics, at others to professional ones. For example, they often asked each other how things were going with their children or extracurricular activities they were involved with. Claudia and Allyson regularly made comments about getting all of their tasks done, asking how they could lighten the other's workload.

There were also several instances of the team becoming involved with one member's issue, getting emotionally engaged as they offered suggestions, such as in the example below. Just before the school year, Allyson's email address was suddenly changed, it unexpectedly including her middle initial as well. Another teacher in the district received Allyson's old email address. This caused Allyson great stress, as the address was linked to multiple other school-related accounts.

- Allyson: Oh. You want to hear what's even worse? I was just about sobbing at 5 o'clock last night. Or 5 o'clock Friday night. Um, you know how they switched my stuff over?
- NATHAN: Yeah.
- ALLYSON: So I'm using [first initial, last name] to sign into all that school, safe schools, things. But when I go to the one for the computers I have to use [first initial, middle initial, last name]. Um, because Alice is still getting all of my bank statements, so that's nice.
- NATHAN: They won't change it? [disbelieving tone]
- CLAUDIA: [Who?
- ALLYSON: Alice. They will not change it. Well, [IT person] never responded back to me.
- CLAUDIA: Did you include [Asst. Superintendent]?
- ALLYSON: No, I included [Principal] though.
- CLAUDIA: I would include [Asst. Superintendent].
- ALLYSON: So now I found out that they are going to take my Google Drive too. They are going to change it. I am going to lose everything in Google Drive unless I

MARK: [↑What?! [disbelieving tone]

ALLYSON: Um, yup. I'm going to lose everything in Google Drive unless... They are going to change my Google Drive to [first initial, middle initial]. So every single account that I have, News ELA, every single thing. I'm going to have to go into it and change before they switch it over to change my email because then I won't be able to get in anymore. And I have to take all my files, everything in Google Drive, and I have to put it on a USB at home ... and then... I'm not going to be able to get into our shared files or anything.

CLAUDIA: I am telling you right now, you are way kinder than I. Because I would be flying off the emails and

ALLYSON: [You are going to have to re-add me

CLAUDIA: I would include [Asst. Superintendent]. It is absolutely *insane* that they have taken your

NATHAN: [Asst. Superintendent and Superintendent]

CLAUDIA: information and given it to somebody else. And she is getting your bank statements. Which I find to be a breach of confidentiality. And that was how the *district* decided to disseminate that information, not you.

ALLYSON: Yeah. Well I didn't even know she was getting my bank statements until she called me and said

CLAUDIA: [Exactly.

ALLYSON: "Listen, I just want to let you know. I'm not opening these up, but this is what I'm getting."

CLAUDIA: But I would, I would send another email and say "I'm having a really hard time comprehending the gist of this when [first initial, last name] still exists and it could simply be reassigned to me."

NATHAN: Yeah.

ALLYSON: I'm going to do it right now.

[Allyson types email as others work individually. Quiet for approximately 45 seconds]

CLAUDIA: And make sure that you put in there that you have to do all of this stuff to your Google Drive. You are losing...

NATHAN: Well, they are going to say she shouldn't be getting her bank statements on school email.

CLAUDIA: But they send our pay stubs through school email.

ALLYSON: [Yeah, yeah.

CLAUDIA: That's them. That's not my choice.

NATHAN: Right.

CLAUDIA: So now they are going to somebody else.

NATHAN: I'm in your boat. I would have already been in [Superintendent]'s office.

CLAUDIA: [Yeah. You've been way too nice about it.

NATHAN: You can change this or...

CLAUDIA: Because it's not as if they had to wipe out [first initial, last name] and it doesn't exist. They just gave it to somebody else when they should have given it back to you.

ALLYSON: Okay.

(Planning Session, September 9)

This example begins with Allyson sharing her frustration over the recent issue of her email address being changed. All three of the other teachers responded to her statement, Nathan and Mark in disbelief. Claudia and Nathan also gave suggestions as to which administrators and what information they would include in an email attempting to address the problem. Claudia's statement that she found aspects of the situation "absolutely *insane*" and that Allyson had been "way too nice about it," as well as Nathan's comment that he "would have already been in

[Superintendent]’s office,” were not stated in a way that chastised Allyson’s response to the situation. Rather, these statements validated Allyson’s feelings and response.

The example above, like so many minor problems that teachers have to manage, could easily have been something that Allyson dealt with on her own. As a member of the team, though, she felt comfortable sharing her situation with her colleagues. Moreover, her teammates did not simply listen, but responded with empathy, shared annoyance, and suggestions. The others showed their concern for Allyson, interest in her being able to satisfactorily resolve the issue and relieve her frustration. In doing so, they strengthened their bonds with Allyson and each other, contributing to their sense of being a team.

Each of the ways the team took an interest in each other strengthened their bonds as a team. In conversations about the project or related curriculum, asking for each other’s opinions and demonstrating that they were actively listening displayed their interest in what teammates’ ideas and views. By showing their interest in each other’s roles as content area teachers, supporting each other when someone had a problem, and expressing empathy, the teachers conveyed the message that were invested in the other person. Inserting verbal statements into conversations, or physically nodding along, communicated their desire to connect, allowed them to gain knowledge of each other, and facilitated understanding. It also constructed their identities as *team makers*.

Personal Remarks

Another discursive strategy used by the teachers that contributed to the construction of their *team maker* identities, and ultimately their collective identity as “the PBL team,” was the insertion of stories about or references to their personal lives into their conversations. I coded these statements and narratives related to the participants’ lives outside of their role as teachers

as *personal remarks*. In their conversations, personal remarks varied in length. At times, full anecdotes of their experiences were given; at others, the teachers made relatively short statements that referred to or built off of earlier stories.

It is human nature to reference our own experiences when interacting with one another; for teachers this is no different. In doing so, teachers give insight into what they know, believe, and value. More importantly for the purposes of this study, in sharing stories about their experiences, their identities were constructed and shaped (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Watson, 2006). It is therefore important to examine the personal references made and the stories the teachers chose to tell in order to better understand the development and presentation of their identities.

At the same time as people construct their own identities, sharing personal anecdotes builds the interpersonal relationships between members of a team. There are numerous studies that show the positive effects of personal storytelling on teamwork (e.g. Auvinen et al., 2013; Lohuis et al., 2016; Tesler et al., 2018). Although these studies are not focused specifically on teachers, it is highly likely these benefits would hold true for teachers as well. Primary among these benefits is that of developing trust (Fiore et al., 2009), a vital element for cooperation and effective collaboration (Barczak et al., 2010). Through informal conversations that include the sharing of personal stories, teachers get to know each other better and develop an understanding of each other's perspectives. They can find commonalities, building bonds that enhance their sense of team cohesion. Thus, in sharing personal stories, they not only constructed their own identities, but contributed to developing a team identity as well. This participation as a *team maker* by each teacher therefore furthers both individual identity development and team entitativity. I will first describe the personal identities developed through these comments, followed by a more extensive discussion of the construction of the shared *team maker* identities.

Individual Identities

Peppered throughout the data from planning sessions were the instances of participants making a personal reference or sharing a personal anecdote. Indeed, of the 309 discussion segments, 66* were labeled with the code of personal remark. For some, such as Allyson (42 instances) and Claudia (31 instances) this occurred more often, which makes sense given that they spoke more in general. Regardless, all of the teachers did so, with Nathan having 20 instances and Mark 12 instances. This shows us that, despite the professional context of the team's work, the teachers' personal identities were present.

In inserting these comments, each constructed various identities. Early in the study, for example, Nathan worked after school as an assistant football coach. During planning sessions, he told numerous stories, such as describing how a particular game went or speaking of a particular player's talent. In doing so, he constructed his *coach* identity. He also made multiple references to his previous jobs in the hospitality field, presenting his former professional identity. For Allyson and Claudia, their identities as *mother* and *wife* were prominent, stories of their children and husbands the most frequent of their personal references. Although less likely to insert a personal remark, Mark too shared stories of his children or sibling, constructing his identities as *father* and *brother*. Like any educator, these teachers did not discard their personal identities once they enter the school building. Rather, and as data from this study shows, these identities were further constructed within their professional context.

Team Maker Identities

The inclusion of personal remarks furthered each of the teacher's personal identity development. Moreover, the evidence suggests it also furthered their professional identity

* Please note that some of these segments included only one person making a personal remark, while others included personal remarks made by multiple participants.

development as *team makers*. These remarks allowed the teachers to present their own various identities and aspects of their personal lives, but also allowed others in the interaction to find an interpersonal connection. By “interpersonal connection,” I am referring to when a teacher either made a personal remark that offered a potential commonality to be acknowledged or when a teacher recognized and responded to a commonality with someone else. These commonalities included having a shared experience, perspective, or even identity. In numerous discussion segments, one teacher’s personal remarks led to the other teachers making their own, the team engaging with each other about topics that were removed from the focus of their work, but that highlighted their commonalities and connections with one another.

A typical example of this is provided below. In one of the earliest planning sessions that occurred prior to the school year, the team met at Claudia’s home, which was located in a nearby community of Greenville. As the team worked through their plan for the first day of school, the internet began to noticeably lag, prompting comments on its sluggishness. At this point, Nathan made a comment referencing his wife that led to each of the teachers’ incorporating personal remarks into the conversation:

NATHAN: When [wife] lived at Greenville she used to steal her landlady’s wi-fi.
 ALLYSON: [laughs]
 CLAUDIA: I bet she didn’t. [laughing]
 MARK: [Where did she live?
 NATHAN: Right over [pointing in one direction]. It’s like a couple of houses down from the main intersection in town. She lived there in a little apartment. Like a house that had been split in half.
 MARK: Nice.
 CLAUDIA: I bet she didn’t have to steal her internet.
 MARK: [I was just telling her this is the reason why I ended up moving here was Greenville.
 ALLYSON: Really?
 MARK: Yeah, my best friend lived at [nearby military base].
 ALLYSON: Oh!
 MARK: He was teaching at Middletown. So, I came out here and everything and then lived with him for a while. He got married, so I had to move *downtown*. [laughter]
 CLAUDIA: O::oh, downtown Greenville.
 MARK: [Yeah. [Local bar]? You remember that?
 CLAUDIA: Yeah! What year was that?
 MARK: O::h, 85, 86?
 CLAUDIA: I was going to say, it may still have been a little rough.

MARK: Yeah. And that was pretty neat. Peter [another teacher in the district] ended up moving into my apartment. If you remember him.

NATHAN: I remember him.

MARK: [Other teacher] did. We were talking one time in the faculty room about that.

CLAUDIA: [I knew Peter! That's funny.]

MARK: I couldn't believe he was living in my old apartment.

ALLYSON: Oh yeah, because you student taught when he was here.

NATHAN: Student taught when he was here with, uh,

MARK: Mary [last name].

NATHAN: [Mary [last name].

MARK: Yeah, she's doing great.

NATHAN: And I just remember him stepping out in the hallway and yelling "What are you doing, you parrot head? Get over here."

ALLYSON: "Banana head" [in voice to mimicking this man]

NATHAN: [I'm like "Parrot head?" "That's all I can say. A bunch of banana heads over there."]

ALLYSON: That's so funny because I took Alyssa's apartment, when her and Rob got married.

MARK: Oh yeah?

ALLYSON: Yup. When her and Rob got married, they bought their house on Central, I ... Because Linda and Chris. She was a teacher in the district for a long time.

MARK: Oh, okay. Yeah.

ALLYSON: They only rent to teachers. And they, like my rent was \$400.

CLAUDIA: Cheap!

ALLYSON: Yeah. It was above his mother and it was really cheap. But they always rent to new teachers, because she was a teacher.

MARK: They had a really good thing going there. They wanted to have good tenants.

ALLYSON: Yeah! Good tenants. And so, um, yeah I moved in right after she moved out. She moved out on a Saturday and I moved in on a Sunday. [looks back at computer] Okay, so what are we going to do that Thursday and Friday? We don't know a schedule or anything.

(Planning Session, July 11)

In this excerpt, Nathan first referenced his wife and shared a personal connection that he had to the town in which Claudia lived. This was the first of the connections based on commonalities that were made in this conversation. Mark similarly made personal remarks that showed his connection to Claudia's community when he shared his personal experience of living there. He and Claudia also found commonality in their knowledge of a local bar. Mark's inclusion of a comment about another teacher also allowed all of the teachers to make statements that showed their own knowledge and experiences with that teacher, this becoming another commonality they all had. Mark's personal remarks about the other teacher taking his apartment also opened up another avenue for Allyson to share her own experience with renting as it related to other teachers. Mark then revealed that he also knew the teacher who Allyson rented from.

In the two minutes it took for the teachers to make these statements, they actively built bonds with each other, ultimately contributing to their identities as *team makers*. These bonds were created through the numerous points of connection: living in the same community, knowing the same people or places, and sharing the experience of renting. They offered potential commonalities to others in sharing their personal remarks or recognized and responded to those commonalities. All of the teachers were able to participate in this conversation, furthering their interpersonal relationships as a team.

Brief conversations such as the one above were frequent in the data of the team's planning sessions. At times, such as in the example above, the personal remarks began with a comment related to something they were already discussing (in this case, the internet). At others, it came after a pause in planning, as the teachers worked individually on different tasks. The excerpt below shows an example of this from a planning session midway through the study. Mark had stepped out of the room for this portion of the planning session. Following a lull in the conversation of 75 seconds, Nathan prompted further conversation by stating that he was near Claudia's house the previous weekend:

- NATHAN: We were going to go to [restaurant] Saturday night and we drove past your house. I said "Look at all those pumpkins. Maybe we should go get a couple. Save us some money." [laughs] I said, "I don't know what she'd say."
- CLAUDIA: Oh, I'd be upset, man! [laughs] I love my pumpkins. ... But you could have stopped by for a drink!
- NATHAN: I didn't know what you had going on.
- CLAUDIA: What did we do Saturday? Oh, we weren't home all day on Saturday. We had three soccer games.
- NATHAN: Wow. This was like 6 o'clock at night.
- CLAUDIA: We had just gotten home.
- ALLYSON: My boys lost their first game.
- NATHAN: Yeah, I heard.
- ALLYSON: Ryan says to me on the way home "Boy, losing doesn't really feel as bad as I thought it would." [laughs]
- NATHAN: They are in the Superbowl next weekend, right?
- ALLYSON: Yeah. Yeah. Those boys, okay, so our boys really did play better. I don't know much about football, but I really got the impression that, like they actually threw it a couple of times like far. Like 30 yards! And caught it. Like... I was impressed. They did really well. But those other boys just plowed, like Ryan at one point, he was trying to tackle a guy. And he was holding him off pretty good, until this other kid just wiped his legs out. It was rough. Their arms are like, just full bruise. Their hands, Ryan got his hands stepped on. They are black and blue.

NATHAN: Yeah. I told Trent I was going to go to the Superbowl too.
 ALLYSON: Oh, are you?
 NATHAN: Yeah, I said I'd help out.
 ALLYSON: Oh yeah! Oh that would be great. It's in Rockport. It's fun.

(Planning Session, October 21)

Throughout this excerpt, there are multiple examples of the teachers making personal remarks that also created a connection with a colleague. Nathan initiated this when he made the comment that he had been near Claudia's house, teasing her that he might take one of the many pumpkins she had on display. Claudia extended this connection further by stating that Nathan should have "stopped by for a drink," indicating that she would have welcomed spending time with him.

When she then stated that she had been at soccer games that day, Allyson recognized a commonality to her own life, inserting a comment that her sons had lost their first football game that day. This constructed Allyson's identity as a *mother*, but also the commonality between her and Claudia as parents of children who play sports. Similarly, Nathan's comments that he had heard of the team's loss, and his later statement about helping with the "Superbowl," contributed to his identity as a *coach*, but also connected him to Allyson, as both were involved with the football community.

As in the first excerpt, the teachers shared their experiences that the others could acknowledge and respond to, exposing commonalities based in their personal lives. Here, we also see instances of them either lamenting missed opportunities to spend time together or planning for interactions outside of their professional context. These statements and the recognition of their connections contribute to their *team maker* identities as they strengthen their interpersonal relationships.

The findings from this study indicate that teachers' professional identities are not solely constructed in their conversations pertaining specifically to their work, but in all of the language they use in their interactions. While divulging personal information and experiences might not

initially be seen as relevant to their work as a team, this is a false assumption. As Hendry et al. (2016) note, off-topic conversations can lead to improved group cohesion. I would argue that sharing these stories and references is essential to finding commonalities, creating a sense of belonging, and building their interpersonal relationships. Strengthening these ties serves to create the team identity. Consequently, in adding and responding to personal remarks to the conversations, the teachers actively constructed their own professional identities as *team makers*.

Humor

A third discursive strategy used by the teachers to construct their *team maker* identities was that of using humor. Throughout the planning sessions, smiles and laughter were prompted by the teachers' statements. This occurred in response to both personal remarks and in comments more closely tied to their professional work. By "humor," I am referring to instances when one of the teachers inserted a witty comment into the conversation, playfully teased someone else, or shared a funny story. It also includes their use of self-deprecating, but amusing, comments. Instances of humor were frequent throughout the planning sessions, sometimes adding to already light conversations, other times relieving the pressure in more serious ones.

Humor is a common component of social interaction, so it is not surprising that data from this study would include such moments. As studies on humor, discourse, and workplace culture have shown, humor can be used to foster learning and community, as well as create a sense of cohesion (Terrion & Ashforth, 2002). It can facilitate conversation, reveal different perspectives, and strengthen interpersonal relationships. Humor can also be used to develop a shared discourse and a distinctive workplace culture, helping to create a group identity (Holmes & Marra, 2002). Thus, while the use of humor can construct particular individual identities (*joker*, *comic relief*, etc.), it also contributes to the creation of a *team maker* identity. As the use of humor was present

in almost all of the planning sessions, I include it here to describe and illustrate the ways it fostered connections, built their interpersonal relationships, and created a sense of team. In what follows, I will focus on three types of humor identified in the data: shared humor, self-deprecating humor, and teasing humor.

Shared Humor

One of the key patterns of humor in the data were the exchanges around the teachers' commonalities that prompted laughter and created light moments, what I refer to as shared humor. There were numerous humorous instances of the teachers discussing a topic in which they all had a stake. This included during conversations about particular students, school events they were involved with, or with the project itself. Finding and expressing humor over common issues and concerns is one way that the team connected with each other, discursively and emotionally fortifying their team identity.

A typical example of this is given below. The two other teachers who frequently collaborated with the team, Maya and Nora, also contributed to this exchange. While discussing their upcoming pictures for the yearbook, Nathan's comment about the page arrangement prompted laughter and further humorous comments.

CLAUDIA: Well, I think we need to look at the layout.
 ALLYSON: To see who's...
 CLAUDIA: Like in last year's... yearbook?
 ALLYSON: To see, like
 CLAUDIA: Because they have us in like, rows. I think.
 NATHAN: Yeah. Oh, you want to do like a Brady Bunch thing?
 [laughter]
 CLAUDIA: Yeah!
 ALLYSON: [Yeah! That's what we were kind of thinking. Yes!
 CLAUDIA: Yes.
 NATHAN: Oh!
 [laughter]
 ALLYSON: Like kind of something
 CLAUDIA: =Something funny.
 ALLYSON: I've been looking on Pinterest, too. [laughs]

NATHAN: I want to be Jan. [laughter]
 ALLYSON: You want to be what?
 CLAUDIA: [I want to be Cindy!
 NATHAN: Jan.
 NORA: What about Halloween? What are you doing for that?
 MARK: [I always liked Marsha!
 CLAUDIA: [Yeah, let's come up with something.
 ALLYSON: We want to do something funny. We want to do something with us all dressed as a theme.
 MAYA: Okay. So I found a really cute thing online of fruit, and then we're Fruit of the Loom or we're fruit salad.
 ALLYSON: That would be funny.
 [laughter]
 ALLYSON: I will be the pear.
 [laughter]
 NATHAN: That means I have to be the grapes, right?
 [laughter]
 MAYA: That's awesome.

(Planning Session, October 7)

In this light-hearted excerpt, all of the teachers had an investment in the topics being discussed: the teachers' yearbook photos and their Halloween costumes. Though both of these were not as serious of topics as the team's project, they were still aspects of their professional context that they all participated in. Nathan's comment comparing the photo layout to that in the opening credits of the television show *The Brady Bunch* began the humorous exchanges, but all of the teachers participated in it through both laughter and their statements. Following the comparison of the teachers' photographs to *The Brady Bunch*, Nathan, Claudia, and Mark chimed in with who from the show they would want to portray. Nora's related question about their plan for Halloween costumes segued the conversation to another shared stake, as all of the teachers in the building participated in dressing up for Halloween. Again, this became an entertaining moment, as Allyson and Nathan prompted laughs with which fruit they could portray as part of Maya's Fruit of the Loom suggestion.

The exchanges in this excerpt were funny and it was evident that the team members were enjoying sharing and listening to the comments. Moreover, these statements contributed to the construction of the team identity. It became clear that rather than worrying about an *individual*

photo or costume, they would create a *team* photo (through the layout) or team costume. Their participation in this conversation, as entertaining as it was, conveyed the message that ‘We are in this together.’ By contributing to this shared humor, each of the teachers simultaneously constructed the team identity and, in turn, their own identity as a *team maker*.

Another typical example of this shared humor took place when the team was discussing the students’ job placements for the Citizenship USA project. Allyson began the excerpt below, describing how one group of students was having trouble working with a student who had a particular job on their team. The team then brainstormed how to address this issue, finding humor in trying to make the situation replicate what might happen in the real world.

- ALLYSON: They were actually talking about firing [student].
 NATHAN: Then we have to do it then.
 NORA: Do it.
 ALLYSON: But then, what do they do if they get fired?
 NATHAN: Um...
 MARK: They have to look for a job.
 NORA: Maybe they work in the cafeteria.
 ALLYSON: Well that’s one of the jobs.
 NATHAN: Street sweep.
 [laughter]
 ALLYSON: Well one of the things is, we could have the go to the non-profit, because that’s like the Urban Mission.
 MAYA: That’s where you go for community service.
 ALLYSON: And they would need to fill out a form to apply for, um
 NATHAN: [A new position?
 ALLYSON: I’m thinking welfare. [laughter] They’d have to apply for welfare. See how much it costs. Could they pay all their
 NORA: [Fill out the unemployment insurance forms.
 NATHAN: I mean, can we do that?
 CLAUDIA: Yes.
 NATHAN: We’ll get them a sleeping bag, an old tent. They can pitch it on the corner.
 [laughter]
 ALLYSON: They would get a ticket from the police for being on the grass. [laughing]
 CLAUDIA: By the way
 ALLYSON: [I mean, do we
 CLAUDIA: Two groups took... Oh there they are [pointing to group lists from camping trip exercise]: food, water, first aid kit, whatever. Look at the last one. They want an RV. They need gas for their RV. They wanted clothes and shoes.
 NATHAN: Actually, that was a great exercise.
 CLAUDIA: They want to take their air fryer.
 [laughter]

NATHAN: Because one group wanted air mattresses and sleeping bags. I was like these guys were into comfort. They want a nice trip. You know?
[laughter]

(Planning Session, October 24)

In this example of shared humor, each of the teachers had an investment in trying to find a solution to the question of how they will handle students who did not complete their jobs or get along with their “co-workers.” This is a problem that they know they will have to confront and will need to have be on the same page with how it will be addressed. In their discussion, Nathan and Allyson both inserted comments regarding potential outcomes that prompted laughter from their peers (suggesting the student could become a “street sweep,” apply for “welfare” and have to determine how they could afford things, behave as if unhoused). Although these comments could be interpreted as making light of real difficulties a person might have if they could not keep a job, knowing that this is project is a simulation - and not the real thing - allowed these comments to be interpreted more humorously. Claudia then segued the conversation to share another humorous anecdote, in which the students completed another team-building exercise that asked them to think about what they would need to bring if they were to go camping.

This conversation to decide how to handle students who could not complete their jobs could have been very straightforward without any humor. Instead, Allyson, Nathan, and Claudia all made comments that prompted the others to laugh. The issue, activities, and students mentioned were shared among the teachers, all participants directly connected to them. Instances of shared humor such as this one and the one above brought moments of lightness, contributing to a feeling that the teachers enjoy their work and each other. Although they were discussing topics that required formal decisions, the use of humor and the receptiveness to it by all of the teachers created a sense of belonging in the moment. Therefore, in adding or responding to these humorous statements, each teacher contributed to their *team maker* identity.

Self-Deprecating Humor

A second type of humor evident in the data were self-deprecating comments made by the teachers. By self-deprecating humor, I refer to statements in which the speakers were critical of themselves in an attempt to entertain the others. These statements showed self-awareness as they made fun of themselves, pointing out silly mistakes, features of their own appearance and ages, or awkward experiences. As with most humor, these statements could certainly be interpreted differently, but it was clear from the smiles and laughter of the speakers themselves that they intended the others to find amusement in their comments. I would argue that these instances also strengthened their interpersonal relationships, as they allowed the speaker to show some vulnerability, an indicator of their comfort with the team, as well as empathy from the responders. Self-deprecating humor can therefore strengthen the team identity, both speakers and respondents contributing to this as *team makers*.

One example of this came during a conversation when the team was trying to figure out how to have some of the students finish up a district-required science pre-assessment while also completing other aspects of the project. The planning session time was winding down and it was clear from their tones that the teachers were beginning to feel the pressure of trying to finish up their decision-making before the end of the period. Allyson offered to have the students take this pre-assessment during her class time once they were finished with their essays. The conversation picks up with Nathan offering time during his class, as well.

NATHAN: Well if they're doing essays, then send me the pre-assessment.
 ALLYSON: >No, no. I don't mind.< But they've had plenty of time.
 NATHAN: No! I want it! [pounds fists on table in joking manner]
 ALLYSON: [smiling] I'm serious. Give me some of them, because I, we can flip flop them too.
 CLAUDIA: It's just, mostly period two and three.
 NATHAN: [We need a door. [in between their rooms]
 ALLYSON: What?
 NATHAN: We need a door.
 ALLYSON: I know. We need a door bad.
 CLAUDIA: We need a door. And we need a drink.

ALLYSON: We need our rooms close to each other is what we freaking need.
 CLAUDIA: We do!
 NATHAN: And I'm so stupid [laughing], because the first Friday we don't have a football game, I signed up for the dance.
 CLAUDIA: Oo::h!
 NORA: [Oh!
 ALLYSON: What?!
 [laughter]
 NORA: Give it away. Give it away. Give it away now!
 NATHAN: [So stupid! My wife's like "Friday off! What are we doing?"
 MARK: Going to a dance. Want to go with me?
 [laughter]
 CLAUDIA: Yeah. Ask somebody else if they want to make money. Some people are out for that.
 ALLYSON: Somebody will take it.
 CLAUDIA: [Teacher] sometimes wants that money.

(Planning Session, October 24)

This excerpt begins with the teachers problem-solving, both Allyson and Nathan willing to give up time with their content to get this pre-assessment done. This exchange is slightly tense early on, not because of any frustrations with each other, but with the circumstances of having to try to accomplish so much. Nathan's pounding on the table lightened the moment, as did Claudia's comment that they needed a drink (presumably as a moment of reprieve from the pressures of their work). Nathan then built off of this period of stress by sharing a mistake that he made in volunteering to chaperone a dance, calling himself "stupid." The response to this statement is a mixture of pity, sympathy, and laughter, with each of the teachers recognizing the problem with this decision yet finding some humor in it. Mark's comment that Nathan could invite his wife to the dance prompted further laughter.

Nathan's use of self-deprecating humor lightened the moment and provided a reprieve from their decision-making, but also contributed to the team's cohesiveness. It provided a break from their stress, allowing them to laugh together. All of the teachers understood why he referred to himself as "stupid," as they all have the common experience of chaperoning dances and everything that it entails. Further, following this comment Claudia offered a suggestion as to how

to solve his problem, with Allyson confirming this as a likely solution. This shows their support of Nathan, indicating their willingness to engage with solving his individual problem.

In another example, the team was discussing creating a poster or flyer to help recruit adults to interview students for their job placements, likening it to the classic Uncle Sam recruitment poster:

MAYA: And then we can put a picture of Mark with a hat, a cyclone [mascot] hat, pointing. [Referencing Uncle Sam poster]
[laughter]
MAYA: I'm pretty sure that should be our poster.
NATHAN: You should be in charge of marketing.
MARK: [laughing] I'd have to have a wig on though.
[laughter]
MAYA: No way.
NATHAN: You don't have one?
[laughter]

(Planning Session, October 7)

In this excerpt, there are three statements that prompt laughter, including Mark's comment that he would need a wig to look more like Uncle Sam. This was funny because he does not have nearly as much hair as the character, an acknowledgment of his baldness. Mark's self-deprecating comment about his appearance is illustrative of these types of comments made a number of times throughout the data by the teachers, as they referenced their looks as a source of humor. The teachers laugh at Mark's expense, but it was he who intentionally prompted this laughter.

The use of self-deprecating humor strengthened the team's bonds in a number of ways. In making these comments, the teachers made themselves vulnerable, indirectly expressing to the other members of the team that they felt comfortable enough with them to do so. Inserting self-deprecating comments indicated that the speaker saw themselves as part of the group, in a safe space for making such comments. The other teachers also took up these comments, responding to them with laughter, empathy, suggestions, or further humorous statements. They did not ignore

self-deprecating comments, leaving the speaker hanging, but engaged with them. As with other types of humor, this contributed to a sense of belonging on the team, bolstering a team identity.

Teasing Humor

A third type of humor that was present in the data was that which I labeled as teasing. Similar to Keltner et al. (2001), I define teasing as an intentional but playful provocation directed at another person. The work of these scholars indicates that teasing is one mechanism used to strengthen social bonds in relationships. For example, it can be an indicator that the teaser is ready for a deeper relationship with the recipient, as it suggests willingness for a more comfortable and less superficial relationship. For the teachers in this study, the use of teasing contributed to an identity as a *team maker* in that it marked moments when the teacher doing the teasing indicated a level of comfort and trust with the person who was the recipient of their teasing. In this study, teasing was often met with a smile or laugh by the recipient and others, indicating they saw it as playful or good-natured. For the majority of instances, teasing statements were brief, the conversation quickly moving on. Yet in that moment, the use of teasing and the acceptance of it created a sense of closeness between the two teachers.

Of course, teasing can do the opposite of contributing to team cohesion, causing tension or hurt. The person being teased, for example, may not enjoy or accept the teasing comment being made by another. Of the 17 instances of teasing identified in this study, however, there were none that on an observational level appeared to offend or cause tension. The recipient of the teasing either laughed or continued the conversation as if they were not bothered. This in itself contributes to a *team maker* identity, as the recipient presented themselves as willing to be teased rather than causing tension within the group.

One example of how teasing can contribute to a *team maker* identity was shown in the first planning session recorded. In the following excerpt, the team was discussing the date of their trip to the ropes course for a student team-building activity.

CLAUDIA: So.. Okay, here is the other thing that we need to consider too. If we are talking schedule, okay wait a minute, Mark has
 MARK: [I have the [social studies trip] in September.
 CLAUDIA: [Social studies trip]. When's that?
 MARK: I need my cell phone.
 ALLYSON: [I know. Okay. So when's the first day of school? It's a Thursday?
 NATHAN: First day with kids is a Thursday.
 ALLYSON: Okay. What's the date?
 NATHAN: September [sad tone]
 CLAUDIA: 5th
 ALLYSON: [laughs] 5th? You are such a teacher. [to Nathan, laughing]
 NATHAN: Yeah, you can pull up the district calendar but I'm pretty sure our
 ALLYSON: [You are such a teacher! [laughing]
 [laughter]
 NATHAN: I'm a teacher?
 ALLYSON: You are like, "September..." [mimics sad tone, frowns] [laughter]
 NATHAN: I'm just trying to survive Drivers Ed.
 [laughter]

(Planning Session, July 10)

Allyson's teasing of Nathan's tone when mentioning the month of September indicated the recognition of something many teachers feel at the start of the school year: a sadness that summer break is over. This is something they all laugh in response to. The comment that Nathan is "such a teacher" - something all of them of course are as well - signaled and acknowledged his inclusion in their group. It created a connection between Nathan and the others. Though it was not an inclusion specific to the team, it still strengthened their bond in highlighting their commonality. Thus, in making this teasing comment, Allyson contributed to her *team maker* identity.

Similar to the self-deprecating comments, the teachers made a number of teasing comments referencing their appearance or ages. For example, in another excerpt from the same planning session as above, the team was already laughing about their potential plan for one of the school's spirit day activities. This conversation goes on to include a teasing comment made by Allyson:

NATHAN: We will totally go '80s costume, hair metal band, you know?
 CLAUDIA: High top converse.
 NATHAN: With no laces in the sneakers, like Run DMC.
 CLAUDIA: [Yup
 ALLYSON: Okay. I was born in 1981, just saying...
 CLAUDIA: Listen! [laughter]
 NATHAN: Sucks to be you then! Because you missed
 MARK: [Oh my word! Seriously!
 [laughter for three seconds]
 ALLYSON: Hey, I'm going to take it because I know that I am a veteran teacher in this building now
 MARK: [Yes
 ALLYSON: at this point. So anytime I can say I was born in 1981, I'm going to say it. [laughs]
 MARK: [Who was it I told...? I don't know
 if it was this year in the faculty room. I have a pair of shoes that are 25 years old. And these young
 CLAUDIA: [I do too!
 MARK: teachers would come in, and they were coming in and they were talking about things and
 everything and I'm like looking at my shoes and everybody next to me knows what I'm thinking.
 ALLYSON: [Were you just like, looking at them like oh my god? [rolling eyes, laughing]
 MARK: [laughs] They got a hole in them this year, but I don't want to part with them. I don't know what I'm
 going to do.
 ALLYSON: They have a what?
 CLAUDIA: [Duct tape. Duct tape cures everything.]
 MARK: [They have a hole inside. They are splitting where the leather meets the
 ALLYSON: [What does?
 MARK: sole. The shoe!
 ALLYSON: What shoe?
 CLAUDIA: His 25-year-old shoe.
 MARK: [My 25-year-old shoe.
 ALLYSON: [Oh, your 25-year-old shoes! Oh, got it. Sorry.
 MARK: Yeah. But it's like every time they come in and they are talking about something and whatever, I'm
 just like [looks down at his shoes, laughs]. Not to be mean or anything. [laughter]

(Planning Session, July 10)

As Nathan and Claudia described their potential team costume for the spirit day, Allyson inserted a comment stating the year she was born. This effectively pointed out that she was younger than the rest of the team, just a child during the decade they were referencing, and therefore a comment to tease them about their ages. Claudia, Nathan, and Mark showed their offense, yet all were heartily laughing about it. In this instance, Allyson's teasing of the other team members caused laughter and pseudo-offended responses, but also created a means for the other teachers to see a commonality: their age and veteran status. Allyson's comment that she was okay with their response because "I know I am a veteran teacher in this building" indicated that she too was

part of their group, despite being younger. Mark then went on to share the anecdote about his shoes being older than some of the newer teachers, Claudia chiming in that she, too, had shoes that age. Again, it is a moment that highlights a commonality, contributing to a shared bond between the team members. Both the teasing comment and the ensuing responses demonstrated comfort with each other, allow the teachers to share a bit about themselves and find commonalities, ultimately deepening their interpersonal relationships. In doing so, the insertion of teasing humor ultimately added to the team's cohesion, making the speaker a *team maker*.

The teachers' use of all three types of humor - shared, self-deprecating, and teasing - contributed to a sense of comfort and belonging on the team. These humorous exchanges revealed commonalities, fostered a sense of community, and facilitated further conversation. The comments, as well as in the laughter and responses from others, also provided some light-hearted moments that could potentially carry the team through more challenging ones. By laughing together, the team created an environment in which their time together was more enjoyable. This amplified a sense of cohesion, contributing to the collective team identity. In each instance of using humor to engage with their team members, the teachers enhanced their *team maker* identities.

Establishing the In-Group

To be an effective team, it is important for its members to perceive of and present themselves as one. The participants on the interdisciplinary PBL team certainly did, often referencing "our team." One aspect inherent to teams is a distinction from those outside of the team: the team is the in-group, everyone else, the out-group. The teachers of this team, of course, did not do their work in a bubble, but engaged every day with other adults: parents, teachers, school staff, and administrators. In doing so, they had to manage the interactions and expectations of these

‘outsiders.’ Although each individual member of the group navigated this for themselves, there is significant evidence to show they often perceived of this management on a team level as well.

This occurred discursively in two ways. First, through their use of language such as *we*, *our*, and *us*, words indicating their cohesiveness as a team. Second, through the topics raised in interviews and planning sessions that signaled their collective identity in relation to out-groups, such as stating the perceptions they encountered from or their interactions with one of the out-groups.

In both interviews and planning sessions, the teachers were clearly conscious of the team’s dynamics with others, such as the nature of their interactions with other faculty or administration and other’s perceptions of the team. In the language of both sources of data, there were statements that created an impression of *us* versus *them*. Here, the use of versus means *in contrast to*, rather than *against*. In their interviews, despite not being directly asked about this, all of the teachers had occurrences of mentioning how they (as a team) were viewed by parents, administrators, or other teachers. In raising this themselves, it indicates they both defined themselves, and were defined by others, as a team. Including these statements is in itself an act of collective identity construction. That is, the teachers’ language signified they were one entity - distinct from others - rather than simply a group of individual teachers. This construction was furthered in their planning sessions, where their awareness of a need to jointly manage these outside dynamics was present multiple times. In each of these instances, the teachers fostered their team identity, their participation in doing so constructing their individual identities as *team makers*.

To illustrate how the teachers produced their *team maker* identities in the context of their interactions with out-groups, I will focus on two types of outside dynamics the team navigated. First, I will describe how the team constructed their in-group team identity through the language

they used to describe their interactions with people outside of the school, including parents.

Then, I will do the same for their interactions with the adults they came into the most frequent contact with: those who worked within the school building.

Outside of School Dynamics

There were those outside of the school that the team interacted with periodically, such as parents or community members involved with their project, but who were still very important to how they viewed themselves as a team. As discussed in Chapter 4, Allyson most often took on the identity of *liaison*, communicating with people as a representative of the team, yet there were certainly instances of the others doing so as well. In the language they used in interviews and planning sessions, particularly in their use of *us*, *our*, and *we* in their statements, it was evident they perceived of themselves with a collective identity in the team's interactions with those outside of the school.

Early in the study, the team acknowledged some parents' perceptions of the them. In her first interview, for example, Claudia brought up the desire by some parents to have their children be among those to work with the team: "Like they *all* think they are going to be on our team. They are all texting about it." In raising this point, Claudia highlights her consciousness of how "they" were viewing "our" team, contributing to the construction of the teachers' team identity as one unit.

The team was cognizant of their interactions with parents, discussing how to connect with and involve parents as participants in some of the team's activities. In these conversations, they used language that framed themselves as a team, working together to engage with parents. A typical example follows. This excerpt comes from a discussion prior to the school year regarding

an after-school barbeque the teachers wanted to hold as a team builder with students, but also as a way to engage families.

- ALLYSON: Like if we barbeque, it should be out front. They don't need to come in the building.
 MARK: [Right
 ALLYSON: It's just, and then if they want to come to the open house, that would be more academic. But I think, if we did the barbeque before we can hook them into coming to the open house. ↑"Oh, we'll see you next week!"
 CLAUDIA: We don't need them to come to open house if they come then, right?
 ALLYSON: Well, unless it's more how the .. Well, what's the purpose? The purpose of the barbecue is to
 NATHAN: To build connections.
 ALLYSON: [To connect. The purpose of the open house is to talk about academics. These are our expectations. If we hook them with the barbecue first ... then they might be more willing to listen to what we expect.
 CLAUDIA: Okay, so then let me ask this. Instead of us having individual ... How about they come to our individual rooms for open house
 MARK: Yeah, they used to have them where everybody would meet as a team.
 CLAUDIA: Why don't we meet as a team?
 NATHAN: Absolutely!
 CLAUDIA: And then we can say these are *our* expectations versus ... individual class.
 ALLYSON: [Yes. [these are mine.
 ALLYSON: I think that's awesome. We can sign out the auditorium or the library.

(Planning Session, July 10)

Throughout this conversation, the teachers talked of themselves jointly, using words such as *we* and *our* to signify the team, as opposed to *they* to signify parents. They discussed using the barbeque as an avenue to build connections, but also as a way to “hook” parents to come to the school’s open house the following week. They viewed this as another opportunity to connect with parents and share their expectations. Claudia’s suggestion that they meet with parents at the open house as a team to share “*our* expectations versus... individual class,” is met enthusiastically by the other teachers. This signaled their perception of themselves as a united entity. This excerpt typifies the use of specific words (*we*, *our* versus *they*, *them*) and topics (building connections, meeting with parents as a team, sharing common expectations) that demonstrated the teachers’ construction of their team identity.

One effect of the team’s engagement with parents and others in the community was positive feedback on the team’s activities. In interviews, all of the teachers mentioned positive responses

they had received. Nathan, for example, commented that “we got a really good response from parents” to the barbeque. Mark, when discussing the walking tour, something several parents had participated in as chaperones, stated they “got a lot [of good feedback] from parents.” Claudia noted that the tour “was *amazing*. We got great feedback from the kids. We got great feedback from the businesses. All of the chaperones thought it was great. It was so good! We were so happy.” These responses from those outside of school validated the team’s work, but also confirmed the importance of their efforts to engage with others as a team. Moreover, the teachers’ language framed these as responses to the team as a whole, again consistently using the word *we* to reinforce this collective identity.

This is not to say that the team never had challenges in their dynamics with people outside of the school or that the teachers never interacted with parents on an individual level. However, their perception of themselves as a team meant that they did not always need to engage with these challenges on their own. In team meetings, individual challenges with parents came up occasionally, with others on the team offering their insights into the student or parent being discussed or suggestions to address the problem. In other planning sessions, the team as a whole faced these challenges, tackling them together. In Claudia’s second interview, for instance, she mentioned that “we’ve been having a couple of parent issues, which I don’t let go of either.” While acknowledging that previous teams she had been on had also talked about student or parent issues, she noted that “Certain teams are more functional than others. And ours happens to be a pretty functional one, and so we do talk more than others.” She went on to affirm that “I like it. I would internalize it [challenges with parents] a lot more if it was just me facing it.” Claudia’s statements show not only that the team approached some of these challenging dynamics together, but suggests that this support eased some of the emotional impact and stress of doing it alone.

Through their use of first-person plural pronouns and the topics they raised, the teachers distinguished themselves from those out-groups outside of school, particularly parents. This discursively positioned them as an in-group, contributing to their team identity. In each instance that an individual participant used this strategy, it furthered their *team maker* identity.

Within-School Dynamics

The interdisciplinary PBL team more frequently interacted with another out-group: adults within the school, including other faculty, staff, and administrators. All of the teachers made comments regarding these other groups in their interviews. In doing so, they rarely spoke about how other employees viewed them as an individual, but of the team and their work. Similar to their language when discussing groups outside of school, the teachers used words such as *we* and *us*, constructing their team identity in the process. These statements, as well as those made in planning sessions, also conveyed this sense of in-group versus out-group. This primarily occurred through the teachers' raising topics that foreground the separation between the team and other school personnel. These topics included their explanation of others' perceptions of the team, which unfortunately included some negative elements. The teachers' descriptions positioned them as a distinct team having to manage these dynamics, again creating a sense of *us* versus *them*.

In their interviews, there were multiple instances of the teachers referring to resentment or misunderstanding from other teachers or administrators. The teachers described other teachers in the building as being annoyed by what they perceived of as the team's special treatment, including getting extra planning time or district money for their activities. For example, Allyson described:

I contacted [ropes course company] because that was one of the things we wanted to start off with. We knew that relationships are huge, especially in project-based learning. We

wanted to do some teambuilding. So I approached the district and said this is a price we can get. And [Asst. Superintendent] said, “We’ll pay for it.” And I was like great! So we took all of our kids for a whole day to the ropes course while the other kids were in school. And so it’s kind of like, I think people are resentful of us for that, but I mean nobody asked. We asked.

Here again Allyson acted as the liaison for the team, contacting both the district and the ropes course company. Her continual use of *we*, however, indicated that she saw herself as speaking not for herself, but for the team. She also noted that she thought other teachers were “resentful of *us*,” effectively positioning the team as distinct from the others in the school, but a collective unit in that distinction.

The teachers’ construction of their team identity through descriptions of the team being viewed as distinct and unfairly favored was reinforced in other interviews. Claudia, in describing a district STEM meeting she went to, stated “You know, a lot was asked about PBL, which I’ve always felt makes certain people resentful because they are like, ‘Oh, the attention is on them.’” Nathan confirmed this sense that others felt the team was treated differently when describing all of the work it takes to accomplish their projects: “And there’s pushback in the building. People don’t say it directly to me, but I hear it. Like we’re the special team, or we get to do this or do that.” In both of these examples, the participants positioned the members of their team as separate from the rest of the faculty, but united in this distinction.

The teachers’ conversations in planning sessions similarly indicated their awareness of this dynamic and the need to manage it. At times, they shared an annoyance at the situation, particularly in others’ misunderstanding of particular situations, wrongly attributing it to the PBL team. For example, in an early planning session, the team discussed a social studies field trip that Mark was organizing, but was open to any 7th grader in the building, regardless of what team they were on:

[illegible]

(Planning Session, July 10)

In this excerpt, there is a common understanding among the team members that other faculty would mistakenly assume that students going on the social studies trip were only students that work with the PBL team. As Mark explained how signing up for the field trip would be managed, Claudia and Allyson voiced their agreement that this was a good idea to avoid this misunderstanding. The team members were clearly aware of how their team was perceived by others, taking steps to mitigate negative impressions.

The team vacillated in their perceptions of being supported by these out-groups. In interviews, they mentioned their appreciation of the support they received from some of the instructional coaches, technology specialists, and administrators. Mark, for instance, voiced in his second interview that “we are getting a lot of support, unbelievable support, from the district

office.” Claudia also appreciated the encouraging words from those faculty who were chaperones on the walking tour or helped to interview students: “the feedback we’ve gotten from people outside of our regular team has been really good.” At other times, though, they felt they were lacking support from other adults in the building. For example, in the following conversation, Allyson and Nathan both expressed their dismay that some students had to miss the sessions with the mayoral candidates due to other faculty members.

ALLYSON: I’m going to say this before...We had a kid in our group that had a band lesson.
 NATHAN: Yes.
 [Maya walks in and sits down.]
 ALLYSON: Went down and asked if he could miss the band lesson and was told absolutely not. So he missed the mayoral candidates, just so you know.
 Maya: [No.
 NATHAN: Me too. It was, ah, [student]. I told him to go down and say, “I have this presentation for my class.” If he says you have to take the lesson, take the lesson.
 Maya: Good for you.
 NATHAN: But they are supposed to support us.
 Maya: Yes.
 ALLYSON: [That’s what we did too.
 Maya: But good for you for expecting respect and modeling ... the expectations, because eventually that
 NATHAN: [I guess
 Maya: is what they are going to get out of this.
 ALLYSON: Well if we plan something on a band day... Sorry. I’ll stop. I’m not going to... Okay. I’m done. I’m done. I’ll let it go.

(Planning Session, September 18)

Because a student was not allowed to miss a band lesson to participate in one of the team’s activities, both Allyson and Nathan interpreted this as a lack of support for their team. Both were clearly annoyed, since “they are supposed to support us.” Although Maya attempted to console them, the others took the outside faculty members’ actions as a slight to their team.

In the examples above, the teachers construct a sense of team through their use of first-person plural pronouns, but also in raising topics that underscored their distinction from others in the building. Together, they managed their engagement with others within the building, particularly in light of some challenging perceptions of the team. They did so proactively, discussing how to mitigate it as a team, as shown in the first excerpt. They also shared in their concerns and

commiserated as a team, as seen in the second excerpt. I would argue that each instance of doing so strengthened their bond - and their team identity - as they tried to jointly figure out how to navigate the dynamics of interacting with others in the building.

No longer siloed in their classrooms, it was likely that teachers would at times refer to themselves as a team or discuss their dynamics with out-groups as one. However, it is important to note that it was not inevitable that they would consistently do so. It was not required that they raise their views on the out-groups' perceptions in their interviews; they could have easily avoided trying to manage these perceptions or challenges in their planning sessions; they could have seen their individual problems as just that, only representing themselves and not the team. Instead, their awareness and discussion of the dynamics with out-groups was not ignored or minimized but addressed. In openly talking about interactions or challenges the team had with out-groups, each teacher strengthened the bonds between members of their in-group. Their words conveyed the message that they all had a shared stake and responsibility, but that they would also work through those issues together, as a team.

These discursive acts are what contributed to the teachers actually being a team. The language used to distinguish themselves from others and to signify that they were one entity (*we*, *us*, *our*) was an important factor in constructing their team identity. The teachers were conscious of others' perceptions, voicing their beliefs, at times sharing in the resulting emotions, such as appreciation or annoyance. They offered mutual support to each other in dealing with these outside dynamics, conveying a sense of togetherness, strengthening their cohesion as a team. By using their language and actions to navigate the dynamics with out-groups, they became *team makers*, contributing to the construction of the team identity.

Conclusion

In the context of consistent and sustained work on an interdisciplinary PBL team, the teachers in this study constructed and presented a variety of individual identities. This chapter explored one identity that all of the teachers had in common, that of *team maker*. This identity was discursively constructed in instances when participants contributed to an overall collective team identity. There were four distinct ways they did this: in taking an interest in each other, making personal remarks, using humor, and establishing the team as an in-group. For each, I described how it contributed to creating a team identity, such as through the use of first-person plural pronouns, the focus of the topic raised, or distinctions from out-groups, providing examples as evidence. Each teacher in this study used their language to strengthen their connections with their teammates. This occurred when they engaged with each other's ideas and opinions, but also when they found commonalities, supported each other, laughed together, or showed empathy and shared emotions. This deepening of their interpersonal relationships ultimately served to increase the cohesion of the team as a singular entity.

To be clear, the findings described in this chapter are one snapshot of how each teacher constructed their *team maker* identities and the resulting team identity. There are certainly many other discursive strategies that one could use to develop this identity, such as asking for help or pointing out each other's strengths in their work. It is also important to note that the teachers frequently spoke in much more individualistic terms, these utterances contributing to their other identities. Some of these other identities, such as Allyson's *liaison* identity, could support her *team maker* identity. Others, such as Nathan's *math teacher* identity, had the potential to interfere with this construction, as he sometimes viewed the work of the team as interfering with this individual ability to cover his curriculum.

And yet, there is significant evidence that all of the participants in the study used the discursive strategies outlined above. This indicates they all were active contributors to the team's creation. No one instance of using these discursive strategies creates a *team maker*, yet consistent and repeated use of them does. Like any identity work, it must be ongoing and consistent to be effective. I believe it is also significant that, despite the many areas of tension described in Chapter 5, I found limited evidence in planning sessions of discursive strategies used by the teachers to differentiate themselves from the team. Although there were certainly frustrations and differing viewpoints, I did not find enough evidence to earn anyone the identity of *team breaker*.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

As we move further into the 21st century, efforts to increase teachers' collaboration as a means to improve schools has become increasingly prevalent (Achinstein, 2002; Gajda & Koliba, 2008). This reshaping of teachers' work, disrupting the longstanding norm of isolation, undoubtedly influences teachers' identity development as they interact with colleagues in new ways. There are myriad types and configurations of teachers' collaboration; this dissertation investigated professional identity development in one of these: that for teachers on a secondary, interdisciplinary team. This study examined teachers' perceptions of their professional identities and explored the ways in which their identities were constructed and negotiated through language as they participated on this team. In theoretical foundation and methodology, the study drew on theories of symbolic interactionism and discourse, as well as theoretical understandings of identity to answer the research questions.

In this concluding chapter, I first summarize and discuss the key findings of this study. These findings are significant to our understanding of teacher professional identity and hold a number of implications for theory and practice. These will be explored, as well as recommendations for teachers, administrators, and researchers. I will then discuss the limitations of this study, some of which provide additional opportunities for future research. I will conclude the chapter with some final thoughts.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

At its onset, this dissertation sought to answer the following research questions:

How do teachers perceive and negotiate the ongoing development of their professional identities when participating on an interdisciplinary collaborative team?

- *What are teachers' perceptions of their professional identities while participating on an interdisciplinary collaborative team? In what ways do these shift over time?*
- *How do the discursive strategies used by the teachers construct their professional identities?*

All of these questions were answered in the course of this study, yet upon reflection, I believe it is necessary to acknowledge a challenge with the organization of these questions. This dissertation has hopefully demonstrated that language is integral to how meaning is made. This is true when spoken, but also in its use in writing such as this dissertation. I perceive of these initial research questions as placing an emphasis on the teachers' perceptions, as if they are the main focus of this study. Indeed, at the beginning of this study, I believed that *was* the focus, particularly in how these perceptions would shift over time. My findings from what the teachers articulated in interviews and planning sessions, however, has made me rethink my phrasing and the order of these questions. While the research questions as written are addressed in the study, the findings compel me to assert the need for two changes to how these questions are written. First, the findings of the study indicate that it is necessary to explore both how "teachers' perceptions of their professional identities" shift *and* how the identities themselves shift in the moment-by-moment interactions and over time. The teachers' identities constantly shifted in the process of being constructed as they interacted with each other and negotiated various tensions. This occurred regardless of whether the teachers' perceptions of themselves changed. I would therefore convey this in how the questions were worded. Second, I believe the placement of the final question minimizes its importance to the study. Understanding identity development is impossible without examining the discursive strategies used by the teachers, thus I would reorganize the questions to make this clear.

The answers to the research questions investigated are woven throughout the three data chapters. In Chapter 4, I provided profiles that explored the identity development of three of the teachers in this study: Allyson, Claudia, and Nathan. Each of these teachers constructed various identities, such as *team leader* or *experienced rookie*, through the language they used in planning sessions and interviews. I discussed each of these identities, explaining the discursive strategies that contributed to its construction. This chapter also discussed the teachers' perceptions of their identities while participating on the team, each of the teachers acknowledging the identities discussed. Chapter 5 examined the tensions that influenced the teachers' negotiation of identity in this new context of interdisciplinary collaboration. These included tensions over authority, differing visions, balancing content, and their sense of the value of their work. While all of the teachers grappled with these tensions, the intensity of how they experienced these varied. Chapter 6 explored the discursive strategies used by the teachers to construct *team maker* identities. This identity was common to all teachers, ultimately contributing to their collective team identity.

In what follows, I summarize the findings while also discussing considerations that were brought to light by these findings. For the purpose of clarity, rather than responding to each research question in the order they were originally crafted, I have ordered these summaries based on what the findings of the study emphasized about teachers' professional identity development. I begin with the discursive strategies used to construct the teacher's professional identities, followed by how they negotiated these identities, finishing with their perceptions of their identities. I will also discuss the ways this study reinforces and builds upon the current literature on teachers' professional identity and teacher collaboration.

Discursive Strategies Used to Construct Professional Identities

This dissertation described numerous discursive strategies the teachers used to construct their professional identities. Multiple identities produced by these strategies were explored for three of the teachers, while the discursive strategies used by all of the teachers to construct the common identity of *team maker* were also discussed. Much like identity itself, the use of discursive strategies to construct an identity is complex and nuanced. Using one strategy only one time does not necessarily construct an identity. Rather, using several strategies in conjunction and over time does. This dissertation showed that an examination of identity development must consider the type of contribution made, as well as the topic, frequency, and tone of those contributions. Additionally, consideration of who responds to those utterances - and how - must be taken into account. Finally, it is necessary to consider how the silences or what is not said influence the construction of identity.

One category of discursive strategy described in this dissertation was the type of contribution the participant made to the conversation. These included introducing a topic, answering a question, adding an idea, raising a concern, or inserting a consideration. The frequency with which each teacher used each type of strategy contributed to the identities they were constructing. The repeated use - or lack of use - of a particular type of contribution facilitated the creation and presentation of each identity. For example, part of how Allyson constructed her identity as *team leader* was in most frequently being the teacher to introduce new topics and answer the others' questions. Claudia, on the other hand, constructed her identity as *advisor* by being the one to most often answer Allyson's questions and add considerations the team needed to take into account when making their decisions. Chapter 4 described how the use of these different types of contributions created the various identities of three of the teachers. Some of

these types of contributions, such as asking questions, were also described in constructing the common *team maker* identity examined in Chapter 6. This chapter also illuminated several others: asking for opinions, using humor, and inserting utterances to demonstrate active listening.

In combination with type of contribution and frequency, the topic of the contribution is a factor of the discursive strategy. A teacher can add a particular type of contribution, but its topic impacts the identity being constructed. For example, all of the teachers added ideas or asked questions about the team's Citizenship USA project, one of the topics identified in this study. For Nathan, the vast majority of these types of contributions occurred only when discussing this topic rather than others. This focus on the project contributed to his *micro-planner* identity. This also speaks to another feature of these discursive strategies for consideration, that of when they were *not* used. In the example above, Nathan did not ask or answer many questions for particular topics, such as for the additional activities the team planned. Other teachers similarly had variations in the types and frequency of contributions for various topics. Consequently, the identities they constructed varied.

Other discursive strategies found in this study focused on the choice of words or phrases used. One aspect of this was in the use of softer or more direct language. For instance, one feature of Allyson's *cheerleader* identity was the use of softer language when voicing frustrations, such as saying something "kind of" bothered her. At other times, the teachers used much more direct language, such as when Claudia would assert that "we need to" take a particular action. Another aspect of this was in the use of individual versus collective language. For all of the teachers, choosing to use first-person plural pronouns such as *we*, *our*, and *us* contributed to their *team maker* identities. In using this language, they were established themselves as an in-group, constructing their collective team identity.

A final discursive strategy discussed in this study was the teachers' positioning of themselves and others. This occurred not only through the types of contributions and topics, but in how these contributions were taken up and by whom. For example, Claudia positioned herself as the *housekeeper* through references to certain tasks. However, she was also positioned by Allyson as such when Allyson would make statement confirming the secondary nature of the tasks Claudia took on. Positioning as a discursive strategy was seen with multiple identities, including Allyson's *team leader* and *liaison* identities, Claudia's *advisor* and *macro-planner* identities, and Nathan's *experienced rookie* and *micro-planner* identities.

The construction of the teachers' identities relied on a combination of these discursive strategies. A single instance of using a particular type of contribution on a particular topic does not fully construct an identity or position a person with a certain identity. Rather, it begins or advances the process of identity construction. Close examination of how these discursive strategies are continually used sheds light onto this process. While each individual instance of these being used contributed to the construction, it was their use over time that furthered that identity development. Thus, shifts in identity occurred in moment-by-moment interactions, but also over the long term. These, when combined with the actions of the teachers necessary to implement their work, contributed to the ongoing development of their professional identities as members of the interdisciplinary team.

Teachers' Negotiation of their Professional Identities

Findings from this study show that even as the teachers were constructing identities through their language, they were also negotiating their identities. That is, there were a number of tensions the teachers navigated as they participated on the team. With these tensions a range of emotions occurred, influencing how they made sense of themselves and their work. This was

briefly discussed with some of the individual identities profiled in Chapter 4, such as Nathan's efforts as an *experienced rookie* to navigate the tension of being a veteran teacher who is competent and knowledgeable while also being a newcomer to the building and interdisciplinary team. Moreover, Chapter 5 was dedicated to exploring four of these tensions that were experienced by all members of the team, but to varying degrees of intensity. The navigation of each had implications for their identities.

The first tension explored was that over authority. While all of the teachers asserted that they saw each other as equal participants in decision-making and were considerate of each other's opinions and suggestions, each also grappled with their own participation in and control over final decisions. Some struggled with giving up control, relying on trust in their colleagues to mitigate this tension. Some became frustrated, tempering their opinions for the sake of the team. The teachers constructed *team player* identities, respectful and willing to defer to the others. A second tension was created by the differing visions of the scale and scope of the team's work together. The extensive nature of the reality of the team's work was much more closely aligned with the visions of two of the teachers, but quite far from the others', who wanted interdisciplinary projects of a much smaller scope. Navigation of this tension was challenging for the latter, who vacillated between enthusiasm, doubt, supportiveness, critique, and flexibility. Again, an outcome of the negotiation of this tension contributed to their *team player* identities, as they conceded to the more extensive vision. A third tension evident in this data was that navigated by each teacher as they attempted to balance their own content area's curriculum and standards with the team's interdisciplinary projects and activities. This led to anxiety and frustrations, but also a common strategy to mitigate the tensions: the reliance on the future to address concerns. The content identities that were more prominent, such as Nathan's, belonged

to those who experienced this tension more intensely. A final tension explored in this dissertation was over whether the value of outcomes was worth the time, effort, changes to practice, and emotions created by their interdisciplinary work. Like the other tensions, the teachers varied in the intensity of how they experienced this tension. The results of the ongoing mental calculations over whether their work was “worth it” had a range of results, from pride and greater job satisfaction to doubt and frustration. Two of the teachers indicated that their work was worth the effort and stress, perceiving of themselves as better educators because of the outcomes achieved. The others expressed hesitancy to fully affirm that the outcomes outweighed the means to achieve them, unable to make a verdict on both this and whether they themselves had changed until a later, undetermined date.

These findings indicate that teachers working in the context of an interdisciplinary team don’t simply construct particular identities through their language but have the challenge of navigating a number of tensions in the identity development process. Teachers experience these tensions to varied degrees of intensity. Although this study does not verify why this may be, it does suggest a number of factors that impact this intensity. Teachers who have more familiarity with interdisciplinary PBL planning and teaching, such as Allyson and Claudia, may experience less intensity as they further engage with this type of work. This may also be true for teachers who have more authority or whose vision of the work is being met. External factors, such as the district and state requirements or other people the team interacts with, most likely also play a role in the intensity of these tensions. For teachers new not only to working on teams such as this one, but in the school or district, this may increase further, as it did with Nathan.

In the process of navigating these tensions, the teachers experienced challenging emotions such as frustration, uncertainty, and stress. These emotions were described in interviews but

often not mentioned in planning sessions, suggesting that at times the teachers were careful to present an identity that masked their actual beliefs or perspectives. The emotional labor of doing so, particularly if it occurs over an extended time period, may potentially result in an identity that is fractured between the identity they present and who they see themselves to be (Hargreaves, 2001) or burnout (Yilmaz et al., 2015). One of the identities present in this study, that of *team player*, may be a result of that emotional labor, but also a way to mitigate the intensity of the tensions they experienced. In constructing *team player* identities, the teachers indicated their willingness to listen and respect the ideas and work of the others. In consciously giving up some of their own authority and individualism, the burdens of sole responsibility for the outcomes may be lessened. This may have alleviated the intensity of the tensions they experienced while allowing them to reserve judgement about the outcomes of their work and their own identities until a later date. I would also assert that another means to relieve these tensions was through the construction of the *team maker* identities described in Chapter 6. In using their language to actively build a collective team identity, each teacher contributed to the team's entitativity and created a friendlier and more comfortable environment in which to work. For some teachers, the value of working in this context may ease the challenging emotions associated with the various tensions described.

Teachers' Perceptions of their Professional Identities

Identity theorists argue, and evidence from this study shows, that teacher's professional identities are continually in the process of construction and reconstruction (e.g. Sutherland et al., 2010; Buchanan, 2015). However, their perceptions of their identities do not necessarily need to follow suit. The findings from this study showed that while some of the teachers' perceptions

were aligned with the identity development evident from data, a change in their understanding of who they were as teachers was not shared by all.

As described in Chapter 4, two of the teachers, Allyson and Claudia, recognized that the new context of their work shifted how they made sense of themselves as educators. Both acknowledged the new identities they constructed as they interacted with their colleagues on the team, whether it be as *team leader*, *advisor*, *cheerleader*, or *macro-planner*. These identities were not necessarily wholly new, but identities that were made more prominent in their work with others. Allyson, for example, already perceived of part of her professional identity as being a *worker*. She believed that this was enhanced and moved to the forefront in her actions with colleagues. The additional emotional energy and identity development Allyson associated with interdisciplinary work was beneficial to her sense of self, making her feel more connected to her peers and motivated as an educator. Claudia similarly felt the emotional and mental weight of the work, but believed it was worth it. She confirmed both the identities she constructed over the course of the team's work, such as *housekeeper*, as well as the minimizing of her *science teacher* identity. She perceived herself as an educator who was constantly evolving, willing to "reinvent" herself to do what she believed was beneficial for kids. She recognized and was open to a shifting professional identity as she engaged with interdisciplinary collaboration.

Like the others, Nathan's identities also shifted while participating on an interdisciplinary team. Unlike the others, however, Nathan's perception of himself as an educator did not change, despite acknowledgement of the identities present in the data and recognition that the context of his teaching was very different than he was used to. He did not yet see himself as changed by his work, believing it was too early to determine if his professional identity was different. Thus,

although teachers may experience shifts to their identities, their *perceptions* of those identities might not shift.

The tensions the teachers negotiated, described in Chapter 5, may have influenced how the teachers made sense of themselves as they participated in this work and whether their perceptions shifted in response. Allyson and Claudia felt the least intensity of these tensions despite still experiencing them. They had the most influence over decisions, their vision of interdisciplinary PBL was mostly being met, they expressed the least concern over balancing their content with the interdisciplinary project, and they found the value of outcomes to outweigh the emotional and physical efforts necessary. At the same time, they acknowledged that their professional identities had changed and accepted the changes. Nathan, on the other hand, was at the other end of a spectrum of intensity for each of these tensions. Despite the challenges of navigating these tensions, he suspended judgment of whether his identity was impacted in this new context. This may indicate a resistance to acknowledge identity changes when one is uncertain of the outcomes, particularly if those outcomes are based on a vision and decisions that are not completely aligned with what one thinks. This also raises the question of whether some identity development is in response to dealing with these tensions. For example, Nathan may have bolstered his *math teacher* identity, as well as constructed both *team player* and *team maker* identities, as ways to mitigate the tensions that are part of being an interdisciplinary teacher. This attachment to who he sees himself to be, while also being respectful of and connecting with the others, may ease the tensions he experienced as he developed his interdisciplinary teacher identity. Further research is needed in this field to explore these questions.

Findings in Relation to the Literature

This dissertation answers calls to investigate the moment-by-moment interactions of teachers engaged in collaborative work (Scribner et al., 2007), incorporating observations of their talk into studies (Havnes, 2009). It contributes to our understanding of teachers' professional identity development in those moments, responding to calls for research that examines the discursive strategies teachers employ and how they position themselves in the construction of their identity (Glazier et al., 2017). As teachers' professional identity development has been both under-theorized and under-examined (Trent, 2010), this dissertation begins to fill that need.

The findings from this study support many of those found in literature on teachers' professional identity development. Consistent with the literature (e.g. Lasky, 2005; Rogers & Scott, 2008, Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), the identity development of the participants in this study reflected the five theoretical understandings that are central to identity. As with all identity development, the shaping and reshaping of teachers' identities was ongoing and dynamic throughout the course of the study. Each interaction offered new opportunities for identity development as their identities were constructed through their language. The findings show that all of the teachers had many identities, each being enhanced or subdued as they engaged with each other. The ways they made meaning of their work and themselves was negotiated in these interactions, dependent on the specific contexts of their work, both those in the immediate circumstances of team interactions and larger external contexts of which they were part. At the same time, the participants were active agents in the development of their identities, at times consciously constructing particular identities. Similarly, this study reinforces the literature that asserts that teachers' emotions are both an expression of their identity and help shape it (Zembylas, 2003; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). For example, the teachers use of humor and

laughter constructed and shaped their identities as *team makers*, while also being an expression of those identities. As described earlier, however, emotion can take a toll as the teachers underwent emotional labor to navigate tensions and manage the identities they presented.

This study further contributes to those that examine the identity development of experienced teachers. As discussed in Chapter 2, much of the research on identity development focuses on new teachers in the field. This literature speaks to many of the theoretical understandings of identity, as this is a time in a teachers' career when identity development is substantial and often noticeable. This is important work, but it is also equally important to recognize that teachers continue to develop as they move through their careers, even if this is less visible through general observation. While there are studies that examine identity development later in teachers' careers, these tend to focus on identifying characteristics of identities, such as job satisfaction or motivation (e.g. Canrinus et al., 2012), or the external Discourses that shape teachers' identities (e.g. Sachs, 2001; Vahasantanen, 2015). This dissertation, on the other hand, gave attention to veteran teachers engaging in a context that was central to their daily lives as educators. This new context, participating in a sustained manner on an interdisciplinary team, was integral to the teachers' identity development, as their identities were constructed, shaped, and presented within these interactions every day. This study also illuminates the tensions that experienced teachers may face as they engage in this context, impacting their identity development, sense of self, and satisfaction with their work. Moreover, this dissertation builds on the literature by revealing some of the discursive strategies that are used by teachers to both construct their identities and negotiate the tensions associated with identity development in this context.

Additionally, this dissertation reinforces and builds on the work of researchers of teacher collaboration. One way it does so in adding to the research on the benefits of collaboration for

teachers. Allyson and Claudia, for example, both indicated they felt professional growth and an improved work life. Likewise, this study made evident the difficulties of collaboration. Several scholars note the challenges, yet importance, of collaborative groups sharing common beliefs and goals (Hord, 1997; Westheimer, 1999; Leonard & Leonard, 2005). This dissertation highlights the importance of aligning visions, suggesting that it is about much more than simply agreeing to the same goals or the means to get there. Rather, it is necessary to consider the identity development of each team member as they engage with the process of aligning visions and the tensions that might arise.

Finally, the findings from this study suggest that it is necessary to bring identity development into conversations on collegiality in collaboration. This concept, investigated by numerous scholars (e.g. Hargreaves, 1994; Kelchtermans, 2006; Datnow, 2011), is necessary for effective collaboration, but with caveats. The development of contrived collegiality (Hargreaves, 1994) or a lack of relational trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2009) can impede effective collaboration. The data in this study showed the participants actively worked to construct a team identity, suggesting their desire to have collegial and trustful relationships, despite at times this being a challenge. There is the possibility that the team was engaging in “comfortable collaboration, rather than critical colleagueship” (Boyd & Glazier, 2017, p. 135) or creating a “pseudocommunity” (Grossman et al., 2001, p. 955), engaging at a surface level, giving the illusion of consensus to maintain relationships while continuing to maintain separate beliefs and practices. Each of these would limit the sustainability and effectiveness of collaboration. The findings certainly showed that participants at times tempered what said to be a *team player* or avoid being critical of others. However, I believe further study of the team over an extended period of time would be necessary

to make a final determination of whether comfortable collaboration or a pseudocommunity was occurring.

Implications and Recommendations

The findings from this dissertation have significance for how we think about teachers' professional identity development in the context of interdisciplinary collaboration. In this section, I will first begin by discussing questions raised by this study that have led me to theorize the development of an *interdisciplinary team teacher* identity. I will then describe the implications and recommendations of this study for practitioners. This includes both teachers who begin to engage in interdisciplinary collaboration and the administrators who want to implement this model of teaching and learning in their schools. Finally, I will discuss the implications for the literature, providing recommendations for future research.

Developing an Interdisciplinary Team Teacher Identity

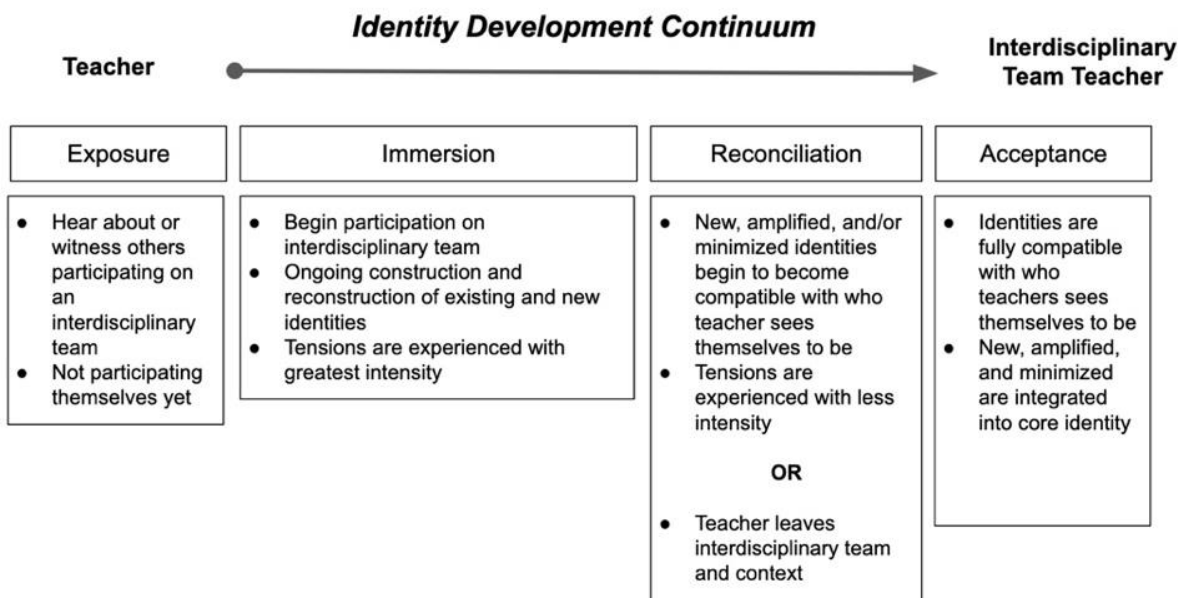
At the root of my interest in this study were questions I had about how teachers make meaning of their professional identities while navigating new interactions and collaboration with colleagues. Educators who have been in the profession for numerous years, those well past the initial stages of becoming a teacher, often feel established professionally. In other words, they know who they are as teachers. Despite this certainty, and as I hope has become clear in this dissertation, identity development is continual and incredibly complex. Researchers generally assert that a teacher's professional identity contains multiple sub-identities, similar to those described in this study, which "...may be broadly linked and can be seen as the core of a teacher's professional identity." (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 122). Veteran teachers, accepting of and confident in their core professional identity, may be unaware of these sub-identities and the impact that new contexts and interactions will have on their construction.

Teachers may label themselves - their core professional identity - simply as *teacher* or *middle school teacher*, those on the secondary level adding a content identifier such as *social studies teacher* or *English teacher*. This characterization may happen even as they acknowledge that they have changed over the years, recognizing that they are not the same teacher they once were. The teachers in this study certainly fit this description. The findings from this study raise the question, however, of whether after extended time in this context their core professional identity would shift to one as an *interdisciplinary team teacher*. That is, rather than being a teacher *on* an interdisciplinary team, the educator *is* an interdisciplinary team teacher. Will teachers working in this context for an extended time, negotiating the associated tensions and undergoing the process of identity development, eventually “become” *interdisciplinary team teachers*? And will their perception of their professional identity reflect this shift?

I believe the findings from this study offer some considerations for this transition from *teacher* to *interdisciplinary team teacher*. It was evident that the participants in this study varied in their professional identity development. They constructed different sub-identities and varied in their recognition and acceptance of these identities. Although they all experienced tensions as they navigated this, the intensity of the tensions was not the same for everyone. In thinking about this, I returned to the literature to consider how scholars theorize and conceptualize identity development to see if there were available models that might inform my thinking on the stages of identity development. While there is much discussion about the developmental stages of new teachers, many of them building on the work of Fuller & Brown (1975), as well as literature on the characteristics of career stages for those in the field (e.g. Huberman, 1993; Lynn, 2002), I could not find any that provided a model of the stages of professional identity development within the context of collaboration. Therefore, although there is much work left to do to theorize

the identity development stages in this context, I offer the figure below and the description that follows as an early attempt to do so.

Figure 7.1 *Identity Development Continuum*



Upon initially hearing about or witnessing others engaged in interdisciplinary collaboration, the context in which a teacher works has changed. They have entered the exposure stage. Thus, there will be implications for their identity, as their awareness, assumptions, and possible interactions with those engaged on a team become influenced by this knowledge. This, however, may not cause significant changes to their identities. Actual participation on an interdisciplinary team moves the teacher into the immersion stage. In this stage, they experience the greatest intensity of tensions as they negotiate the meanings of their work and themselves in this new context. This is a period of substantial identity development, as some current identities are minimized, others amplified, and wholly new identities are constructed. The extent to which the immersion stage lasts may vary for teachers, some more easily able to move into the reconciliation stage than others. For those who cannot ease these tensions or overcome the dissonance between their

identities and who they see themselves to be, exiting from this context might occur. In other words, they leave the team. For those who are able, they will move into the reconciliation stage, the tensions lessening in intensity and their identities becoming compatible with who they see themselves to be. Eventually, teachers' identities become compatible with who they see themselves to be, these identities fully integrated into their core identity. Rather than being a *teacher*, they have become an *interdisciplinary team teacher*.

For the teachers in this study, I would place Allyson and Claudia furthest in the process of identity development from *teacher* to *interdisciplinary team teacher*, having begun to move into the reconciliation stage. As described in the summary of findings section above, they experienced the least intensity of the tensions. They were “all in” in achieving their vision, integral to planning and decision-making, finding satisfaction with the outcomes of their work. The sub-identities they constructed benefited the entire team, as *team leader*, *advisor*, *cheerleader*, and *housekeeper*. They did not fully give up their content identities but were flexible in how and when how to integrate their disciplines. This placement further along the continuum may simply be because they started moving along it earlier; they were exposed to this context of teaching earlier and were instrumental to the formation of the team. I would assert that neither Allyson nor Claudia has fully “become” an *interdisciplinary team teacher* but are well into the process. For Nathan and Mark, I would place them in the middle of the immersion stage. They experienced the tensions with more intensity, having greater uncertainty about the vision and outcomes of their work, as well as whether they were changed by it. It was yet to be determined whether they would move into the reconciliation stage or leave the interdisciplinary team.

We can also learn from the literature on the professional identity development of new teachers in considering placement on this continuum. Nias (1989) asserted that people experiencing stress, similar to those felt by new teachers as they transition into the profession, tend to cling to previously developed identities. Given the vastly different context of interdisciplinary PBL teaming such as that which the participants in this study engaged in, I would argue we should view them as new teachers and anticipate a similar reaction. Nathan's resistance to seeing himself as changed and the evidence of the greater intensity of tensions he experienced would align with this. As Ronfeldt & Grossman (2008) note in their examination of the "possible selves" of new teachers, however, "entering professional practice requires that novices construct identities that *fit into that world* [emphasis added]" (p. 41). Experienced teachers engaging for the first time in interdisciplinary collaboration must also construct identities that fit the new context. Otherwise, "becoming" an interdisciplinary team teacher may be an impossibility.

Implications for Teachers and Administrators

Teacher collaboration is not always easy. The literature recognizes that there are many challenges associated with collaboration, despite its benefits (e.g. Leonard & Leonard, 2005; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2007). Collaboration is itself a skill, as it does not automatically happen simply because teachers have good intentions (Friend & Cook, 2013). In addition to overcoming the logistical and ideological challenges of collaboration or developing the skill of collaboration itself, the findings in this study suggest that teachers be made aware that their identities will be shaped by the process of collaboration. That is, working closely with others is about more than making decisions together or taking on different roles; it will change who they are. This is not to say that they will become totally new teachers, but that they will construct new identities that

affect their professional identity and potentially who they see themselves to be. Helping teachers to understand this may ease some of the tensions associated with negotiating identity development, as recognition of identity development may allow teachers to feel that experiencing these tensions is a normal part of the process of being a collaborative educator. As they move through the process of identity development, these tensions and any corresponding anxieties will hopefully pass. In this way, I am reminded of how we support new teachers in “becoming.” To successfully transition into the profession, several scholars call for teacher education programs to help new teachers navigate their identity development and its challenges (e.g. Alsup, 2006; Pillen et al., 2013). Likewise, this may be necessary for teachers engaging in the new context of interdisciplinary collaboration.

For teachers beginning the process of interdisciplinary collaboration similar to the team in this study, opportunities to explore and acknowledge their identity development would be helpful. To work collaboratively, teachers may need to give up or minimize some of their identities. This can be very difficult and is in many ways a loss. For secondary teachers this may be especially difficult, as they are often trained for the profession specifically through the lens of their content, their teacher education programs focused on becoming a content specialist like a social studies or science teacher. This experience contributes to who the teachers see themselves to be for their entire career, potentially making the lessening of a content identity particularly challenging. Acknowledgement of this loss, or the loss of other identities, may help teachers navigate the dissonance of having new identities that are in conflict with who they perceive of themselves to be. Opportunities for reflection have also been shown to aid in identity development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), thus it may be beneficial to take the time to reflect on and acknowledge the emotions and stresses felt in the process of identity development.

Similarly, opportunities to reflect on their discourse, as well as how they position themselves and others, may help teachers to better understand the identities they are constructing in these interactions.

I would also encourage districts and administrators to approach interdisciplinary collaboration at the secondary level with several considerations in mind. Foremost, they too need to recognize that collaboration is about more than getting in place logistical factors that make it possible, such as providing time and space for teachers to plan. Rather, they should acknowledge the identity development teachers on interdisciplinary teams will undergo in the new context of their work. As seen in this dissertation, all teachers do not have the same identities. They may experience collaboration very differently. As teachers engage in collaboration, some of their identities may be amplified while others are minimized or restrained. This can potentially lead to emotional labor that contributes to burnout (Yilmaz, 2015). Teachers navigating the complexities of identity development need additional support as they undertake the effort to reconcile sometimes conflicting identities. One aspect of this support is in helping teachers to ease the tensions they experience as they negotiate their identity development, such as those described in this dissertation. Facilitating opportunities for teachers on a team to discuss their visions, expectations for decision-making, and the scope of projects in order to voice their perceptions with the goal of aligning their views would be a valuable step in doing so.

There is also much we can learn from the literature and programming that assists preservice teachers in developing their professional identities. Becoming a teacher is a time of great change in identity development, but so too is working in the new context of intense collaboration such as that undertaken by the participants in this study. Adapting lessons from the work done with preservice teachers may offer an avenue to facilitate experienced teachers' identity development.

For example, Vetter and Schieble (2016) assert that preservice teachers should analyze a video of themselves teaching and consider how their various social identities shape their positioning in conversation with students. The researchers offer several questions that preservice teachers can use to interrogate their own identities and the impact of these identities. Conducting a similar exercise with a collaborative team could be similarly beneficial. After watching a video of their planning, team members could answer and discuss questions such as:

- *Who does most of the talking? Who leads? Who makes comments on what topics?*
- *What kinds of questions are posed? What kinds of answers are facilitated?*
- *How do you talk each other? What is your tone? Do you use directives? Questions? Praises? Criticisms?*
- *How did you position yourself as a teacher and colleague? How did you position others? How were you being positioned?*
- *How might these positionings be shaped by how your experiences as a teacher? By your race, class, gender, and/or sexuality?*
- *How does this align or not align with the identities you want to present?*
- *How does this shape what is possible in your collaboration?*

(Adapted from Vetter & Schieble, 2016)

By participating in activities such as this, teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own identities and the positioning of themselves and others during team interactions. It also allows them to contemplate how their identity development aligns with their perceptions - or does not. They are given the opportunity to consider how others making meaning of them in these interactions. This not only opens up opportunities for teachers to examine their own identity development, but also provides space for recognition that this development contributes to the dynamics of the team and ultimately, the effectiveness of the collaboration itself. Activities that allow time and space for reflection and acknowledgement of changing identities and the associated tensions may ease teachers' ability to reconcile their identities. As this can require a measure of vulnerability for participants, I also suggest, when possible, mentorship from teachers who have already participated in this type of work and navigated the challenges and tensions of identity development when on an interdisciplinary collaborative team.

Creating an interdisciplinary team of teachers in a school does not only change the context of work for those teachers involved, it changes the context of work for everyone in the school. Other teachers and staff may respond to this new context of teaching in various ways, whether they are directly involved with the team or not. In this study, the teachers were aware of this dynamic, speaking to the perceptions they encountered from or their interactions with those outside of the team. Indeed, part of their *team maker* identities was in using language that distinguished the team as a distinct from other people and teams in the building. Although this was not explored in this dissertation, it is reasonable to assume that the teachers were not just negotiating their identities in the context of the team, but a separate negotiation was occurring for each teacher as they interacted with others outside the team. In participating on the team, they became different from who they used to be, something that may be a factor in how others make meaning of them. For example, as Allyson interacted with other ELA teachers, she was no longer just another ELA teacher, but someone who at times minimized her *ELA teacher* identity because of her participation with the interdisciplinary team. How this change was perceived by the other ELA teachers could influence how meaning is made of Allyson by the other teachers, impacting their interactions. For Allyson, this most likely required an additional effort to navigate others' perceptions of her as she moved from the context of her team to the context of her department or that of the school at large.

The teachers on an interdisciplinary team may not only need to be aware that this will be a factor to navigate, but support in doing so. One way to do that is acknowledging and raising awareness of this changing context and its implications for other teachers and staff in the building. Despite not being on the interdisciplinary team, other teachers may feel uncertainty about what the introduction of such a team to the building will mean for them. They may

perceive of the members of the team as having special privileges, such as extra planning time or funding, as was the case in this study. Clarification on the work of the team may ease some of these concerns. More importantly, other teachers may have questions of whether similar practices will be expected of them. As they see teachers on the team construct new identities, perhaps progressing along the continuum of an *interdisciplinary team teacher* identity, anxiety over whether they will eventually be expected to do the same may increase. Providing clarification to teachers on the districts' expectations, as well as giving teachers exposure to the work of the team through visits to their planning sessions or participation in their projects, may reduce some of this anxiety. It may also influence how these teachers interact with those on the team, potentially alleviating some of the tensions of identity development for both.

If a district and administrators want innovative collaboration, such as that done by the participants in this study, to work over the long term, they would be wise to pay attention to what it means for the identities of both those who are doing it and others in the building. They must protect and support those who are doing it from factors in the context outside of the immediate context of the team. Helping those in the larger context of the school to understand the work and what it means for them is one way to do so.

Implications for Future Research

This dissertation expands our knowledge of teachers' professional identity development through an analysis of their perceptions and discourse in the context of interdisciplinary collaboration. While the growing field of literature into both teacher professional identity and teacher collaboration was incredibly useful as a foundation for this work, there are many gaps to be filled. This dissertation closes some of those gaps, while also offering openings future investigation.

Research that sits at the nexus of teachers' identity development, collaboration, and discourse, such as this dissertation, is limited. Providing opportunities for teachers to collaborate in sustained ways has increased substantially in the last few decades (Gajda & Koliba, 2008) and does not appear to be diminishing, and yet we know little about how this impacts professional identity development. This study has confirmed the importance of examining the identity development of experienced teachers but is only one snapshot of one team of teachers. More studies are needed that investigate that development in the context of interdisciplinary collaboration, but also in other various collaborative models. This knowledge, particularly with close examination of the discursive strategies used to construct their identities, would provide insight into how teachers negotiate this identity development and the impact it has on their sense of professional self. While the findings from this dissertation highlight some of the tensions teachers experience, future research is necessary to investigate others, possibly finding ways to ease those tensions.

It is also important to note that this study did not speak to the many of the other identities that the participants also brought with them into their interactions or the impact these may have had on how they made meaning of themselves and others. For example, the data suggests that the female participants, particularly Allyson, exemplified what society expects teachers of their gender to be: nurturing, dedicated, and self-sacrificing. They often spoke of being mothers in their personal lives, yet they took on roles that could be described as mothering in the team as well. Further analysis of their speech, as well as their actions, is necessary to explore the gendered dynamics of the team and the implications for their identities. It is my hope in the future to conduct another study examining the data through this gendered lens.

As the number of studies with this focus increase, I would also recommend they expand in scope beyond what was possible for this dissertation. Studies are needed that capture teacher's language and interactions beyond their planning sessions, such as when they team teach or during downtimes in the faculty room or hallway. These could also explore their interactions with those outside of the team. All of these influence their identity construction, possibly in ways that may be more significant than what occurs in planning sessions.

This dissertation also prompts many questions that need to be explored, opening opportunities for further research in the field. Foremost, research into the stages of identity development would be helpful to understanding how it is experienced during interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly in completing a thorough examination of each of these stages and the tensions each entail. Long-term studies, ideally over several years, are needed to examine how both teachers' identities and the discursive strategies they use change over time. Investigating several interdisciplinary teams for a longer period of time would give insight into other tensions that exist beyond those found in this study, whether certain tensions are inevitable, and how those tensions can be alleviated. More extensive studies may also indicate whether those who experience a weaker intensity of these tensions are further along in their identity development.

There is much we also need to learn about the relationship between various identities. For example, can a content identity be prominent while also constructing a *team player* identity or does it have to be subdued in order to be a *team player*? Or, more importantly, does it have to be minimized to ultimately be an *interdisciplinary team teacher*? Studies that examine identity development of a team over an extended period of time are necessary to explore how teachers resolve the dissonance of conflicting identities, but also in how they negotiate their identities when they have to confront serious disagreements between team members. In this dissertation,

the team actively worked to create a *team identity*, often absorbing any frustrations and holding off on judgement, avoiding blatant and observable conflict. It is unclear if this would continue for the long term. The team could maintain their identities, but they also may shift to be more critical or confrontational. Or, would a teacher be more likely to choose to walk away from being part of the team if the challenge is too great? Answering questions such as these would further illuminate what it means to be a teacher working in this context and the identity development it entails.

Finally, studies are needed that address a significant limitation of this dissertation. Ideally, I would have preferred to include teachers in this study of various races, ethnicities, and abilities. These facets of identity, as well as others not present in this study, significantly influence how one makes sense of their own identity and those of others. Due to time constraints, however, I was unable to find and select a team that represented these identities. This is therefore an important avenue for future researchers to pursue.

Limitations

Although this study contributes to our knowledge of teachers' professional identity development, it has limitations. As has already been noted, one of those limitations is participants' lack of racial or ethnic diversity. In this section, I describe further limitations to the study and the conclusions that can therefore be drawn from it.

As with any qualitative research, the findings in the preceding chapters are not intended to be generalized to all teachers working in all collaborative situations. This study must be understood in the context of the research design, the research setting, and the participants. These factors directly influenced the findings, yet also open possibilities for future research. To address the research questions, I chose to study the type of collaborative setting that consists of secondary

level teachers working to plan interdisciplinary projects on a sustained basis. While there are many other types of collaboration that occurs in schools, including in secondary schools, I intentionally chose this type in order to see identity development in teachers of different contents over a consistent and prolonged period of time. The findings of this dissertation, therefore, cannot be generalized to every type of teacher collaboration. The plethora of other collaborative models, however, leave open a large gap in research to be filled.

Other limitations of this study relate to the methods and depth of data collection. Interviews and participant observation were vital to gathering the data necessary to answer the research questions. I was able to observe and audio-record the teachers' interactions in planning sessions for later analysis, while also directly asking teachers for their perception in interviews. I was also occasionally able to observe the teachers at other points in their work, such as in town hall meetings with students or in the culminating activity for their project. As noted earlier, there are a multitude of other times however, such as during faculty meetings or passing in the hall, that the teachers interacted with each other that indubitably influenced their professional identity development and perceptions. It would be impossible to capture all of these interactions without a team of researchers and significantly more time in the field. Additionally, this study did not fully take into account the impact of others outside of the participants on the teacher's professional identity development. The teachers constantly interacted with other people - students, administrators, parents, etc. While these influenced the construction and negotiation of their identities, and were in fact discussed in Chapter 6, the interactions themselves were not captured for analysis. Doing so could have deepened our understanding of their impact on identity development.

A significant limitation in the data collection for this study was my inability to video-record planning sessions to capture nonverbal communication. A full microanalysis of interaction would include additional types of communication, such as facial expressions, gestures, and body language. While this had been included in the original proposal for the study, not all of the participants felt comfortable being recorded in this way. However, I attempted to mitigate this factor by including some descriptions of these types of communication in my field notes.

Upon reflection, I also believe a limitation is in the quantity of data collected for some of the participants. Although Mark was present at almost all of the planning sessions, his quietness left far few utterances in the data for me to examine. This in itself is interesting but did not allow me to get enough data to write a compelling understanding of his experience and identity development in the way I was able to for Allyson, Claudia, and Nathan. Maya and Nora were present at fewer of the planning sessions, and I sometimes did not see them for a few weeks at a time as those days did not correspond with the ones I was there. As with Mark, I had far less data to work with for these participants. As such, I was limited in the conclusions I could draw from their data. Were I to repeat this study, I would take measures to make my observation dates correspond with those of these teachers. As teachers who were both part of the team and on the periphery, more closely analyzing their identity development was a missed opportunity.

Final Thoughts

In this dissertation, I sought to expand our understanding of teachers' professional identities and the discursive strategies they employ to construct those identities. If educators and policy makers are to make informed decisions about efforts to improve schools, it is essential to improve our knowledge of how teachers making meaning of themselves and their work, including understanding how their professional identities shift and are negotiated. This

dissertation illustrated how the changing context of interdisciplinary collaboration impacted the identity development of one team of teachers, each participant navigating this both as an individual and as part of the team.

One takeaway I have from conducting this study is that it takes a fair amount of courage for an experienced teacher to step out of the comfort of their own classroom, reexamine and revise their pedagogy, and concede some of their authority to a team. The teachers in this study did just that, indicating a willingness to be vulnerable and uncomfortable if it would result in improving student outcomes. In this regard, they were quite similar. Moreover, they all actively contributed to a collective team identity, both as *team players* and *team makers*. They constructed identities that would deepen their interpersonal relationships by building common bonds with each other.

Despite all of the participants having many commonalities, however, they were actually very different people. Their identity development in the process of participating on the interdisciplinary team further distinguished them as individuals, as identities were constructed, emphasized, or minimized. They each constructed a variety of identities, different from those the others' developed. They experienced the tensions and emotions of identity development to different degrees. They were, in fact, not all the same teacher.

In examining the literature on teacher collaboration, with the exception of those studies that specifically investigate teachers' professional identities, I never came across language that spoke to the individuality of the teachers doing the collaboration. Rather, descriptions of efforts to increase teacher collaboration tended to label them simply as teachers, lumping them all into one homogeneous group with minimal descriptions to distinguish them beyond their content area or years of experience. This literature, and most likely the initiatives to implement collaboration, do not take into account who the individual teachers stepping into the new context of collaboration

are *or* who they will become. They do not consider how changes will impact the teachers' identity development *or* how the teachers' identity development will impact the desired changes. This dissertation attempts to illuminate the importance of doing so for both the teachers' themselves and the sustainability of collaborative efforts.

On a final note, somewhere in the course of writing this dissertation, during a wholly unrelated conversation, I was reminded that in its Hebrew origin, the term *abracadabra* means "I will create as I speak." This term we associate today with magicians, an apt proclamation as they pull a rabbit out of a hat, generating something out of nothing. Yet I believe the term also tells us something about the importance of examining discourse to understand how people become who they are. It is in their conversations, after all, that teachers construct and reconstruct their identities. Their acts of speech create new realities. (*Abacadabra!*) Much as with a magic show, it is only through close examination that the mysteries of how this works are revealed. It is my hope that this dissertation allows readers to more deeply appreciate the significance of language in creating the many professional identities of teachers.

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
Department of Teaching and Leadership

Syracuse University IRB Approved

MAY 1 - 2019



Protocol Title: *Teacher Professional Identity and Collaboration*

Principal Investigator/Key Research Personnel:

Christine Morgan, Doctoral Student. Responsible for data collection, analysis, and written synthesis of research study. Contact information: (315) 369-8019 or cmellen@syr.edu.

Jeffery Mangram, Associate Professor. Faculty mentor for research study. Contact Information: (315) 443-3293 or jamangra@syr.edu.

The purpose of this form is to provide you with information about participation in a research study and offer you the opportunity to decide whether you wish to participate. You can take as much time as you wish to decide and can ask any questions you may have now, during or after the research is complete. Your participation is voluntary.

The purpose of this study is to learn more about teachers' professional identity development, particularly teachers' perceptions of collaboration and their roles while participating on an interdisciplinary team. The aim of the research is to understand how teachers make meaning of their work and themselves as educators while planning interdisciplinary projects. The study will also examine how teachers navigate the collaboration process, including the language they use in collaborative planning sessions.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in three interviews. The purpose of the first interview is to learn about your professional background, teaching philosophy and style, and perceptions of collaboration and your role as an educator. The aim of the other two interviews is to understand your perceptions of collaboration and your role as an educator while you are in the process of planning and implementing an interdisciplinary project. For example, you will be asked questions about what you hope to accomplish through collaboration, the roles you see yourself and your colleagues taking in the process of collaboration, and your perspectives on the success or challenges of your efforts. These interviews will be conducted at the location and time of your choosing, and will last approximately forty-five minutes.

Additionally, I would like to observe your collaborative planning sessions while preparing for and implementing an interdisciplinary project. The purpose of this is to better understand how teachers negotiate the collaborative process and their roles in it, particularly the language they use to do so. Together with you and your team, we could develop a schedule for approximately six – ten observations that is beneficial to you and your colleagues. This will occur during your team's regularly scheduled planning time and will not require you to schedule additional sessions solely for the purpose of the study. It is my understanding that this collaboration typically occurs during your regularly scheduled forty-minute planning periods. Additionally, as informed consent is a prerequisite for participation in the study, I will only observe sessions in which each

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teacher present has given their consent to participate. If a teacher present at the session has not given their consent, I will remove myself from the session. It is also important to note that all teachers on the interdisciplinary team do not need to be present for a planning session that has been scheduled to be observed. The study only requires that a minimum of two of the team's teachers are present for any session.

The possible risks to you as a result of participating in this study are feeling some inconvenience at having to take time beyond the scope of your regular job requirements to participate in the interviews. To alleviate this, I will be flexible in the scheduling of interviews to find a time and location that is convenient for you. You may also experience some discomfort when asked to describe your perceptions of your own or your colleagues' roles as educators during collaboration, or have concern over statements made during collaborative planning sessions. You may feel some anxiety over how your views and statements will be used in any presentations and publications. To minimize these risks, strict procedures are in place to ensure confidentiality. Each participant in the study will be assigned a pseudonym prior to transcription and any individually identifiable details will be changed or eliminated in any published materials or presentations. Additionally, you will have the option to review the transcripts for accuracy and may remove any portion of the transcripts that you do not feel comfortable having used in the study. You may also choose to withdraw from the study at any point, without penalty.

The benefits of this research are that you will be helping researchers to better understand interdisciplinary collaboration and teachers' professional identity development during this process. One of the benefits of this study is that you have an opportunity to reflect on and share your perspectives on collaborative efforts. You will have a voice in how researchers understand the identity development of teachers involved in collaborative efforts. There are no direct benefits associated with participation in this study. However, you may indirectly benefit from this study, as the findings may have implications for professional development for teachers or educational policies that influence the profession.

Privacy and confidentiality are of the utmost importance in this study. The interviews will be conducted at times and locations of your choosing to ensure privacy. I will take notes during these interviews. Similarly, observation of collaborative planning sessions will be scheduled at an agreed upon time and location of your collaborative team's choosing. Again, I will take notes during these sessions. With your permission, audio recordings will be taken during the interviews. You will also be asked for permission to audio or video record the collaborative planning sessions. The purpose of recording interviews and planning sessions is to capture the exact language of your perspectives and conversations for data analysis purposes. Video recordings will only be taken for the purpose of verifying who made particular statements during the collaborative discussions. The audio and/or video recorder will be placed at a location determined to be unobtrusive. You may also choose not to be audio or video recorded at any time during the interviews or observed planning sessions. If anyone on the team declines to give consent to be audio or video recorded during observed planning sessions, only field notes will be taken when they are present.

Protocol Title: *Teacher Professional Identity and Collaboration*

All audio and/or video recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on my password-protected personal laptop. These will be destroyed once I have completed transcription. All notes that I take will also be transcribed into password-protected files on my password-protected personal laptop. Prior to transcription, these notes will be kept on my person or in a locked filing cabinet in my home. Following transcription, field notes will be destroyed. Only myself and my faculty mentor, Dr. Jeffery Mangram, will have access to the transcriptions. These may be shared as printed copies or through the use of password-protected files on a password-protected flash drive. Any printed copies of transcriptions or the password-protected flash drive will be kept on our persons or will be stored in locked filing cabinets in my home or Dr. Mangram's Syracuse University office. All transcriptions will be kept for a period of seven years, although they may be destroyed sooner once the study is complete.

It is the hope that the results of this study will be shared through publication in educational journals or presentations. Measures will be taken to maintain confidentiality. You will be assigned a pseudonym prior to transcription and any individually identifiable details will be changed or eliminated in any published materials or presentations. Dr. Mangram and I will be the only one with access to the key for the pseudonyms. Once identifiable private information has been removed, the information may be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without the additional consent. Unfortunately, given the social nature of collaborative planning sessions, confidentiality of these meetings cannot be guaranteed. However, this will be minimized through the use of pseudonyms and the omission of any individually identifiable details in any publications or presentations. Additionally, you will be given the opportunity to review any transcriptions during your interviews or the collaborative planning sessions. You may eliminate any statements that you made from the data at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. I would be happy to answer any questions that you have prior to or at any point during the study, should you choose to participate. You may skip and/or refuse to answer any interview questions or share particular data from collaborative planning sessions. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

For questions, concerns, or more information regarding this research you may contact me, Christine Morgan, at (315) 369-8019 or cmellen@syr.edu, or my faculty mentor, Dr. Jeffery Mangram, at (315) 443-3293 or jamangra@syr.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board at (315) 443-3013.

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Protocol Title: *Teacher Professional Identity and Collaboration*

Participant Consent Form

Please initial all that apply.

Interviews:

☐ I agree to be **audio recorded** during interviews.

☐ I **do not** agree to be audio recorded during interviews.

Collaborative Planning Sessions:

☐ I agree to be **audio recorded** during collaborative planning sessions.

☐ I **do not** agree to be audio recorded during collaborative planning sessions.

☐ I agree to be **video recorded** during collaborative planning sessions.

☐ I **do not** agree to be video recorded during collaborative planning sessions.

All of my questions have been answered, I am 18 years of age or older, and by signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this research study. I have received a copy of this form for my personal records.

Printed Name of the Participant

Date: _____

Signature of the Participant

Printed Name of the Researcher

Date: _____

Signature of the Researcher

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Appendix B: Interview Protocol

In the initial interview, I asked the following questions. Those marked with an asterisk (*) I asked in later interviews as well.

1. Tell me about yourself (education, teaching experience).
2. What does being a teacher mean to you?
3. *How would you describe your identity as a teacher?
4. What is your philosophy of teaching?
5. Describe the goals of your classroom and of your subject.
6. Describe your teaching style and methods.
7. To what extent have you collaborated with other teachers in the past?
8. *What are your thoughts on working collaboratively with teachers from other subject areas?
9. In your view, what is the purpose of working collaboratively to develop interdisciplinary projects?
10. *What do you hope to accomplish by working collaboratively with other teachers?
11. What role(s) do you see yourself taking on the team as you work together?
12. *Describe your current relationship with each of the teachers on the team.

Later interviews:

1. What role(s) have you taken on as the team has collaborated?
2. How would you describe your identity as a teacher while participating on this team? How has it shaped how you see yourself?
3. What similarities and differences do you see between yourself and your colleagues?
4. Describe how effective you believe the team is in their collaborative efforts.
5. Describe your thoughts on working collaboratively with your colleagues. What has gone well? What has not gone well?

Appendix C: Team Activities

During the course of the study, the team undertook one major project as well as incorporated numerous supplementary activities into their lessons and schedule. These contributed to their efforts to integrate curriculum and support students' development of 21st century skills (critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and collaboration). They also hoped some of these activities would strengthen the relationships between students and facilitate a sense of belonging on the team. The descriptions below offer a brief summary of these activities.

Citizenship USA Project	This was the primary project the team planned and implemented during the study. The project asked students to think about the role that government, citizens, businesses, and employees play in a functioning community. Incorporating STEM and civic literacy skills, the students worked in teams to create and run a functioning government and numerous "businesses." Throughout the course of the project, each student took on a particular "job" for their team, with students developing a better understanding of how laws are created, management of accounting and banking, the use of marketing, and various civic duties.
Job Interviews	As part of their placement into their individual teams, students were required to apply for the particular jobs they wanted. This included creating a resume and filling out an application. The PBL team arranged for adults from the school and community to act as employers and have each student complete an interview for the job that they wanted.
Business Walking Tour	To help students better understand how businesses and government operate and the role they play in creating a functioning community, the team arranged for students to meet adults in the community who performed the real-life versions of the jobs they were taking on. Groups of students visited various businesses within the community, such as the local radio station and bank, as well as with local town hall.
Town Hall Meetings	The team met with all students together in weekly town hall meetings. These were used for various purposes, including going over key elements of the project, bringing in guest speakers, conducting a gallery walk of the students' work, or doing team-building activities.
Mayoral Candidates Event	The team's project occurred while the community in which the Springfield School District is located was conducting their elections, including that for mayor. The three mayoral candidates visited the school, meeting with groups of students to share their vision for the community and take questions from the students. They also talked about the

	work of those whose jobs are in government, which was significant to the what the students were learning about with their project.
T-Shirt Design & Creation	As a method to build a sense of belonging, the students designed and submitted logos for Team Curiosity. The students then voted on the logos, the winning design incorporated into a t-shirt. The students learned how to print their own t-shirts with the logo. These t-shirts were worn by students for team events.
Fall Barbeque	Within the first few weeks of the school year, the team organized a barbeque and games after school for students on the team and their families. They did so to strengthen the relationships with and between students, as well as with parents.

Appendix D: Transcription Conventions

Key

.	falling intonation at end of tone unit
?	rising intonation at end of tone unit
,	marks phrase – final intonation (more to come)
!	animated intonation
..	noticeable pause or break in rhythm (less than half second)
...	half-second pause, as measured by stop watch
...	Full second pause
" "	words in these quotation marks indicate mimicking another speaker or themselves in a different conversation or reading from another text.
-	sound abruptly cut off, e.g. false start
<i>Italics</i>	emphatic stress
:	colon following vowel indicates elongated vowel sound
::	extra colon indicates longer elongation
↑	a step up in pitch
↓	a shift down in pitch
()	indicates spoken softly, whispering
CAPS	indicates spoken loudly
> <	talk is rushed
[overlapping speech
]	words in these brackets are utterances interjected by a speaker within another speaker's turn
=	latching: no perceptible inter-turn pause
[]	words in these brackets indicate confidential names [e.g. student] or non-linguistic information, e.g. pauses of 1 second or longer (the number of seconds is indicated), speakers' gestures or actions.
[...]	ellipses marks between square brackets indicates that the speaker's turn continues, that the extract starts in the middle of the speaker's turn, or that some turns have been omitted
.hh	inhalation (intake of breath)
hhh	aspiration (releasing of breath)
t	tongue click

Appendix E: Planning Session Codes

In the first cycle of coding, the planning sessions data was divided into discussion segments and coded based on the topic of discussion. The table below shows the results of the second cycle of coding. Each code focused on how the teacher contributed (or not) to the conversation. I created this table to see how often each code was used by the individual teachers, to be able to compare their use, and to look for trends. Based on this information, I then examined particular contributions more closely for each individual teacher, completing a series of memos as described in Chapter 3.

	Total	Nathan	Mark	Allyson	Claudia
Changes/introduces the topic	309	54	28	156	71
Adding idea	122	32	17	43	30
Asking questions - Total	255	60	78	54	63
Ask: Clarify – other	23	2	7	8	6
Ask: Clarify – other – school	38	11	7	12	8
Ask: Clarify activity	73	9	40	10	14
Ask: Clarify project	87	34	11	13	29
Ask: Computer help	14	1	8	4	1
Ask: Repeat what already said	7	0	2	3	2
Ask: Student(s)	13	3	3	4	3
Asking for opinion	71	18	6	49	21
Raising concerns - Total	169	34	3	30	31
Concern: Activity	2	0	0	0	2
Concern: Amount of work	10	2	0	6	2
Concern: Project	11	3	1	3	4
Concern: Outside dynamics	16	5	1	4	6
Concern: School	24	9	0	6	9
Concern: Student	21	8	1	7	5
Concern: Time – Content	8	6	0	1	1
Concern: Other	6	1	0	3	2
Connecting to Content	16	8	2	5	1
Demonstrating listening	108	19	44	24	21
DL: overlapping utterances	23	2	0	18	3
Explaining topic	111	17	19	51	24
Frustration - Total	76	21	1	21	33
Frustration: Amount of work	4	0	0	2	4
Frustration: Project	12	4	1	3	4
Frustration: Outside dynamics	7	3	0	1	3
Frustration: School	27	9	0	10	8
Frustration: Student	12	1	0	1	10
Frustration: Teammate	6	0	0	4	2
Frustration: Time	6	4	0	0	2
Humor	85	34	16	15	20
Humor: Shared	45	20	8	8	9
Humor: Self-Deprecating	22	6	5	3	8
Humor: Teasing	18	8	3	4	3
In separate conversation	40	4	6	14	16

Interest - Total	50	13	8	19	10
Interest: Other personal	17	5	3	6	3
Interest: Other's classroom	6	2	0	3	1
Interest: Professional	7	3	1	1	2
Interest: Concern for teammate	20	3	4	9	4
Thanking a teammate	23	3	3	12	5
Praising teammate	13	2	1	8	2
Leading conversation	115	22	9	68	16
Offering help	20	5	4	7	4
Giving opinion - Total	299	79	25	84	111
Opinion: Project	9	2	0	1	6
Opinion: How things went	31	7	4	11	9
Opinion: Other	40	13	1	14	12
Opinion: School	48	16	4	4	24
Opinion: Student	26	6	3	7	10
Opinion: Team Decision	117	27	10	39	41
Opinion: Teammate	6	0	1	3	2
Opinion: What should do differently	8	3	1	2	2
Opinion: What others should do	14	5	1	3	5
Own classroom	12	1	2	6	3
Personal remark	105	20	12	42	31
Remaining quiet	193	69	87	4	33
Consideration	90	27	13	11	39
Consideration – personal	10	4	0	0	6
Experience	34	4	1	15	14
Help	16	3	1	7	5
Adding understanding - Total	237	44	49	82	62
Under/Knowledge – other	64	7	11	25	21
Under/Knowledge of activity	49	1	12	23	13
Under/Knowledge of project	61	20	23	11	7
Under/Knowledge of student	59	13	3	22	21
Under/Knowledge of work done	4	3	0	1	0
Working on something else	43	0	5	14	24
Referencing work - Total	317	23	58	154	82
Work: Project/activity in own class	67	14	13	29	11
Work: Notes taken	7	0	0	6	1
Work: Shared document	45	1	1	27	16
Work: What been working on/did	96	2	15	46	33
Work: When will do it	19	6	2	8	3
Work: Will take care of task	80	1	27	34	18
Raises work that needs to be done	62	8	3	32	19

Appendix F: Excerpts of Memo

The following are excerpts from one of the memos I wrote as I more closely analyzed the teachers' language. At the beginning of each memo, I recorded the general purpose of the memo and questions I was exploring. This was then followed by my findings regarding those questions, as well as examples that supported it. For the sake of clarity for the reader of this dissertation, note that this appendix has had large segments of the memo removed, particularly lengthier sections of data that were included to assist in my thinking. Instead, I have included a few samples of the data and my thoughts. I believe this will give the reader a sense of the analysis process without being distracted by the sheer length (some memos were more than 20 pages) and messiness of it.

TPI Analysis Memo: Claudia Focuses on Asking Questions and Asking Opinions

Purpose: I have recently completed a comparison of codes table for the four main participants. Based on this, I began to examine how each person contributed to the conversation (or not). [See memo of Noticings and Questions]. The purpose of this memo is to begin to look more closely at Claudia and the questions that were raised from my findings for her thus far. I am interested in how she contributes to the conversation, the discursive strategies she uses, and how she is positioning herself. For this memo, I want to further explore her language for the questions she asks, including when asking for the opinions of others. After conducting the first rounds of coding, I've noticed that most of Claudia's questions are asked when discussing the Citizenship USA project or associated activities. I have addressed the following questions in this memo:

1. What types of things does Claudia ask questions about? Who are these questions to and who responds? What else do I notice about these questions?
2. She asks for other's opinions frequently. What type of words or phrasing does she use? Does she do this in a way that really gives her opinion? Does she ask and then listen? Whatever strategy she uses, what does this do for her?

1. What are the topics Claudia asks questions about? Who are these questions to and who responds? What else do I notice about these questions?

When coding through the first two rounds, I noticed that Claudia asks most of her questions clarifying the activity or Citizenship USA project. After the initial rounds of coding, I am somewhat surprised that Claudia asks so many questions about the activities, as she seems pretty active in the planning of them. (Maybe this is the way she contributes? By asking the questions that others aren't thinking of?) However, when I first interviewed her, she said she sees her strength on the team as "organizing details."

When I more closely examined the segments of data that only apply to the project or related activities (walking tour, town hall, mayoral candidates), much of Claudia's utterances in these segments were dedicated to:

- the logistics of the schedule (23)
- division of project work (7)
- grouping of students (3)
- materials (4)
- other

For the questions on logistics, this is more overall instances of this than anyone else with these.

A sample of data from questions about logistics of when things will happen for their activities (code: Clarify - other):

- (FT 2) Weren't we going to do something, oh, the poster thing. And then are we doing, did we decide on the 24th? **To anyone, Allyson answers**
- (FT 2) The 23rd is a Monday. That's the Erie Canal day, which is the day that we talk about our posters. Are we changing it to the 24th? I was just going to include it in the email to [secretary].
– **To anyone, Allyson answers**
- (FT 5) Are we coming back late from [the culminating activity]? - **To Mark, Mark answers**
- (FT 5) Like your kids go down, and second, third period whatever kids you have would go down. Because we are still going to be together, right? – **To Allyson, Allyson answers**
- (FT 6) So we should probably go to the auditorium, right? So I am going to the library then? **To Mark, Mark and Allyson answer**

A sample of data from questions about logistics of when things will happen for their primary project (code: Clarify - CU):

- (FT 2) Do you see these start-up packs in here? ... (Later) But do we need that stuff? Or is that part of the curriculum...? **To anyone, Mark answers**
- (FT 4) Do we go at the beginning and the end? Or do we just go once? **To anyone, Allyson answers**
- (FT 11) Is it one day that's only 3 periods long? **To anyone, Allyson answers**
- (FT 11) Do I have a specific one I'm doing? To anyone, Allyson answers
- I have Craig coming... couldn't I therefore have some of them working the rest of that week? (FT 11)/**To Allyson, Allyson answers**
- (FT 13) (about employee information sheets) Is it in the curriculum? **To Nathan, Nathan answers**
- (FT 13) Do you know what theme it's in? **To Nathan, Mark starts to answer**
- (FT 15) Am I switching? (**To Nathan, Nathan answers**) ... But how are you switching with? (**to Nathan, Allyson answers**)
- (FT 16) How long do you think this lesson is going to take? **To Nathan and Allyson, Allyson answers**
- (FT 16) So in ELA they're doing... **To Allyson, Allyson answers**

Of note in closely examining the segments from **all** of the questions Claudia asked:

- o Claudia mostly directs her questions to Allyson. Allyson is also the one to most often answer the question, even if it is directed to anyone or specifically to someone else.

	Allyson	Nathan	Mark	All	Maya
Asked to	28	8	5	22	0
Answered by	41	12	10	0	1

- o Claudia's questions generally aren't really about the curriculum or activity itself, more so about scheduling or where to find something in the curriculum. All of what is shown above (for all the codes I looked at) demonstrates Claudia's positioning of herself as tracking the schedule, concerned about the schedule, as the logistics person.
- o I wonder, is she positioned by others as the logistics person? When examining other's questions, pay attention to whether their questions about logistics who their questions are asked to.

2. She asks for other's opinions frequently. What type of words or phrasing does she use? Does she do this in a way that really gives her opinion? Does she ask and then listen? Whatever strategy she uses, what does this do for her?

I am curious about how Claudia phrases her questions when she is asking for an opinion. And does she ask and then listen? Or is it really just her giving HER opinion then asking what others think?

When I return to the data to examine what is really happening when she asks for others' opinions, I notice that she does the following things:

- Is getting the okay for her idea (13)
- Is trying to get agreement for her beliefs (6)
- Does not directly ask for an opinion, but implies that she wants others' opinions (4)
- Ask for an opinion on a student (2)
- Asks for an opinion on a project (2)

I am most interested in this first category, as it is the most prominent and makes me wonder what language she uses (and the discursive strategy that goes along with that), as well as how that positions her. In examining these, she uses the phrases:

- So let me ask you this...
- So are we going to...?
- Can we...? / Is that doable?
- But what do we want...? / So how about I write...
- So do you guys mind then if I...?
- Should we give them...? / So we'll give them.../ Does that work...?
- Could we say that, for example,...? / Could we say...?
- Do we want to talk about...?

Much of this wording doesn't invite open-ended responses, but yes or no answers. Rather than opening the floor to give ideas and opinions, it is either a you-agree-with-me or you-don't. [The opposite of this would be questions like, "What does everyone want to do about...X?" or "Has anyone had any thoughts on...X?"] This seem like it is gently assertive. (Is that a thing?!) At the same time, phrasing it this way positions her as willing to get a degree of feedback on her answers and as open to her colleagues' thoughts. So, in some ways, this is moving her toward more of the collective/team player end of the spectrum versus being 100% individualistic. At the same time, her idea is always ultimately supported by someone (mainly Allyson) or all of the team.

Other General Thoughts:

- Claudia and Allyson are clearly the ones who organize the work of the team, yet whereas Allyson tends to focus more on the content, Claudia focuses on the logistics: the when and how of how these activities will play out. She does not appear to be shy in giving her opinions or asking questions.
- I am starting to a sense that Claudia is constructing an **identity as housekeeper** for the team. One aspect of this is how she asks about logistical issues and minor details of the team's work. (It does not yet seem evident that she is positioned by others this way, but I would should explore that more.)
- I also see her constructing an **identity as macro-planner**. She provides a sense of organization and structure to their overall work (although this doesn't occur in the meetings themselves). She asks many clarifying questions pertaining to the logistics of their work, such as those about the schedule, grouping of students, or materials. She does this far more than anyone else. This focus on logistics,

particularly on scheduling, is necessary for the group to move forward and for the work to be completed in a timely manner.

- When thinking about Allyson's identity as team leader, consider how she is the most frequent to respond to Claudia's questions. Consider how she is positioned by Claudia when Claudia directs questions to her.

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Teacher Professional Identity Development
Teacher Collaboration
Interdisciplinary Teaching & Curriculum
Critical Pedagogy
Social Studies Education

EDUCATION

2023	Doctor of Philosophy, Teaching and Curriculum Syracuse University, Syracuse NY, 4.0 GPA
2004	Master of Science, Social Studies Education Syracuse University, Syracuse NY, 4.0 GPA
1999	Bachelor of Arts, History with Honors Colgate University, Hamilton NY, 3.55 GPA

TEACHING CERTIFICATION

2020	Massachusetts Provisional License in History 5-12
2004	New York State Professional Certification in Social Studies 7-12

UNIVERSITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Spring 2017, 2019, 2020	Instructor , EDU 300: Media, Democracy, & Social Issues Syracuse University, Syracuse NY
Fall 2015, 2016, 2019	Instructor , EDU 522: Social Studies, Media, & Democracy: The Reconstruction of Education Syracuse University, Syracuse NY
Fall 2018	Teaching Assistant , SED 413/416: Methods and Curriculum in Teaching – Social Studies Candidacy Syracuse University, Syracuse NY

Spring 2016	Teaching Assistant , EDU 622: International Education for Transformation Syracuse University, Syracuse NY
Summer 2014, 2015, 2016	Teaching Assistant , CFE 200: Media Education and Contemporary Culture Syracuse University, Syracuse NY

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

2020 – Present	High School History Teacher 9 th Grade World History Canton Public School District, Canton MA
2017 – 2018	Educational Leadership Administrative Intern PreK – 2, 3 – 5, and District Levels Holland Patent Central School District, Holland Patent NY
2017 – 2018	High School Social Studies Teacher 9 th & 10 th Grade Global Studies, AIS Social Studies Holland Patent Central School District, Holland Patent NY
2016 – 2017	EdTPA Scorer Pearson, New York, NY
2005 – 2015	Middle School Social Studies Teacher 6 th , 7 th , & 8 th Grade Social Studies Holland Patent Central School District, Holland Patent NY
2012 – 2014	Education Consultant New York State Archives, Albany NY
2010 – 2013	Curriculum Developer Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES, Utica NY
2005	Teacher's Aide Town of Webb School District, Old Forge NY

PEER- REVIEWED CONFERENCE PAPERS

February 2020	Morgan, C. & Zeneli, A. (2020). <i>Teachers as Political Actors: Engaging Pre-Service Social Studies Teachers with a Critical Literacies Pedagogy</i> . Paper accepted to the International Society for the Social Studies Annual Conference.
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- April 2019 **Morgan, C.** (2019). *Claiming Ownership: The Negotiation of Professional Identity in an Era of Educational Reform*. Paper accepted to the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting.
- April 2018 Sapon-Shevin, M., **Morgan, C.**, Murphy, E., Neddo, T. (2018) *Americans Who Tell the Truth: Bridging Critical Pedagogy from University to Schools*. Paper accepted to the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting.

INVITED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- February 2020 **Morgan, C.** (2020). *Perks, Pitfalls, and Possibilities: Reflections for Effective Teacher Collaboration*. Presentation to the Syracuse University Annual Teacher Leadership Conference.

OTHER PRESENTATIONS

- November 2015 *The Construction of History*, Workshop with Leadership & Public HS students and teachers, New York City, NY
- January 2015 *Lessons Learned from STEAM*, Presentation and modeling for Beekmantown CSD teachers, Holland Patent, NY
- October 2014 *Lessons Learned from STEAM*, Presentation and modeling for teachers from various school districts, Holland Patent, NY
- May 2014 *STEAM in Action*, Presentation and modeling for BOCES & NYSED representatives and teachers from various school districts, Holland Patent, NY
- November 2013 *Implementing a STEAM Program*, Presentation for secondary teachers from various school districts, Holland Patent, NY

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2019 – 2023 Primary Investigator, *Shifting Identities: An Examination of Teacher Professional Identity Development on an Interdisciplinary Collaborative Team*
- 2018 – 2021 Research Collaborator, *The Effects of Inclusive Teaching Workshops in Higher Education*, with Dr. Jeffery Mangram and Anemonë Zeneli
- 2016 – 2017 Qualitative Research Apprenticeship: *Teacher Professional Identity in the Era of Reform*, with Dr. Jeffery Mangram

- 2015 Research Collaborator, *Critical Media Literacy and Early College Students*, with Dr. Jeffery Mangram
- 2014 Research Collaborator, *Action Research Project: STEAM in Action*, with Secondary Interdisciplinary Teaching Team

GRANTS

- 2019 (1) SU School of Education Graduate Student Organization Travel Award
(2) SU Graduate School Organization Travel Grant Award
- 2018 (1) SU School of Education Graduate Student Organization Travel Award
(2) SU Graduate School Organization Travel Grant Award
- 2014 'Teaching is the Core' Action Research Grant

AWARDS AND HONORS

- August 2014 – Present Graduate Assistantship, SU School of Education
- April 2017 Syracuse University Superintendents Alumni Association Award
Outstanding Achievement in Educational Leadership Program
- October 2013 NYS Archives Award
Excellence in the Educational Use of Local Government Records
- November 2012 Genesis Group Outstanding Educator Award

SERVICE

- 2018 – 2019 Volunteer Assistant, The African American Experience in the US
Syracuse University & Syracuse City School District, Syracuse NY
- 2018 Field Observer, Candidacy Student Teaching Placements
Syracuse, NY
- 2017 Panel Member, School of Education Admitted Graduate Program
Syracuse University, Syracuse NY
- 2016 Member, Faculty Teaching Committee for Promotion
Syracuse University, Syracuse NY

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- 2015 – Present American Educational Research Association
- 2015 – Present The International Society for the Social Studies
- 2004 – Present National Council of the Social Studies
- 2004 – 2020 New York State Council for the Social Studies