

2010

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Description

This research project began as an effort to redesign a learning theory course as transitional space and evolved into an analysis of how unresolved conflict from younger learning selves influence graduate preservice teachers' acquisition of teacher identity. The study draws upon work by Ellsworth (2005) on transitional space and Britzman (2007) on "Teacher Education as Uneven Development." The data for the study were collected throughout a three-semester graduate teacher education program and include narrative and formal writing using theoretical discourses. Foucauldian concepts of discourse analysis were used to interpret the initial data set; discourse analysis maps were then employed to further develop data interpretation. Two case study illustrations of preservice teachers resulted from this work. These demonstrate how transitional space is troubled space and the unevenness of teacher development. The study raises the question, "What will teacher education do with uncertainty?"

Keywords

teacher development, teacher identity, subjectivity, discourse

Disciplines

Education

Comments

This document has undergone peer review. This is an electronic version of an article published in:

Phillips, D. K. (2010). On Transitional Space, Unresolved Conflicts, and an Uncertain Teacher Education 16(5). *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, pp. 633-644. doi: 10.1080/13540602.2010.507970

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On Transitional Space, Unresolved Conflicts, and an Uncertain Teacher Education

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This research project began as an effort to redesign a learning theory course as transitional space and evolved into an analysis of how unresolved conflict from younger learning selves influence graduate preservice teachers' acquisition of teacher identity. The study draws upon work by Ellsworth (2005) on transitional space and Britzman (2007) on "Teacher Education as Uneven Development." The data for the study were collected throughout a three-semester graduate teacher education program and include narrative and formal writing using theoretical discourses. Foucauldian concepts of discourse analysis were used to interpret the initial data set; discourse analysis maps were then employed to further develop data interpretation. Two case study illustrations of preservice teachers resulted from this work. These demonstrate how transitional space is troubled space and the unevenness of teacher development. The study raises the question, "What will teacher education do with uncertainty?"

Keywords: teacher development; teacher identity; subjectivity; discourse

Introduction

This teaching/research project began at the confluence of several paths: my ongoing study on emerging teacher identity, an assignment to teach a learning theory course in a graduate teacher education program and my continual reading of poststructural feminisms (Britzman, 2007; Britzman & Pitt, 1996; Butler, 1997a, 1997b, 2005; Ellsworth, 1997, 2005; Felman, 1987; Pitt & Britzman, 2003). I have been particularly intrigued by Ellsworth's (2005) work on pedagogy and have been actively rethinking my teaching as a "suspended performance in the space between self and other" (p. 158); as "undecidable" (p. 172); as a process undeniably in relation to the world, others, and our unconscious selves; and as a framework for shattering the illusion of "control" in my work as a teacher educator. What does it mean to consider with Ellsworth (2005) pedagogy "not in relation to knowledge as a thing made but to knowledge in the making" (p. 1)? Could a learning theory course ever act as transitional space (Ellsworth, 2005)?

Given this framework, my goal was to approach the concept of learning theory as discourse or as "historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of statements,

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terms, categories, and beliefs” (Scott, 2003, p.379), which has the potential to powerfully influence emerging teacher identities. I contemplated the following: If our identity is shaped and re-shaped as we are influenced by discourses and as we are in relation with others (Butler, 2005; Ellsworth, 1997, 2005; Harrer, 2005), could a learning theory course become a place of transition for preservice teachers if they were introduced to various theoretical discourses and given time to use the theories to deconstruct curriculum, experiences, and conflicts during the process of becoming teachers? Could graduate preservice teachers use theoretical discourses to negotiate their emerging teacher identities?

The questions, of course, risks essentialism (Britzman, 1997) if the reading of the data denies that “the drama of education . . . lies in the unanswerable question of the experience of the learning self” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 157). Thus, the dilemma of the project became my intent to design a learning theory class that might act as transitional space even while recognizing that such a space depends on more than design alone. Ellsworth (2005) describes the US Holocaust Memorial Museum as an example of transitional space – a pedagogical address that embraces dilemmas, paradox and impossibilities and refuses to close the conversation of difficult topics. It is the relational aspects of the visitor within the museum that has the potential to powerfully “teach.” There is no “right answer” required of the visitor – each visitor’s response will be unique with a different outcome based upon this aspect of relationality to discourses, both conscious and unconscious.

As this project progressed, I began to understand that transitional space is a troubled space. Ongoing data analysis seemed to illustrate how the graduate preservice teachers’ unresolved conflicts, as young learners seemed to haunt them in their pursuit of teacher identity. Thus a project that began as a curriculum redesign using Ellsworth’s work on pedagogy and transitional space (1997; 2005) evolved into a project illustrating the “dynamic process of intersubjective discourses, experiences and emotions” (Zembylas, 2003); a project supporting Britzman’s (2007) argument which views teacher education as “uneven and uncertain” (p.1). A project that serves to resist the notion that teacher education can be scripted or will script those acquiring teacher identity.

Theoretical Framework

Language, discourse and subjectivity are key concepts of poststructural feminism. The study of language is the “analysis of social organizations, social meaning, power, and individual consciousness” (Weedon, 1987). Language, sanctioned by institutions, act as authoritative discourses (Foucault, 1972) and are “. . . indissolubly fused with . . . political power, an institution, a person—and it stands and falls together with the authority” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 343). Discourse, then, “positions the subject in a dual way: in relation to what and how something is said and in relation to a community that makes particular practices possible and others unavailable” (Britzman, 2003, p. 39). Various authoritative discourses are at play in each person’s site of self or subjectivity.

Subjectivity is fluid and shifting, socially constructed by such powerful discourses, seeking to call it into existence through forces of desire, guilt, ambivalence, and love (Butler, 2005; Lather, 1991; Pitt & Britzman, 2003; Weedon, 1987). These conditions position subjectivity as a site of resistance and possibility (Butler, 1997b, 2005; McLaren, 2002) since our identities are continuously re-mapped, “If a subject were constituted once and for all, there would be no possibility of a reiteration of those constituting conventions or norms. That the subject is that which must be constituted again and again implies that it is open to formations that are not fully constrained in advance” (Butler, as cited in St. Pierre, 2000, p. 277).

The work of self-constitution is done in relation to others (Butler, 2005; Ellsworth, 2005; Harrer, 2005), involves resistance, mourning, desire, love, and loss (Butler, 2005; Harrer, 2005; Mackwood, 1997), and includes transference (Britzman & Pitt, 1996; Felman, 1987; Pitt & Britzman, 2003), the “idea that one’s past unresolved conflicts with others and within the self are projected onto meanings of new interactions” (Britzman & Pitt, 1996, p. 117).

Who, then, is the learning self of the constituted and reconstituted graduate preservice teacher? She or he is the “mind/brain/body in motion” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 36) re-playing past memories of a learner, projecting these memories into the present as a student teacher, in relation with mentor teachers, teacher educators, children and adolescents; negotiating expectations and ideals, beliefs and values; while enacting a dream, fiction, and expectation of who a teacher is.

The space where this learning self enacts learning, knows learning as alive and intimate, is what Ellsworth (2005) describes as “transitional space.” Such space “invites us to imagine pedagogy as addressing the learning self as an emergence—as a self and an intelligence that is always in the making” (p. 57). The learning space is one of “hospitality” (p. 70), inviting without dictating what one should think. Pedagogy as transitional space recognizes the power of discourse, the complexity of subjectivity. It is an intriguing theory for learning, but how does one even attempt such pedagogy, let alone begin to “see it” within the confines of regulated, competency-based forces of teacher education?

Context for study

The Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program, the context for this study, is a three-semester fulltime program at a private liberal arts university in the Western United States. I did not design the course as a survey of learning theory but as an exploration of theoretical discourse available to problematize the practice of teaching and teaching identity. If subjectivity changes over time in relation with other discourses, then in the redesign of the course, I wanted to incorporate long-term exposure and experimentation with theory as discourse. So although the course officially ended after the first two-weeks of the teacher education program, I deliberately planned an infusion and return to theory throughout the duration of the program via the action research course sequence I also

taught. In this way, the learning theory course morphed into a program-long exploration of being in relation to theoretical discourse.

Methodology

The research design included three semesters of data collection throughout the duration of the graduate teacher education program. Specific assignments were created for students to use theoretical discourse to problematize their own practice and emerging teacher identity; these assignments are the data collection for the study.

The original assignment and primary data collection was an assignment titled, *Snapshots: Powerful Moments of Learning*. This assignment asked students to write vignettes or *Snapshots* of powerful moments of learning from any personal memory and to interpret these memories using three different theoretical discourses. Seven months after completing the *Snapshot* assignment, students were asked to return to this assignment and add an addendum, describing how their experiences as teachers may have changed or deepened their initial interpretations. Additional data collected over the next two semesters included: an altered theory text project; a curriculum analysis using theoretical discourses; two specific data collection/theoretical interpretation activities of teaching dilemmas; one response to a research study concerning teacher subjectivity; and the action research project where students used theoretical discourses to interpret their data. Together the data creates crystalline validity as Richardson (2003) describes: each layering of data reflecting and refracting, creating meaning and knowledge.

Data Analysis

I employed Willig's (2003) application of Foucauldian concepts for discourse analysis to interpret the *Snapshots* assignment written during the first semester. The focuses of this analysis were: 1) the identification of discursive constructions the graduate preservice teachers used in the acquisition of teacher identity; 2) the subject positions contained within these discursive constructions. My objective was to better understand how theoretical discourses of teaching and learning positioned the graduate preservice teachers as they negotiated their teacher identity.

Of the *Snapshot* data, I asked the following questions:

1. How does the student construct "powerful moments of learning?"
2. How is the object constructed by different discourses?
3. What do various constructions of the discursive object allow to be achieved? What actions are permissible under the discourse? What becomes its function?
4. What is the subject position within the discourse? What rights, duties, obligation does this give (or take away) from the subject?

5. In what ways do the discursive constructions and the subject positions within them open up or close down opportunities of action (non-verbal counts)?

Following this analysis of the *Snapshots* assignment, I asked two additional questions of my interpretations:

1. What teacher identities are allowed in creating powerful moments of learning?
2. How does or doesn't the application of theoretical discourses open up the possibility of re-constituting identity?

The initial data analysis was completed during the second semester of the study. Once completed, I created discourse analysis maps for each student guided by Clarke's (2005) situational analysis. Additional data were added to these maps as it was collected and the maps were continuously reworked using the questions listed above.

This allowed me to map the graduate students' negotiation of identity throughout the duration of the teacher education program. It was through these maps that the stories of unresolved conflict emerged. The powerful moments of learning described and interpreted in the *Snapshot* assignment surfaced throughout the data, often re-inscribed or re-framed, sometimes prominently and at other times more subtly, as preservice teachers met new conflicts and dilemmas in their teaching. Britzman (2007) describes this as a paradox, how "newcomers learning to teach enter teacher education looking backward on their years of school experience and project it into the present" (Britzman, 2007, p. 2).

Based upon these maps, I developed two illustrations for this analysis: Jodi, a white-middle class female in her twenties hoping to become an early childhood/elementary teacher, and Geoff, a white-middle class male also in his twenties, aspiring to be an elementary/middle-level teacher. (Pseudonyms are used throughout the study.) I have used excerpts from the data to develop these case illustrations. I did not select these two students because they represent the most traumatic experiences (they do not), but because I do believe they illustrate the difficulty of transitional space, of unresolved conflicts and the uncertainty of teacher development.

I would be remiss without acknowledging that this research project is "not outside of its own traumatic formulations and conditions" (Britzman, 1997, p. 43). The analysis and interpretations are influenced by my subjectivity and discourses re-working my identity. Therefore, acknowledge that "the voice of the researcher, the researched, and even the reader" (Britzman, 1997, p. 31) as present here in the analysis of Jodi and Geoff and their struggle to acquire teacher identity.

Case Study Illustrations

Jodi: Re-constitution of self

Jodi's three *Snapshots: Powerful Moments of Learning* illustrate the discursive construction and reconstruction of identity during the transition from student to teacher. They also demonstrate how unresolved conflicts from one's past student life wrestle with one's emerging identity as teacher. And they illustrate how the need for affirmation influences identity construction. Jodi uses some poststructural feminist theory, but also uses Smith (1998), Kessler (2000), Noddings (1995), and readings from critical pedagogy in re-telling her learning memories. The order of the three memories as they appear in Jodi's paper, along with the title she assigns to each vignette, shows the construction and re-construction of her identity from that of the "bad student" to the "good student."

The title of the first scenario questions her good student status, "Am I a Good Student?" In this *Snapshot*, Jodi, who has always been a "good student" finds herself with an authoritative male teacher who "enjoyed a reputation" of giving "unbelievably difficult 5th grade history tests." Jodi worked diligently studying for the test, but when the test was returned, there was a "big 52% with 'See Me' written across the top in red - as if proclaiming to the whole world that I was a failure." Jodi uses the concept of discourse from poststructural feminist theory to explore how she was socially constructed as a "good student," who "was supposed to receive one of the highest grades in the class." Such expectations, she describes, is part of the discourse of white middle-class parents and teachers. The powerful moment of learning as described by Jodi in this *Snapshot* is a failure to meet adults' expectations, and includes both fear and humiliation. In this first telling, Jodi's status as the "good student" is in question - she is the "bad student."

This begins to change, however, in her application of Smith's (1998) theoretical discourse to the *Snapshot*. Jodi applies Smith's work (1998) to illustrate how the fifth grade teacher failed her as a student by not using authentic forms of learning. She quotes Smith (1998), "We can only learn from activities that are interesting and comprehensible to us; in other words, activities that are satisfying. If this is not the case, only inefficient rote-learning, or memorization, is available to us and forgetting is inevitable" (p. 87). Now, it is the fifth-grade teacher who is positioned as "bad" and Jodi becomes the victim of "bad teaching."

In the second *Snapshot*, titled "The Journey," Jodi begins the work of reclaiming "good student" status. In this *Snapshot*, learning occurs through a historical simulation. The learning is exploratory, participatory, and includes co-construction of knowledge between students. Jodi chooses the theoretical discourses of Smith (1998) and Kessler (2000) to describe both the positive cognitive and emotional influences of such learning. The teacher's role as a guide and facilitator of knowledge is highlighted against the backdrop of the "bad teaching" from the first *Snapshot*.

The re-positioning of herself as the "good student" is completed in the third *Snapshot*, "I am an Artist!" Jodi, the victim of "bad teaching" is restored to the position of the "good student," or the "artist" who gains affirmation by taking risks and pursuing her own interests under the guidance of a caring teacher. Jodi quotes Noddings (1995) in the

artist's scenario, "We must work more closely with students' own motives if we are to succeed in teaching them things we take to be worthwhile and in preparing them for democratic life" (p. 29). She emphasizes the "badness" of the history teacher and the "goodness" of the other teachers who motivated and affirmed students through active learning and choice. In doing so, she reinstates her own "good student" status in direct relationship to having a "good teacher."

Jodi's application of theoretical discourses describes the "good teacher" as one who "gets out of the way" of learning to the extent that her students may not remember the teacher, but only the combined positive emotional and cognitive experience of learning. Using specific theoretical discourses, she sets this expectation for herself as a future teacher.

Seven months later, Jodi returns to her *Snapshots* assignment, having nearly completed her first teaching experience as a fulltime student teacher. She chooses to focus on the scenario of the fifth-grade history teacher. Her earlier interpretation of this event waivers:

I see it [the *Snapshot*] in a slightly different way. Although the experience made my failing that much more terrible, I am sure that my teacher only wrote that because he knew that I could do better, he wanted me to do better. He was probably almost as disappointed as I was at my score. As a teacher, I am realizing how much we invest in our students. If they fail, we feel we have failed, and when they succeed, we feel the success along with them I am now sure that my teacher only wanted to talk about what I needed to be successfulAs I look at students that I have, I definitely have felt their failures and the successes. But, the real question is, how do I deal with the failures? . . . After looking at my own experience and how I felt from it, I am sure that I have made a student feel the exact opposite of what I wanted them to feel. When wanting students to feel encouraged, even in their failures, I know I have made them feel their failures even stronger.

In Jodi's return to the *Snapshot*, the victim learner becomes sympathetic with the difficult teacher. This reversal of roles appears similar to Pitt and Britzman's (2003) description of "phantasies of refusing to learn" which "can take the form of reversing positions where the helpless learner becomes the demanding teacher" (p. 760). Such symbolism "allows one to return the obstacles [of representing to learn] to the archaic conflicts they represent" (p. 760). The haunting of the unresolved conflict takes shape, now, as Jodi, occupies the injurious teacher position and considers her own perceived failures as a teacher. Jodi now identifies with the fifth-grade teacher; she is empathetic with him and notes his possible good intentions, thus ignoring his acts of humiliation. Perhaps she, too, has humiliated students but this was not her intent; and to reposition herself as a "good teacher," she must first resolve the old conflict by re-positioning her past fifth-grade teacher. She must occupy his position in order in order to resist it (Butler, 1997b).

As Jodi continues to write in her return to the *Snapshot*, the pull of theoretical discourses of Smith (1998), Kessler (2000), and Noddings (1995) are heard as she works through the fifth-grade teacher dilemma. She briefly mentions her second *Snapshot*, the historical simulation, and writes what made it so remarkable was, “I was literally a part of it.” This is her past-student voice speaking. She continues with this voice, even as she moves back into the teacher position and speaks of an integrated mathematics unit she has just taught to first graders, “We have taken a journey to Antarctica, as scientists, and the students have their own passports and plane tickets They are so excited to take the journey . . . They are invested in it.”

The phrase, “They are invested in it,” mirrors the words she used in writing about her own experience as a student participating in the historical simulation seven months earlier, “I was invested in it.” She infers the theoretical discourses of Smith (1998), Kessler (2000), and Noddings (1995) involving active learning, exploration, and choice. She reflects, “Through the experience that I had when I was in fifth grade [failing the exam], I can definitely see the importance of using what I have learned [i.e. from Smith (1998), Kessler (2000), and Noddings (1996).” Jodi appears to be using theoretical discourses as a way to resolve the conflict of being the demeaning fifth-grade teacher. In the same way that she reframed herself from the “bad student” to the “good student” when writing her original *Snapshots*, she now begins to re-frame the image of herself as the good teacher.

Foucauldian notions (Butler, 1997b; 2005; Harrer, 2005) of subjectivity suggest that Jodi is engaging in a re-constitution of self through the use of theoretical discourse. It is through repetition that a subject is re-constituted. Harrer (2005) explains the necessity of repetition: ancient Greek masters subjected an apprentice to teachings until the apprentice internalized the discourse and was able to act and speak with spontaneity. The data illustrates how Jodi’s repeated use of active learning, choice, motivating through students’ interests, and the teacher as a guide begins to frame her teaching identity. Her action research project focused on learning how to use manipulatives with young learners to “*facilitate* student conceptual understanding in math [italics added].” Jodi continues the use of these discourses and enacts practices associated with them routinely during fulltime student teaching. When she returns to the altered text assignment as a fulltime student teacher, Jodi adds a note to text describing John Dewey indicating that she is hopeful: “We try to ask questions instead of just telling them [children]: Why, How? What? To challenge them to think of their own answer.” There is desire for affirmation here, “We *try*.” Maybe good intentions do count? Perhaps Jodi sees herself living up to the expectations of the theoretical discourses she uses to describe the “good teacher.” Or are the theoretical discourses only creating a dichotomy of good/bad for her as she seeks affirmation as the good student and teacher?

In a critical reflection of the same integrated mathematics unit mentioned above, Jodi writes,

I definitely believe that Paulo Freire's ideas of engaging learning can be implemented successfully into schools today However, as is often the case, it is not the students that get in the way of implementing this style of teaching, it is the administration, parents, or *even teachers themselves* [italics added].

Jodi may speak more than she realizes: the teachers themselves, and their unresolved conflicts, may "get in the way" of such learning.

Geoff: Impossibilities and unresolved conflict

Geoff's *Snapshots: Powerful moments of learning* assignment includes two consistently themed scenarios where theory is used to illustrate learning resulting from a mentor/apprentice relationship over a long period of time. The third snapshot, however, appears to represent unresolved conflict: rejection from someone who is loved, resulting in humiliation, and fear. The juxtaposition of the combined *Snapshots* creates difficult binaries for Geoff to work out in constructing a teacher identity: hate/love; rejection/affirmation; punishment/reward; authoritative decision/choice. In this re-reading of Geoff's work, there are illustrations of how the unconscious works at the site of subjectivity, of a "student, who thinks s/he knows one thing, but who really knows and thinks something else" (Ellsworth, 1997, p.59).

In the mentor/apprentice *Snapshots*, Geoff describes two experiences, one in high school and one as a young adult, where he enjoys one-on-one mentoring from adults over an extended period of time. Words like "relational," "co-construction of knowledge," and "respect" are used throughout the *Snapshots*. Geoff writes of one teacher, "[He] worked side by side as a teacher-student, learning from his pupils as well as instructing them...Because of this teacher-student relationship, [the teacher] and his students were able to learn from one another and produce a higher quality project through their collaboration and exchange of ideas." The mentor teachers in these *Snapshots* are "committed," seek "the interests of the student," and act as a "guide." Geoff chooses Dewey (as described in Noddings, 1995; Phillips & Soltis, 2004), readings from critical pedagogy, and Lave and Wenger's (as described in Phillips & Soltis, 2004) notion of apprenticeship, which he notes "seems very appropriate to describe my experience." There is a strong sense of what the adult/teacher/mentor should be with less detail spent describing what Geoff the student/apprentice is doing in these scenarios. This emphasis is strengthened by the order of the narratives: the two strong mentor/apprentice *Snapshots* are on either side of the third *Snapshot* standing in stark contrast between relational examples ideal adult/teacher/mentors.

The middle *Snapshot*, "Grandma's Scorn," recalls an incident of rebuke and broken relationships. Geoff's experience involves betrayal by a grandmother who was sought for protection and affirmation; her scorn has a haunting and lasting effect as one way of powerful learning. Geoff as a child hides from his grandparents who assume the worse has happened - Geoff has drowned. When his grandfather finds him, he spans him.

Geoff runs to his grandmother “for comfort,” who rejects him physically and emotionally, thus adding to his humiliation. In one interpretation, Geoff uses Jensen’s (2005) work, “We are more likely to remember an experience with a negative bias than one with a positive bias” (p. 77), and he continues, “I can tell you, I *never* hid like that again, from any form of adult authority. My emotions, while negative, had an arguably positive effect on how I behaved henceforth.”

The discourse of rejection and authority seems subversive and strong, reminding Geoff to follow the rules, obey authority, and to stay out of harm’s way. This discourse is lurking in his other two memories of mentor learning. In these *Snapshots*, Geoff closely follows the advice, mentoring, and instruction of the adult/teacher/mentors who he places in the role of authority. He also establishes a personal standard for adults/teacher/mentors: they ought to be knowledgeable, relational, and reliable. They do not rebuke, reject, or betray.

The theoretical discourses of Dewey and Lave and Wenger (as described in Phillips & Soltis, 2004), do not appear useful to Geoff as a tool to reframe his own subject position within the *Snapshots*. They are used only to position the successful teacher as authority and the learner as one who learns from authority. Theoretical discourse is held separate from personal identity construction, positioning Geoff between two dramatically different expectations of learning: the discourse of scorn and rejection and that of the caring authoritative teacher/mentor. He becomes subjected to what Walkerdine (1992) characterizes as an “impossible fiction” (p. 15), a belief that “love that will win the day. . . . [a belief in] the benevolent gaze of the teacher which will secure freedom from cruel authority in the family as well as the school” (p. 16). In attempting to be relational and a one-on-one mentor to all students and at all times, Geoff creates an impossible fiction, one that cannot be supported, particularly in his student teaching placement. He does not seem to use theoretical discourse in the same way as Jodi, as a means to problematize practice or identity. The theoretical discourses, then, may serve to reinforce impossibilities.

Geoff’s was placed with two mentor teachers who team-taught a combined class of 60 students in a middle school. This presented specific challenges to Geoff. He organized his action research project as a mentor/apprentice workshop, but in the addendum he wrote to his *Snapshot* assignment, he noted, “Teaching sixty kids at once, though, obviously challenges a communal, trust-based classroom environment.” In another online dialogue assignment involving theoretical applications, Geoff wrote to his colleague, “I teach 60 kids at a time, so it feels like when I get one side of the room quiet, the other side is goofing off, and when I go to get the other side back on track, it seems like I lose the side I just left.”

At another time he points out the lack of authentic dialogue he is experiencing with his mentor teachers during student teaching. Dialogue between mentor and apprentice is a reoccurring theme in Geoff’s writing. He notes that he receives “input from them much more than they do from me.” This lack of dialogue is one of the reasons he sees his

student teaching placement as inadequate. He describes his student teaching learning as follows:

I don't think that I have learned my teaching skills by operating within a community. From the get go, my mentor teachers have had me teaching, so I was never really transitioned into it While it has been beneficial for me to 'get in there and do it,' I do wish that the transition could have included more time as an apprentice.

Geoff continues to examine his current student teaching by revisiting the story of his grandma:

Just as my notion of "grandma" was challenged and then altered when I was six, so now my notion of "teacher" is constantly being challenged, reassessed, doubted, restructured, and refined. This has not always been (nor will it always be) for the positive. Frustration over not being able to operate as a teacher in the way I would truly like has caused me to seriously doubt my fit for the profession.

Geoff's writings are complex reminders of discursive constructions of subjectivity, as "learning is uncannily organized by repetition of past investments and conflicts—or, in short hand, new editions of old conflicts—projected onto present experiences, people and events" (Pitt & Britzman, 2003, p. 761). Perhaps this data illustrates the transference of Geoff's old, unresolved conflict resurfacing as a student teacher, making it difficult to acquire new knowledge and skills.

Perhaps as Britzman (2007) argues, Geoff illustrates "[a hatred for] the dependency that also characterizes learning to teach. . . [because] learning for the adult, means thinking about one's painful emotional experience of helplessness, dependency, and frustration" (p.8). Perhaps he feels betrayed by the theoretical discourses of mentorship, his mentor teachers, by the teacher education program and his cohort leader. We all represent "authority" just as his grandparents did and as "authority," shouldn't we be better mentors guiding Geoff, the apprentice? Couldn't we prepare him better for uncertainty (Britzman, 2007)? Have we all seduced and then betrayed his trust? And if so, does this not position theoretical discourse as just one more impossibility?

This project began as a curriculum redesign, an academic experiment in transitional space. Yet, here at the end of the planning, teaching, analysis, and writing, I am left with an "inescapable and profound not knowing" (Ellsworth, 2004, p.161), a story of a difficult and turbulent space and the uncertainty of teacher development. Ellsworth (2005) writes of the "mind/brain/body in motion" (p. 36), and, yes, mind/brain/body *moves*, but I understand now that these are not the moves of a planned and practiced dance. No, this is the hard breathing/gasping of *becoming*, of birthing, of trauma. Mind/brain/body in motion can only be partially seen; *motion*, after all, blurs the picture. For we are all "crossing that important internal boundary that is the line between the

person we have been but no longer are and the person we will become” (Ellsworth, 2005, pp. 61-62). And now, what should I do with such knowing and not knowing?

Towards an Uncertain Teacher Education (Britzman, 2007)

Britzman (2007) argues, “My position is that there is no such thing as teacher education without us creating the conditions to tolerate and value the uncertainty of development as a strange and even alienating resource for understanding the great conflicts our field absorbs, creates, and lives within” (pp. 2-3). This project suggests that one way to create the conditions to “tolerate and value the uncertainty of development” in teacher education is to design teacher education courses as transitional space, to practice a pedagogy of dilemma, openly discussing the influences of unresolved conflicts upon emerging teacher identity. And this, perhaps, suggests a re-framing of how teacher educators relate and view preservice teachers. Exploring Ellsworth’s (1997; 2005) and Britzman’s (2007) work further might lead away from a focus on skills and strategies alone and towards a focus on *becoming* and a practice of relationality.

The illustrations of Jodi and Geoff place my practice as a teacher educator in transitional space; they raise questions larger than this study alone. How might teacher education value and even find this turbulent process of becoming useful? How can this knowledge of an uncertain teacher development (Britzman, 2007) be used to guide preservice teachers through conflicts they experience as student teachers and will experience in their future classrooms and in the continual remaking of themselves as teachers? Indeed, “What will we allow anomalous, sensational pedagogies to make of us, as educators?” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 36).

The illustrations of Jodi and Geoff prompt me to consider deeply my own teaching and the policies and programming of teacher education. For ours is not a field of fixed measurements and sure outcomes. For example, in engineering, there is a mathematical equation to determining the “bending moment” of any given structure, the amount of force that can be applied prior to a breaking point. But Jodi and Geoff demonstrate that the forces of human subjectivity are so complex, there can be no equation to predict a bending moment of identity, a becoming as a teacher. Because, as Ellsworth (2005) writes, “teaching and learning [are] always in the making, never guaranteed and never achieved (p. 56).” This is perhaps the difficult and necessary work teacher education must accept.

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This document has undergone peer review. This is an electronic version of an article published in:

Phillips, D. K. (2010). On transitional space, unresolved conflicts, and an uncertain teacher education. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 16(5), 633-644.

doi: 10.1080/13540602.2010.507970

The final, definitive version of this document, which should be used for reference and citation purposes, is available online at *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* (<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713447546~db=all>). Copyright restrictions may apply.

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