THE IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS OF LITERACY IN FIELD EXPERIENCES CONSIDERING THEIR PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Lindsay Pearle Grow

The Graduate School
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2011
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky

By
Lindsay Pearle Grow
Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Janice F. Almasi, PhD
Lexington, Kentucky

2011

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Abstract

This qualitative multiple case study explored the identity development of three preservice teachers of literacy. The study focused on the prior knowledge of the preservice teachers of literacy and how their knowledge related to their identity development while in field experiences. The primary question that guided this study was: What is the nature of the construction of identity during field experiences for preservice teachers of literacy? Sub questions explored identity in field experiences and the role of prior pedagogical content knowledge to identity development.

Findings indicated that an evolving habitus central to their identity as literacy teachers could be deduced that guided the preservice teachers as they interacted in the figured worlds of their field experiences related to literacy teaching. Also, prior knowledge as a component of identity served to help the preservice teachers author themselves in regard to their interactions with their cooperating teachers, students, and with the classroom and school environment. Findings further indicated that the preservice teachers of literacy relied on their prior knowledge to notice, critique, and anticipate. Noticing, critiquing, and anticipating led to further development of their identity as teachers of literacy in a circular manner.

A recommendation for practice includes the use of the NCA/WR Identity Guide to help preservice teachers of literacy become aware of their identity during field experiences. Further, providing an opportunity for reflection when standardized tests are administered could lead to metacognition, which is helpful for the identity development of preservice teachers. Recommendations for future research include examining different populations of preservice teachers and further exploring standardized testing related to identity. This study showed that preservice teachers of literacy navigate a path of diverse experiences as they learn to author themselves in the figured worlds of the field experiences. These experiences serve to shape them as future teachers and continued exploration of the specifics of their identity development will assist in creating strong teachers who are equipped to face the challenges of providing quality literacy instruction.
KEYWORDS: Preservice Teachers of Literacy, Identity, Prior Knowledge, Teacher Education, Literacy

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This dissertation is a report of a multiple case study of the identity development of preservice elementary teachers of literacy. The study examined three preservice teachers in a field experience and during student teaching through interviews, observation, artifacts, and an assessment (Literacy Instruction Knowledge Scale [LIKS], Utah State University, 2009; Reutzel et al., 2009). The purpose of the study was to learn more about the identity development of these preservice teachers in field experiences considering specifically their prior knowledge related to literacy.

This first chapter of the dissertation presents background information to situate the study in the larger contextual problem that this study will help to address. Brief mention of the research literature and political climate provide reasons for studying the identity of new teachers related to their prior pedagogical content knowledge. An understanding of the pressures that cause new teacher attrition provide further rationale for the study of preservice literacy teacher identity. The chapter then specifies the purpose of the study and the research question, notes relevant definitions that are pertinent to the study, and considers the significance of the study.

Background

Political Focus on Quality Literacy Teachers Lends to Study of Identity

Recent reports (e.g., IRA 2007; IRA 2003) forefront the importance of quality literacy teaching: “There is a growing consensus in the United States today that putting a quality teacher in every classroom is the key to addressing the challenges of literacy learning in schools” (p. 3, IRA, 2003). This growing consensus about the importance of quality literacy teachers connects to the preparation of quality teachers which has been the focus of research for some time and is a current interest in political policies such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) centered on having “highly qualified” educators in classrooms around the nation (NCLB, 2001).

The interest in preservice literacy teachers and their education (Harmon et al., 2001; Hoffman et al., 2005; Hoffman & Roller, 2001; Hoffman & Pearson, 2000; IRA 2007; IRA 2003) is situated within the broader scene of literacy research and political policies (e.g., NCLB, 2001). While our understanding of how teachers learn to teach has
increased (Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers, 2008; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Richardson, 2001), the conclusions that are reached are vast and grasping what is important is challenging. For example, in a seminal review, which will be further explained in Chapter 2, Risko and colleagues (2008) reviewed studies of reading teacher education explaining myriad theoretical positions represented in this body of literature. Theoretical positions in the research literature they reviewed ranged from positivist/behavior to cognitive, to constructivist learning theories, to sociocultural theories.

Risko et al. (2008) recommended that future research about reading teacher education focus on deepening and broadening theoretical paradigms and drawing on multiple research methodologies to “capture layers of factors affecting teacher development” (p. 283). Identity is a concept that is able to include a variety of research paradigms. Along with the theoretical paradigms, Risko et al. (2008) also called for a focus on the complex environments that work in tandem to make up a literacy teacher. In this dissertation, the study of identity with a focus on teacher knowledge helps pull together various theoretical positions related to literacy teacher development. I will also explore the field experience environment of learning to teach.

Risko et al. (2008) pointed out that the research literature related to reading teacher education reflects different theoretical paradigms; these varieties of paradigms are also reflected in the pedagogical decisions teachers make. In learning to teach, the preservice literacy teacher is faced with navigating various elements, including theoretical orientations, which all converge as they establish their identity as a teacher. For instance, teachers of literacy make decisions about how to teach writing, deciding whether they will use a workshop approach, which may have a more sociocultural theoretical orientation (e.g., Calkins, 2001; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001) or whether they will follow a more scripted, teacher-centered approach (Land & Moustafa, 2005; Samway & Pease-Alvarez, 2005). Or they might make a decision about how to use their time in either preparing their students for a standardized test by assigning multiple choice questions or spending time doing a reading aloud.

In all of these decisions, they are forging their identities as teachers of literacy and drawing on multiple theoretical positions regarding knowledge. They are authoring
themselves as literacy teachers drawing from their base of knowledge. As they construct their identity as teachers, teachers of literacy are especially faced with bridging various theoretical perspectives and working with different curricular areas due to the nature of literacy as foundational to other curricular areas (Alvermann, Phelps, & Gillis, 2010; Bean, 2000).

**Teacher knowledge can be viewed from differing theoretical positions.** The theoretical positions that new teachers navigate as they negotiate their teaching identities and the various views of teacher knowledge need not be viewed in opposition to one another. Instead, the various conflicting paradigms and situations that new teachers encounter can be seen as part of the landscape that must be navigated as teachers of literacy journey down the path of constructing an identity as teacher. This sort of an approach, focused on the identity of teachers, has a more pragmatic spirit (Dillon, 2000) and embraces the tensions that often divide educational research (Munby, Russell, & Martin, 2001).

Along with the teaching decisions that teachers make, which reflect different theoretical positions, the knowledge of teachers is also viewed from differing positions. The ways teacher knowledge is described and studied varies greatly (Munby et al., 2001). The study of identity is one of these ways and another is considering a focus on measureable pedagogical content knowledge. These two areas will be considered in relationship to each other in this study.

**Identity**

Teacher identity is about how teachers relate to those around them, how they make sense of who they are in order to communicate and interact with their environment. A teacher’s identity incorporates many different aspects including their content and pedagogical knowledge. Identity relates to character, knowledge, personality, self-efficacy, beliefs, and values that are shaped in sociocultural ways through people’s experiences (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). The study of identity is a useful research frame as it considers the whole person and the ways in which people negotiate the figured worlds in which they participate (Olsen, 2008c; Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998).
The study of identity in relation to literacy is especially appropriate due to the social nature of literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Purcell-Gates, Jacobson, & Degener, 2004). Identity formation occurs in social practices. One of the ways identity is formed is through literacy activities such as speaking, reading, and writing. As preservice teachers speak and author themselves (Holland et al., 1998) they create their identities as literacy teachers. Thus literacy is a natural place to examine identity development. Furthermore, literacy practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2000) are inferred from literacy events (Heath, 1983) such as reading aloud or doing writers workshop. Literacy practices include attitudes, values, feelings, and relationships; identity is concerned with these attributes. These concepts will be explored further in Chapter 2.

In reference to the identity of teachers, chiefly preservice teachers of literacy as this study focuses on, the nuances of the relationship between pedagogical content knowledge which is touted as important in society today and identity development have not been explored. The focus on pedagogical content knowledge is unique in the study of identity and is related to recent political trends in education. It is to the discussion of the current climate in relation to pedagogical content knowledge and identity that I now turn.

Focus on Measureable Pedagogical Content Knowledge is Part of New Teacher Identity Development

The current climate in our society assails educators and emphasizes assessing measurable knowledge. Recent political trends in education focus on the importance of highly qualified professional teachers in every classroom around the nation (No Child Left Behind, 2001; Lewis & Long, 2008). One of the ways that highly qualified teachers are being defined is by focusing on the content they know.

As evidence of this, the International Reading Association (IRA) revised the Standards for Reading Professionals in 2010 and the first standard is “Foundational Knowledge: Candidates understand the theoretical and evidence-based foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction.” The IRA standards (2010) specifically utilize a role-based organization in the reporting of the standards and the column with teacher expectations is intentionally labeled “teacher candidate.” This highlights that it is the prospective teacher who needs to be able to demonstrate competence in the standards not just the practicing teacher.
Research on teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge often stems from Shulman’s work (1986, 1987), which conceptualized *pedagogical content knowledge* as different from *content knowledge*. Pedagogical content knowledge refers specifically to the knowledge needed for teaching. Research shows that literacy teachers possess a body of knowledge that is different from non-teachers (Phelps, 2009).

Needless to say, teachers are being scrutinized and held accountable in ways that focus on their pedagogical content knowledge. They are made to take classes to bolster their knowledge and take tests that prove they are knowledgeable. This test taking is most often a part of new teacher licensure as state and nation-wide initiatives hold certain expectations for the certification of new teachers. The certification requirements are often based on data from assessments candidates take that presumably assess teacher knowledge and readiness to teach (Imig & Imig, 2008; Sedlak, 2008). In order to receive licensure to teach, candidates must successfully complete education requirements and pass certain exams (e.g., Praxis published by Educational Testing Service, 2010). These measures are in place with the intention of ensuring teachers who are well prepared and have certain knowledge are those who are able to enter the field.

In addition to the IRA standards (2010), standards and assessments that evaluate teachers have been developed by various groups (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC); Education Testing Service (ETS); the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS); Porter, Youngs, & Odden, 2001). These tests and expectations to meet the standards can place a burden and impose stress on teachers (e.g., Garan, 2004; McCarthey, 2008). This stress sometimes leads new teachers to struggle as they form their identity as teachers. There are also other reasons for stress that new teachers experience.

High pressure leads to strain on identity formation and thus to teacher attrition. In addition to the stress imposed by pedagogical content knowledge that teachers must master and show competency with – other sources of pressure exist for new teachers. These pressures influence the path of identity formation and sometimes lead to teacher attrition.

Within the first years of teaching, alarming rates of attrition have been reported with figures such as 50% of teachers leaving in the first five years (Ingersoll & Smith,
2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Strong, 2009). Some studies have found it is the best and brightest teachers who most frequently get frustrated and resign (Henke, Chen, & Geis, 2000; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Although some teachers leave for reasons such as family changes or retirement, it is possible others leave because they are not prepared for, or willing to be in, the teaching environments where they find jobs (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Studies show teachers report various reasons for leaving including stressors such as: lack of planning time, low salary, large class sizes, policy changes, inadequate preparation, and problematic student behaviors (Strong, 2009; Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005). Elementary teachers of literacy in particular feel stress because of the pressures to teach students to read and write (Flint, 2008).

**Understanding reasons for attrition and stress points to studying identity.** There are many sources of stress on teachers including: lack of support from community and parents, time demands, lack of supplies, large class sizes, low salaries, and teacher accountability systems which rely on student performance (Berry, 2006; Connolly, 2000; Strong, 2009) which often cause teachers to leave the profession. Pressures also include preoccupation with standardized test score success and centralized control of curriculum (Nespor, 1997; Olsen & Sexton, 2008). Often the standardized test scores in reading (and math) are used as a barometer to gauge the success of schools as these are the most frequently tested areas. Frequently the external demands for testing of students do not match the instructional assessments that teachers of literacy need in order to instruct their students (Invernizzi, Landrum, Howell, & Warley, 2005).

This emphasis on measureable, quantifiable knowledge is not necessarily what new teachers were taught in their teacher education programs. Teacher education programs emphasize student-centered, constructivist approaches and educate teachers about making instructional decisions based on the needs of the students in their class; while in the field, curriculum is often more centralized and prescribed (Handsfield, Crumpler, & Dean, 2010; Olsen, 2008b). Navigating these discrepancies (Cook, Smagorinsky, Fry, Konopak, & Moore, 2002) can make it difficult for teachers to develop a professional teaching identity with which they feel comfortable, and some teachers are not very resilient to adapt to these stressors.
A combination of these stressors contribute to why teachers feel they are unprepared for, or not compatible with, their teaching positions. The imbalance of stressors as compared to positive experiences can cause teachers to quit (Connolly, 2000). Teaching somehow does not align with their identity or teachers have difficulty defining and navigating the construction of their professional identity. As new teachers struggle to define their professional identities, some find a place and others do not; some have high self-efficacy, which allows them to face these situations while others show less resilient qualities.

While this study does not specifically investigate matters of teacher retention and attrition, it finds a connection to this burgeoning problem because perhaps a better understanding of teacher identity could translate into teacher education, thus influencing the level of preparedness of new teachers causing them to remain teachers longer. Some believe there is a connection between the attrition of teachers and issues of identity, thinking we must bring issues of identity into preservice teacher training if we want to help stop the exodus from the profession (Alsup, 2006).

Darling-Hammond (2000) reports that increased teacher retention is related to higher levels of preparation. Maloch et al. (2003) found that teachers prepared in Sites of Excellence in Reading Teacher Education (Harmon et al., 2001), fared better holding to values of the teacher preparation programs and demonstrated more characteristics of experienced teachers. Learning more about the identity development of new teachers and using this knowledge in teacher preparation and induction programs may be helpful in retaining more teachers and supporting them to meet the demands of experiences they will encounter in their teaching careers. Examining the relationship between identity and the content knowledge that is so emphasized in today’s assessment-driven educational climate is pertinent.

A specific focus on the navigation of identity in field experiences and student teaching related to literacy brings a new lens on the matter of identity and preservice teacher education. Field experiences are an important time of growth for new literacy teachers, a time when they can weigh the ideas learned in coursework, try on what it means to be a teacher, and experience what it is like in the “real world” (Olsen, 2008b; IRA 2003, 2007). New teachers develop many opinions that will shape them for years to
come in these early experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2008; Dewey, 1904). Research into excellent reading teacher preparation programs specifically highlights strong field experience components with careful supervision as influential to high quality teacher preparation (Harlin, 1999; Harmon et al., 2001a; Hoffman & Roller, 2001; IRA 2003, 2007). Learning more about their identity development during this time is important work.

**Statement of the Research Problem**

Preservice teachers of literacy are faced with negotiating and adopting the identity of a teacher in an increasingly charged political environment where there are many demands and stressors on teachers. The current educational scene places an emphasis on highly qualified teachers who are deemed qualified based on their credentials that often come from passing standardized tests of knowledge. Measuring knowledge through standardized tests is epistemologically different from constructivist and sociocultural views of knowledge, which are common in the field of education. The study of identity is able to cut across various theoretical positions as it naturally incorporates the different theoretical positions that are important to each individual in the makeup of their identity. Identity includes concepts such as values, beliefs, figured worlds, and- important to this study- knowledge, specifically in this study pedagogical content knowledge. Identity bridges the social and the individual because the figured worlds in which identity is constructed and the Discourses (Gee, 2001) that individuals participate in help to mold and shape identities. This study explores how prior pedagogical content knowledge is related to identity in order to merge some of the differing ways that teachers are viewed and help better educate future teachers of literacy.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this case study was to seek greater understanding of the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy in field experiences (including student teaching). Further, the relationship between identity and prior pedagogical content knowledge was explored.
Research Questions

The primary question that guided this study was: What is the nature of the construction of identity during field experiences for preservice teachers of literacy? Sub questions were as follows:

- What characterizes the path of identity formation/shaping as preservice elementary teachers of literacy engage in field experiences?
- What is the role of prior pedagogical content knowledge to identity development?

Definition of Terms

Attrition: Attrition is the rate of turnover within the teaching profession. The teaching profession has a reputation for having high rates of turnover. This “revolving door” of teaching is particularly prevalent in younger, newer teachers and much research focused on the types of teachers who are more prone to leaving (Ingersoll, 2001).

Epistemology: Epistemology is the nature of knowledge and process of knowing or the relationship between the knower and the known (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Mertens, 2005). Cunningham and Fitzgerald (1996, also Fitzgerald & Cunningham, 2002), in a seminal article highlight three overarching concerns in the theory of knowledge: “what constitutes or counts as knowledge, where knowledge is located, and how knowledge is attained” (p.40).

Field experience: An opportunity for future teachers to engage with the practice of being a teacher. Practical experiences allow a teacher to transition from theoretical insights to the observation and implementation of the more “technical” aspects of teaching (Dewey, 1904). Powerful clinical experiences have been shown to lead to better prepared teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2008). Specifically related to literacy, research into effective programs shows that field experiences are an important component (IRA 2003; IRA 2007; Harmon et al., 2001a; Harmon, Hedrick, Strecker, & Martinez, 2001b; Sailors, Keehn, Martinez, & Harmon, 2005; Sailors et al., 2004; Cox et al., 1998; Linek et al., 1999; Harlin, 1999). In this study, the participants took part in a five week, all day, practicum field experience. They also took part in a semester-long student teaching field experience.

Figured world: A figured world is the context where an identity is constructed. It is “a socially and historically constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters
and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 52). This concept is similar to Bourdieu’s (1980; 1991) notion of social field.

**Habitus:** Habitus is “a set of *dispositions* which incline agents to act and react in certain ways” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 12). The habitus gives people the sense of how to respond to situations in their lives; however, it is not a fixed component of personality because it can be amended and adjusted during interaction in figured worlds. Habitus arises from repetitious exposure to certain experiences and values that become second nature to a person. People are thus “the products of particular histories which endure in the habitus” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 17). Habitus is what gives an individual a propensity to speak in a certain manner; it is what inclines a person with the sense of how to respond, orienting their thoughts and actions. The habitus is a part of history it is “embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history –[it] is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product” (Bourdieu, 1980, p. 56).

**Identity:** Identity considers how a person’s surroundings influence and shape the person and their ways of thinking, speaking, and acting. Identity considers how a person thinks about themself and how they participate in the world. There are many different approaches to identity in the literature; in this study a sociocultural, anthropological perspective of identity will be considered (Holland et al., 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991, 1998). This perspective deemphasizes the larger race, class, and gender aspects of identity that have been prevalent in some literature (e.g., Assaf, 2005). In this study a lens of identity is used which considers how a person is shaped and reshaped by their changing environment, beliefs, knowledge, and other elements such as prior experience. Identity encompasses different elements because various constructs shape how a person responds; constructs such as knowledge, belief, and emotion can all be important in identity.

The concept of identity is a bridge between the social and the individual because it is about how the individual relates to the collective but also about how the environment and surrounding figured worlds influence the individual (Holland et al., 1998; Wenger, 1998). The self is constantly being constructed and re-made dependent on the
surrounding “figured worlds” (Holland et al., 1998). The self is “authored” (Holland et al., 1998) as the person interacts with the world.

In particular, teachers are influenced by their personal and professional roles as they draw on both of these arenas in order to be a teacher (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Discovering the “teacher within” (Palmer, 1998) can be a complicated process for beginning teachers because of the years they have spent as students in “the apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975). Teacher development can be viewed as a fluid continuum that stretches from being a student, into teacher education and practicum experiences, followed by student teaching and induction, and finally into the years of teaching; the continuum is fluid because a teacher draws on each of these components rather than moving in a linear progression (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Olsen, 2008b). Thus the identity development of teachers is chronological and iterative (Olsen, 2008a), a complex negotiation of many different times and arenas of life that can be understood through many processes (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2010). Reaching a definition from which to operate involves the struggle with myriad concepts such as knowledge, belief, thought, self, emotion, story, agency, context, and acknowledges a range of disciplines that study identity. Defining the specific constructs of teacher identity that will be explored then is important in order appropriately narrow this wide array of possibilities. In this study the identity of preservice teachers of literacy will be considered related to their prior pedagogical content knowledge and related to their field experiences.

Paradigm: A worldview or a “basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990, p. 17). A paradigm is “a worldview, a general perspective, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world” (Patton, 1990, p. 37). Paradigms are embedded deeply in the beliefs and assumptions of individuals within certain groups. These mostly unconscious, internal perspectives “tell us what is real and what is not; they provide us with a sense of collective identity, and they guide and justify our actions” (Skrtic, 1995, p. 5). Drawing from the richness of these different perspectives, I will use a definition of a paradigm as a worldview or conceptual belief perspective, usually unconsciously held by people, which help them perceive and relate to the world. This study wrestled with combining the perspectives of a cognitive paradigm that values the ability of individuals to represent their knowledge about teaching on tests and a sociocultural paradigm that
values the interactions and experiences of teachers as important demonstrating their knowledge and being successful as teachers.

**Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK):** Pedagogical content knowledge is the unique knowledge a teacher uses to instruct students. PCK is specific to the ability to communicate content to students in a way they can understand and is thus knowledge that is useful for teaching. PCK specific to literacy content knowledge is related to a more generic understanding of the topic.

Teacher knowledge has been well researched (see Munby, Russell, & Martin, 2001 for a review) and studies and ideas specifically related to teacher knowledge of literacy are beginning to emerge (e.g., Lyon & Weiser, 2009). For example, studies are beginning to show that students who are in classrooms with teachers who have more knowledge about reading experience greater success (Carreker et al., 2005; McCutchen, Green, Abbot, & Sanders, 2009; Podhajski, Mather, Nathan, & Sammons, 2009).

Many researchers have based their ideas on Shulman’s (1986, 1987) work where he conceptualized different categories of knowledge for teachers. He made distinctions between content and pedagogical knowledge, specifying that the knowledge of the topic was different from general pedagogical knowledge of how to teach. *Pedagogical content knowledge* is more specifically knowledge for teaching; this refers to knowledge that would give the ability to create representations of information in order for students to understand. For example, PCK allows teachers to understand the process of reading in such a way that they can break it down into smaller parts such as focusing on fluency or vocabulary based on the needs of each particular student.

Research has shown that this specific PCK is possessed by teachers and is important. Specifically related to reading, there is evidence that the knowledge average adults possess about reading is insufficient to teach reading to elementary students. Reading teachers need specific knowledge of texts, language, and the development of reading in order to effectively instruct students (Block & Parris, 2008; Dole, 2003; Hoffman & Pearson, 2000; National Reading Panel, 2000; Osborn & Lehr, 1998; Phelps, 2009; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005).

**Pragmatism:** The focus on consequences, or on the end result, as a method for determining what to do or what to believe is central to the pragmatic paradigm. James
(1925) states it in this manner, “An idea is true so long as to believe it is profitable to our lives…True is the name of whatsoever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good, too, for definite, assignable reasons” (p. 75-76). Basically, the truth is related to the consequences of the outcome. In defining truth, pragmatists look to the “cash-value” of the proposition (James, 1975), in other words, “True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify” (p. 97).

Cherryholmes (1992) would agree, “Pragmatists choose some explanations or theories or stories and dismiss others when the former produce results they desire better than the latter” (p. 15). The focus for pragmatists is on the question that they want to answer and they then find means to answer it which best suit the question and their values and perceptions of importance (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Pragmatism is not an easily defined paradigm, Menand (1997) aptly points out that, “The meaning and application of pragmatism are always being debated. People who are drawn to pragmatism tend, after all, to be the kind of people who are reluctant to regard someone else’s word on the subject as final” (p. 1). The range of positions within pragmatism is part of what draws people to it.

**Preservice teachers:** Preservice teachers are students of education who are planning to become teachers but are not yet certified.

**Preservice teachers of literacy:** In this study, future elementary teachers were the focus of the study. Elementary teachers typically teach all subject areas, or at least they are prepared to teach all subjects; however, this study focused on the literacy teaching aspect of the elementary classroom. That is not to say that these preservice teachers did not also teach math, science, social studies, or other subject areas – just that the focus of this study was on the literacy teaching aspect.

**Significance**

This study adds to the body of work related to preservice teachers of literacy in the specific focus on the identity journey of three preservice elementary teachers. Focusing on this tender time in a teacher’s career is important because new teachers are impressionable and are making decisions that will influence them throughout their careers. The identities they develop as they first take on the responsibility of a teacher will be the foundation they have to build on throughout their tenure as teachers. Thus the
identity they develop as they navigate some of their first experiences teaching in field experiences and in their student teaching is an important area to study.

Along with considering field experiences, this study considers teacher identity from a perspective rooted in our society’s current emphasis on measurable content knowledge. The knowledge of teachers is an important aspect of their identity. As society increasingly focuses on knowledge that can be measured with pencil and paper tests, it is important to understand how teacher knowledge of literacy and knowledge of literacy pedagogy relate to identity.

By specifically focusing on the identity of preservice teachers, more can be added to the body of work that seeks to understand how to best educate new teachers. In this time where the voices of teachers are increasingly trodden upon, it is important to better understand teacher identity and explore teachers’ agency to act in the figured worlds where their voices are becoming less important. Understanding the identity of preservice teachers while they take part in field experiences may help to better design teacher programs to nurture these traits in new teachers (Bernshausen & Cunningham, 2001). This understanding may then help to address the problem of the attrition of so many new teachers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Strong, 2009).

Furthermore, this case study will be significant to individual readers in different ways, as they will find specific areas of interest that may implore them to delve deeper into areas of research. Due to the specific nature of this study as a case study, it is not generalizable to wide populations, however the descriptive richness of the data allows for consideration of interesting elements as is interesting and applicable to individual situations (Merriam, 2009).

**Summary**

The journey of developing a literacy teaching identity involves navigating various elements of personal history, knowledge, contextual experiences, and a variety of theoretical positions that stem from societal pressures and idealistic aspirations. It is during the early, formative field experiences and in student teaching that preservice teachers begin to develop the identities they will carry with them throughout their teaching careers.
The study of identity is appropriately wide enough to pragmatically handle the berth of a variety of theoretical positions, because the self is capable of wrestling with and operating from various paradigms. It is appropriate then in this study of the identity construction of three preservice elementary teachers of literacy to welcome the influence of various forces, theories, and paradigms. This study is unique in the pragmatic spirit in which it considers the nature of the construction of identity specifically focused on field experiences and prior knowledge.

Contextually, this study focused on the identity development of preservice teachers as they took part in a field experience and their student teaching. In this multiple case study, three elementary teachers were followed through their field experiences exploring the role of knowledge in identity development specifically in their literacy teaching. The interest in pedagogical content knowledge specifically emerged from the societal emphasis on highly qualified teachers who must possess a certain body of knowledge in order to teach. Consideration of societal and contextual pressures is important in understanding teacher identity.

This study advances the understanding of the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy. It considers their prior pedagogical content knowledge and field experiences in the development of identity. In this, it helps to inform teacher education programs and induction experiences which both aid in transitioning the new teacher into a successful teaching career.

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Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework and Review of Literature

Introduction

This study explored the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy in field experiences related to their prior pedagogical content knowledge. This chapter presents the conceptual framework that situates this study in existing theoretical models. It also reviews relevant literature to the study. The chapter contains three major sections. I begin with a short discussion about what makes a highly qualified teacher. After that, I turn to the first major section where I present relevant information that situates how I examined identity in this case study. I consider the specific entry points I adopted from a range of possibilities when studying the identity of preservice teachers of literacy. I show how the study of identity in this dissertation is rooted in the broader societal context and in teacher education, particularly field experiences.

Second, I present a conceptual framework centered on identity and literacy as a social practice. In this conceptual framework, I rely on the contexts of identity developed by Holland et al. (1998) and also consider the history related specifically to teacher identity. Third, I review relevant literature to support this study organized in two major sections: (a) literature related to literacy teacher preparation, and (b) literature related to teacher identity. Within the section that focuses on literacy teacher preparation, I consider literature related the importance of studying preservice teachers of literacy while in field experiences. Within the section that focuses on the literature related to teacher identity, I explore how knowledge is a component of identity.

Throughout this chapter, and in this study, I took into account the relationship of the preservice teachers of literacy who I studied to the larger bodies of research that inform this work. As Figure 2.1 shows, the study of preservice teachers of literacy is nested within the consideration of preservice teachers in general and within the study of teachers, which includes practicing teachers. Considering this relationship is important as some of the conversations in this chapter relate more generally to teachers. However, this work pertains in important ways to preservice teachers and preservice teachers of literacy as well.
Highly Qualified Teachers

The decision to study the identity of preservice teachers of literacy stems first from my own personal experiences as a beginning teacher and the troubles I had particularly in learning to teach reading, which I will explain later in the methods section. But it also stems from the societal and political emphasis on “highly qualified teachers” (NCLB, 2004) and from the additional pressures that those charged with teaching children to read experience (Flint, 2008).

The notion of “highly qualified teacher” is tricky business (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Rice, 2008). There are multiple positions on the topic and it is discussed in a variety of ways. In terms of literacy teachers, the six Standards for Reading Professionals (IRA, 2010) each list “possible evidence” that educators can demonstrate in order to show they meet the expectations of a reading professional. The IRA standards are one way of setting out the qualifiers for a highly qualified teacher.

The measuring stick for highly qualified teachers that was a part of the NCLB (2004) legislation that coined the term highly qualified teachers states: “To be deemed highly qualified, teachers must: 1) have a bachelor's degree, 2) have full state certification or licensure, and 3) prove that they know each subject they teach” (NCLB, 2004).

Even though this formal definition exists, there is still ambiguity. People are not necessarily satisfied with these definitions of quality (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002) and continue to discuss teacher quality using different terminology. Liston, Borko,
and Whitcomb (2008) noted, “Three terms heard in the discussion [about teacher worthiness] are highly qualified teacher, effective teacher, and good teacher” (p. 111). Being qualified is related to certifications and teacher characteristics, those who discuss effective teaching are concerned with outcomes – often measured in student achievement, while those who discuss good teaching are concerned with teaching practices. “Good teacher is perhaps the most common and least precise term of all” (p. 112), stated Liston et al. (2008), but it is also the most holistic, complex and intriguing. Therefore, depending on which orientation one adopts, speaking about “highly qualified teachers” can mean different things.

Thus, in the discussion of highly qualified teachers some focus on outcomes, some on certifications and characteristics, and others on teaching practices. The study of identity is not concerned with just one of these angles. Instead, the study of identity allows all of the angles to be considered in what makes a quality teacher. Highly qualified teachers have a certain identity as a teacher that allows them to make a difference. This could be because of their certifications and characteristics, or it could be because of the outcomes they are able to obtain with their classes, or it could be because of their teaching practices. Considering the identity of a teacher allows the exploration of these various angles in order to better understand what makes a highly qualified teacher. The study of identity allows many views to be considered rather than narrowing the study of what makes a qualified teacher in one particular direction.

Studying identity is one way to consider what makes a highly qualified teacher. But there are other angles that researchers have explored as well. For example, there is a body of work that discusses the ability of the teacher to provide emotional and instructional support to their students (e.g., Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Morrison & Connor, 2002; Rudasill, Gallagher, & White, 2010). Teachers who are able to provide good emotional support in this body of literature are viewed as highly qualified because children who are met with more teacher support in the classroom have increased motivation and academic achievement. The ability of teachers to provide emotional support in the classroom or to be good teachers are not closely related to the formal definition of teacher quality as defined by NCLB (2004)- that is through measurable qualifications.
Studying teachers and considering quality teachers is a complex matter. The study of identity, however, is one possible way in which this complexity can be addressed. Because teachers are concerned about their qualifications, their student outcomes, and their teaching practices, studying the identity of a teacher is an angle to explore what it means to be a quality teacher with a focus on a wider range of possibilities. The study of identity does not demand a systematic adoption of considering these different angles but instead looks in a qualitative, descriptive spirit at what is important and relevant for each individual being studied.

The political emphasis on highly qualified teachers is thus a driving force in the choice for identity as a frame of study. It is a less conventional choice given the formal definitional focus on certifications as important to defining highly qualified teachers. But perhaps there is something more than qualifications and certifications to making highly qualified teachers. Perhaps it has something to do with who teachers are as people. And who they are as people and as teachers relates to their identity, which is developed over time, beginning when teachers are students and continuing into their teacher education programs and beyond. Studying this tender time of teacher education in the life of a preservice teacher lends to considering how a teacher is crafted. What is the nature of their identity development? How do the experiences in their field placements help them to become quality teachers? With the particular political focus on literacy (e.g., NRP, 2000), considering identity related to literacy teaching is exceedingly important.

Context for conceptual framework and literature review - Situating the study:

Entry points for exploration of identity

Because identity is so multifaceted it is important to narrow the scope and better explain the entry points into this study. The primary focus of the study is consideration of identity development related to literacy. In considering this, the larger field of the identity development of teachers and then preservice teachers of literacy are both relevant. Narrowing the study and bringing clarity to why identity is being studied in preservice teachers of literacy will add richness and depth to the study of identity. In order to situate this study within the broader field of identity development, I will explore the entry points into this study or the areas from which this study emerges, an idea which stems from Olsen’s (2008b) exploration of teacher identity.
Olsen (2008b) discussed several different entry points for studying teacher identity including: reasons for entry to the profession, teacher education experience, current teaching context, career plans/teacher retention, prior professional experience, and prior personal experience (see Figure 2.2). Olsen (2008b) asks his readers to “picture a room with many doors,” (p. 24) then continues to explain how choosing one of the entry points is like choosing a door which opens up onto a “circular mix” (p. 24) of myriad components in a teacher’s identity. Identity contains various components. For example, in the preservice teacher of literacy’s identity - identity is made of elements such as: past as a reader and writer, experiences with schooling, beliefs about literacy pedagogy, teacher education experience, personal interests in literature, pressures to find employment, etc. It is at the intersection of these various areas that a teacher’s identity exists. Olsen (2008b) explained that the study of identity could be approached by entering through any of these doors. Because it is too vast to consider with intense focus all of the areas of a teacher’s identity, the questions of the research study help to guide which entry points are central and shape how identity is examined in the study.

I have added the broad societal context of teaching as profession to Olsen’s (2008b) entry points for the study of identity (Figure 2.1) as an important aspect to the development of teacher identity. I contend this aspect encompasses the societal, political, and historical pressures of being a teacher that have influence on teacher identity. I believe, as do others who study teacher identity, that “teacher thinking is heavily influenced by societal and local beliefs about schooling” (p. 5, Marsh, 2001). For example, teachers of literacy are faced with the pressures Americans feel to have a literate society. Some of these pressures stem from recent political policies regarding reading instruction.

Of these many angles from which teacher identity can be explored, this study is connected strongly with two entry points: the broader societal context of particularly literacy teaching and the teacher education experience (particularly field experiences). A brief conceptual review of these two areas follows with connections to relevant literature in order to set the stage for this study.
Broader societal context provides relevancy for content knowledge. After the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 (National Commission on Excellence in Education) there has been a heightened focus on the quality of education in the United States. The passage of policies such as Goals 2000, Reading First, Reading Excellence Act, and No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) has led to increased accountability and scrutiny of schools and debates over researched-based instructional strategies (Coburn, Pearson, & Woulfin, 2011). This legislation has placed increased pressure on teachers to get students to perform at certain levels. The pressure literacy teachers feel is especially heightened due to the ideal of having a literate society and the many circulating myths about the underperformance of American children in reading (McQuillan, 1998). The knowledge of teachers has an increased place of prominence as people look for ways to improve the education of students. Teaching standards include components of teacher knowledge and the NCLB legislation includes components about having *highly qualified teachers* in classrooms across the nation. In the literacy community, being highly qualified corresponds to meeting the standards, which were recently updated by the IRA (2010). The importance the literacy community places on teacher knowledge can be seen in part from the inclusion of “foundational knowledge” as the first IRA standard (2010) (see Appendix A).
This interest in “highly qualified” teachers, who have adequate knowledge, has heightened focus on the certification, qualifications, and dispositions of teachers (Berry, 2006; Cusick, 1994; Goldhaber & Eide, 2003). The increased demands on teachers evidenced through teacher exams and professional standards, such as those set forth by IRA, sends a message about a necessary underlying body of knowledge that society believes teachers should possess in order to teach. There is an emphasis on the individual, cognitive knowledge that teachers possess. The attitude behind testing teachers mirrors the attitude that is the driving force for the standardized testing of children. While not necessarily research driven, some mention the argument that “teachers who score well on tests can best teach students how to score well on tests” (Baines, 2010, p. 160). Some also believe that teachers’ test scores are a predictor for classroom effectiveness (Goldhaber & Eide, 2003). Regardless of the mixed research to support claims such as these, these beliefs are driving attitudes and actions in our country. It is evident through the tests and professional standards (e.g., IRA, 2010) that the knowledge of teachers is of concern to the broader contextual/political arena of society today (Munby, Russell, & Martin, 2001; Grossman, 1990). The focus on teachers’ knowledge in this study stems from the societal emphasis on testing and the pressures that teachers feel. The emphasis on testing creates an importance around the cognitive, individual view of knowledge, that a person possesses knowledge of his/her own that is acquired and can be assessed. This is in contrast to the sociocognitive perspective of knowledge, which values interaction as relevant in helping people make meaning through activity. In this study I wrestled with these two views of knowledge and how to combine them. I took the position that knowledge (cognitive or sociocognitive) is one component of identity, more will be discussed about this and the research related to teacher knowledge later.

Of further interest in the broader societal scheme of education, specifically related to literacy, are recent trends in school and classroom climates. The increased focus on standardized test scores and pressure to use scientifically-based programs has often led to standardized teaching (Meier, 2009; Ruiz & Morales-Ellis, 2005). The fallout from the report of the National Reading Panel (2000) has led to conversation about what counts as effective research to prove which teaching strategies are worth using in classrooms (e.g.,
Allington, 2002). This has led to confusion in the schools as teachers of literacy are sometimes being encouraged and pressured to adopt similar practices and lesson plans as their colleagues, and sometimes more regimented scripted programs have been adopted (Allington, 2002; Altwerger, 2005).

Although these practices are not in place everywhere, scripted teaching programs have sometimes been adopted in order to qualify for grant money such as in the Reading First program (Shannon & Edmondson, 2005) and because of reports such as the National Reading Panel (2000) and subsequent legislation that may have a more narrow view of the reading process (Coles, 2001). Scripted teaching programs generally arise from research that attempts to standardize the instruction given to children in order to control experiments. This is done for research purposes, but might not be what is best for children (e.g., Johnston-Parsons et al., 2007; Moustafa & Land, 2001). When programs used for research are adopted on a larger scale, often the needs of specific populations are not taken into account. Generalizing research that was completed in particular settings to wide-scale use is not good practice and is often done because publishing companies can make money on distributing the research-based programs (Allington, 2005; Meyer, 2005). Sometimes the programs that are adopted do not even follow researchers’ recommendations. The packaged programs often claim they are research-based, but they often deviate from the manner in which similar interventions were implemented in research studies (Dewitz, Jones, & Leahy, 2009).

In terms of identity development of literacy teachers, some researchers believe teachers are conflicted because of the mixed messages they receive from colleges of education as compared to what is expected of them in the field. Preservice teachers are taught that teaching literacy, in particular, is an individualized process because all children acquire skills at a different rate and in a slightly different way (O’Donnell & Wood, 2004; Tracey & Morrow, 2006; Gould, 1996). However, in the field teachers are often met with scripted programs that operate from a different paradigm (e.g., Larson & Phillips, 2005; Smagorinsky, Lakly, & Johnson, 2002; Olsen, 2008a). Scripted programs such as Open Court, Success for All, and Reading Mastery often operate from a paradigm of distrust in the teacher (Land & Moustafa, 2005; Samway & Pease-Alvarez, 2005).
By controlling the instructional moments in the classroom some think the curriculum can be “teacher proofed.” On the other hand, schools of education have taught teachers to adopt more constructivist learning techniques that value the individual (Commeyras, 2007; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985; Smagorinsky et al., 2004). Constructivist principles rely on meeting learners at their level and scaffolding them (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) accordingly by providing appropriate instruction differentiated to meet each student’s needs. Preservice teachers are taught ways to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of the learners in their classroom (Reutzel, 2007; Tomlinson, 1999). The expectations in the field thus conflict with what teachers learned in college, causing a struggle in the identity of teachers as they attempt to fit in while also staying true to what they have learned.

These conflicts that teachers of literacy experience as they weigh what they learned in teacher education coursework with what they are expected to teach in the schools, leads to another relevant aspect in the broader societal context: the state of teacher education programs (e.g., Hoffman & Roller, 2001). Teacher education programs are under attack by some who wonder whether formal programs should be deemphasized (Baines, 2010; Ballou & Podgursky, 2000; Duffy, Webb, & Davis, 2009; Hess, 2001). Other entry modes to teaching such as Teach for America or emergency substitute licensing programs are becoming more commonplace. Recent reports point to a deficit in the preparation of elementary teachers to teach reading and writing well (Lyon, 1998; Strickland, Snow, Griffin, Burns, & McNamara, 2002).

Thus, considering the broad societal context for the teaching profession is an important entry point for the study of preservice teacher identity. The identity development of preservice teachers of literacy is influenced by societal situations such as NCLB legislation with demands for highly qualified teachers, scripted reading programs, and the state of teacher education programs.

Literacy teacher education particularly in field experiences. The second entry point for the study of preservice literacy teacher identity is rooted in the teacher education experience and particularly the work that future literacy teachers do in the field as a part of their coursework. Teacher education is meant to be a time to help in the transition from student to teacher, as candidates learn about literacy pedagogical methods,
theoretical models of reading development, and other ideas that were invisible to them as students. It is in this time of preparation that the identity of a teacher becomes more real. As a part of teacher education, preservice teachers participate in course work and field experiences that shape their identity in numerous ways including obtaining pedagogical and content knowledge that is part of their identity.

Studying field experiences is relevant because the contexts in which literacy teachers learn influence their development and identity as teachers (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005; Hammerness & Darling-Hammond, 2005; Sailors et al., 2004; Zeichner, 2008). Field experiences are places where preservice teachers make sense of and negotiate their identity as a teacher, bridging the space of being a student and that of being a teacher. For example, they are able to reflect on the pedagogical significance of ways they were taught to read and write, weighing this with what they see during field experiences - considering this as informative to how they will teach literacy. Field experiences are the sociocultural environments that influence the identity of new teachers of literacy and give them space to try what they are learning and to wrestle with what works for them. Part of the identity of teachers is composed of these sociocultural influences and part of identity is made of the content and pedagogical knowledge they have acquired and are acquiring as their identity develops. It is in this space, within the sociocultural influences but considering the content and pedagogical knowledge, that this study is positioned.

This study adds to the body of work related to teacher identity by specifically focusing on the identity journey of preservice elementary teachers of literacy. Focusing on this tender time in a teacher’s career is important because new teachers are impressionable and are making decisions that will influence them throughout their careers.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual underpinnings for this study primarily revolve around the notion of identity, specifically identity related to teachers and even more narrowly, beginning teachers of literacy. Here I will explore identity in a broad sense connecting to issues of literacy teacher identity and relevant elements of teacher identity including teacher
knowledge. Other conceptual support for this study is found in literacy as a social practice and legitimate peripheral participation.

**Identity**

Studying identity is examining who the self is and how that self interacts with the world; identity is contingent on experiences and sociocultural encounters (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Britzman, 2003; Holland et al, 1998; Olsen, 2008a). The definition of identity is somewhat elusive due to the many constructs that have been used to study it and the many fields in which identity has been considered. In this study I adopt a sociocultural, anthropological view of identity that rests on contextual influences on identity as well as the influences of knowledge, prior experiences, behaviors, beliefs, and other elements the self uses to interact with its surroundings. The sociocultural approach to identity emphasizes that there is a close relationship between learning and identity development (Grossman, 1990; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The ways that people learn are connected to who they are, or their identity; identity provides a lens for learning and conversely, certain content is learned because of the identity of a person. This relationship between learning (or the construction of knowledge) and identity is particularly relevant in this study, which explores as a sub question the role of pedagogical content knowledge to identity development.

Identity deals with the self and the understanding and portrayal of the self. Identity is concerned with how the self relates to and is understood by others in the world (Holland et al., 1998). When researchers study identity they think about the essence of people, who they are, what they bring with them in terms of personality, character, and values and how this relates to the contexts with which people are involved. Preservice teachers of literacy experience a unique time of identity development as they journey down the path of becoming a teacher. They forge new professional identities as teachers, which means inventing in new ways how the self interacts with others. Their new role demands a new understanding of themselves. Preservice teachers’ involvement in field experiences, in particular, is an important time for future teachers of literacy to learn and grow as they develop their identity (Harlin, 1999; Sailors et al., 2004) because embedded in activity is when identity is constructed (Holland et al., 1998). Field experiences are a time of active involvement when preservice teachers are participating in the figured
world of school as a teacher, constructing their identity as they go. Preservice teachers at first are involved more on the edge of the field experience and throughout the course of their teacher training, become more involved and develop a stronger identity as a teacher. This notion is related to Lave and Wenger’s (1991) idea of legitimate peripheral participation where apprenticeship participation begins without full responsibility and then moves toward a more full participation in the setting.

**Constructs of identity.** Identity is defined uniquely by each scholar who writes about it. In this study I will rely on some of the ideas of Holland et al. (1998) who developed four constructs of identity, which describe the places where, and ways in which the self is authored, where the construct of identity comes to life. These constructs are *figured worlds, positionality, space of authoring, and making worlds.*

First is the construct of the *figured world.* Figured worlds are spaces where people act in certain ways, creating “webs of meaning” (Geertz, 1973). In these socially, historically, and culturally constructed arenas, people have the propensity to behave in ways that define the figured world; using tools, artifacts, and speech patterns in particular manners to fit in with what is considered appropriate in that domain (Holland et al., 1998). Lave and Wegner’s (1991) and Wenger’s (1998) perspective of “situated learning” and “communities of practice” help to further conceptualize this position of the worlds where identity is created. Figured worlds are spaces where there exists a “realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 52). This study examines the participation of preservice teachers of literacy in the figured world of their field experiences. The identity of these teachers is shaped by interactions with the cooperating teacher and students as well as the particular nuances of the school culture including the makeup of students and the physical environment.

The second construct of identity is *positionality.* Related to power, affiliation, and hierarchy, the context of positionality deals with relational markers that categorize people into certain groups. Preservice teachers of literacy who are guests in another person’s classroom experience aspects of power related to navigating the relationship with their cooperating teacher and establishing a rapport with students and other faculty. They also contend with being simultaneously positioned as a student at the university
while being a teacher. The responsibilities that come with the role of student for turning in assignments and completing tasks to the satisfaction of their professors positions them differently than the role they must take as an authority figure in front of their students.

The third construct, *space of authoring* conveys the way people act toward the world around them, creating their identities. Authoring refers to the way people take ideas, knowledge, events, and resources from their past and respond to situations currently happening. Authoring is relevant to what is happening in the present - the way that identity comes to life in the space of the present figured world. Preservice teachers of literacy draw on their prior knowledge and experiences with literacy learning in order to interact with their present figured world. As they interact with situations around them, they draw from their course readings, personal experiences with reading, time as a student, conversations with others, and so on to negotiate their response to the present situation. Holland et al. (1998) defined authorship as “a matter of orchestration: of arranging the identifiable social discourse/practices that are one’s resources…in order to craft a response in a time and a space” (p. 272). Authoring has to do with the response people make, the way people address and answer contextual situations around them.

Studying preservice teachers of literacy is particularly unique because they are authoring themselves as teachers for the first time. Their identity is being shaped and is particularly vulnerable to influences (Olsen, 2008a).

The fourth construct explored by Holland et al. (1998), deals with the imaginative *making of worlds*. There are two ways to understand this construct: play in a larger scope that may serve to change societal structures and play on an individual level where a person tries out roles. Holland et al. (1998) used the concept of play in a larger scope to illustrate the ways in which new figured worlds are created in the larger structure of society. New figured worlds are created through experimentation on the margins of what is currently accepted. For example, people who are marginalized may create songs that tell of life with different rules; these songs may then serve to form new attitudes that give spirit to the creation of new figured worlds over time. In the play or fantasized world people may act in ways that they are not allowed to in the normal, socially acceptable world – trying on a way that is imagined – perhaps more ideal or even in opposition to the way things are done.
In the second way of understanding this notion of play, play brings to life an “atmosphere of possibility” (p. 254, Holland et al., 1998) in an individual. “In play we experiment with the force of our acting otherwise” (p. 236, Holland et al., 1998) and try on something that we usually are not. Play experiments with a new way of acting, allowing a person to appropriate different patterns of behavior, perhaps desired behaviors but behaviors which a different from how one acts now or the situation in which one finds him/herself. Preservice teachers of literacy are trying on, playing in a sense, with the role of teacher. In my conversations with preservice teachers they imagined their classrooms to be certain ways and reflected on who they aspired to be as teachers in their own classrooms. They used the language of a teacher, but sometimes did not fully understand what the language they used meant, referring to round robin reading for example, but then speaking about something different. They critiqued classroom literacy practices of their cooperating teachers and told me of ways that they imagined they would do things in their future classrooms. These behaviors can be viewed as examples of the way preservice teachers ‘play,’ because it is “through play our fancied selves become material” (p. 236, Holland et al., 1998).

Teacher Identity

The study of teacher identity has taken a central position in the field (e.g., Alsup, 2006; Britzman, 2003; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Danielewicz, 2001; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Teacher Education Quarterly, Summer 2008). I will save the discussions of connections to literacy teacher identity for the review of literature section and here will present a very brief overview of the conceptual underpinnings of teacher identity.

Beginning teachers must transition from the role of a student to the role of a teacher. They have spent years as an apprentice observing their own teachers in what Lortie (1975) calls the “apprenticeship of observation.” However, they are often expected to take on the duties of a seasoned educator from the first day of teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). It may however, take time to develop the identity of a teacher. Frequently beginning teachers are placed in difficult schools with challenging students, adding complexity to the transition (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006; Baron, 2006; Hudson, Beutel, & Hudson, 2009). A better understanding of the identity development of
Preservice teachers of literacy may provide insight into the transitions that beginning teachers experience and serve to improve teacher education.

In a review of literature focusing on the identity formation of teachers, Rodgers and Scott (2008) identify four basic assumptions of the identity of teachers. They say identity is: (a) dependent on contexts, (b) formed in relationship and involves emotions, (c) changing, unstable, and multiple, and (d) “involves the construction and reconstruction of meaning through stories over time” (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p. 733). These assumptions show that teachers’ identity is constantly in a state of flux and dependent on the relationships and situations in which the teacher is a part. For example, new teachers learning to teach literacy are immersed in university courses as well as take part in field placements where they learn from cooperating teachers. They must rationalize these experiences from various figured worlds as they seek to author their own identity as a literacy teacher. They must consider for example, how they learned to read with how their university coursework explains learning to read and reconcile that with what happens in their field placements.

With these many different conceptions of teacher identity, Rodgers and Scott (2008) point out a hole in the literature noting that, “Left largely unexplored by this literature, however, is the black box of how- how teachers should go about making the psychological shift from being authored by these forces to authoring their own stories” (p. 733). How teachers go from being students learning to read and write, to teachers who are authoring their own identity, remains an area where more research could be done; longitudinal examination of the transition from college to teaching is an area of need (Beck, Kosnik, & Rowsell, 2007). It is clear that “identity shapes (and is shaped by) interns’ learning in teacher education” (Horn, Nolen, Ward, & Campbell, 2008, p. 70) and that teachers of literacy do learn from their teacher education experiences (e.g., Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Wilson, Floden, Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). However, descriptive studies on identity development while learning to teach remain an area of need.

**Relevant elements of teacher identity: Teacher knowledge.** One of the myriad components that makes up who people are, or their identity, is what they know. In this
study I adopt a view of knowledge as situated within identity, and look from there for ways in which knowledge influences identity.

It is worth exploring briefly some of the epistemological wrestling that took place as I developed the position of knowledge as a part of identity because it explains the reason I chose to explore the sub-question for this dissertation: “what is the role of prior pedagogical content knowledge to identity development?” In making these epistemological struggles explicit, I hope to add a layer of depth (Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, & Hayes, 2009) that may serve to penetrate some of the underlying political dissonance that currently questions non-standard research methods. Epistemology considers the nature of knowledge, what it means to know something and how people know what they know. Therefore, epistemology is especially relevant to the sub question in this study, which focuses on knowledge and its place in relation to identity.

In beginning this study, I wanted to explore knowledge in the way that society is tending to define knowledge – as quantifiable and measureable on standardized assessments. This is the reason I chose to use the LIKS (Utah State, 2009) assessment. I must point out that in choosing this measure I am not making any assertions as to the beliefs and epistemological orientations of those who designed this assessment or to the types of knowledge that this measure can assess. I simply wanted to include an approach to knowledge that would mirror the types of approaches our society is emphasizing - standardized, multiple choice type assessments. I wanted to approach the study of identity from a perspective that, for better or worse, is being given more credit in politics and society – hoping to make a connection between identity and a standardized approach to knowledge.

In adopting such a measure as one form of data in this study, I explicitly recognize that I have purposefully adopted varying epistemological orientations to the view of knowledge. In answering the question of “what counts as knowledge” as posed by Cunningham and Fitzgerald (1996) those who would rely on a quantifiable measure such as the LIKS (Utah State, 2009) to assess learning may view knowledge as something that can be acquired. This is an internal cognitive view of knowledge and learning (Aristotle’s Tabula Rosa; Schunk, 2000). Others may answer the question “what
counts as knowledge” as something that is constructed and situated within the context (Fosnot, 1996; Gould, 1996). This longstanding debate is often referred to as the difference between whether learning is cognitive or situated (Olsen, 2008a) and is also discussed as the difference between individual and social perspectives (Anderson, Greeno, Reder, & Simon, 2000).

Ultimately, this measure served as another form of data about the knowledge and identity of the preservice teachers of literacy in this study – not as the sole representation of knowledge. Thus, it served to pragmatically bolster the epistemological orientations from which this study originated and show that differing epistemological orientations can be used to inform each other in a single study. Standardized testing focuses on the abilities of a single mind, the knowledge that one person possesses, and thus can be connected to a more cognitive theoretical epistemology. Using the LIKS provided a way to theoretically triangulate data - it was another lens into identity, which is typically viewed from a sociocultural perspective. Dillon, O’Brien, and Heilman (2000) attest that using a variety of paradigms in literacy inquiry and ultimately taking a pragmatic approach is a beneficial approach for research design in the field of literacy. Furthermore, Munby et al. (2001) stated, “To understand teachers’ knowledge requires embracing the tensions that underlie the epistemology without falling prey to the dichotomies that characterize them” (p. 879). In the study of identity it is useful to have different approaches in order to triangulate the ways in which the self is uncovered, explored, and explained.

Preservice teachers, specifically in this case future elementary teachers of literacy, develop and negotiate their identity as teachers. This is done in university classrooms and in field experiences as preservice teachers use their own experiences and knowledge to make sense of and interact with what is around them. They are simultaneously creating their identities as teachers while constructing a knowledge base about literacy teaching and learning. Often these two areas have been studied as separate domains while it is possible they may be related in important ways. In this study, using a frame of teacher identity, consideration was given to the influences of teachers’ prior knowledge, purposefully bringing these epistemologically distinct paradigms into conversation in order to see what might be learned.
Other Important Conceptual Contributions: Literacy as Social Practice

The importance of literacy in identity development is directly related to the importance of literacy as a social practice. In other words, literacy is important to identity development, and is interesting to study, because of the centrality of literacy to the social practices that shape identity. In order to more fully explain the ideas of the social nature of literacy and how literacy as social is related to identity development, I will define and draw on some theoretical concepts that literacy researchers use. I will connect these theories with theories related to identity. I first briefly show the big picture connections between the theories. Next, I define and explore each part, showing how the ideas relate - namely I will explore: literacy events and literacy practices, habitus, Discourse, and figured worlds. Finally, I summarize how these theoretical principles are related and how they are relevant to this dissertation and the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy.

Figure 2.3 provides a launching point for the exploration of the theories in this section. This figure shows the ideas of habitus, Discourse, and figured worlds nested within semi-permeable circles. They are depicted in semi-permeable circles because the ideas from each theory overlap and explain one another. These theories are often relied on individually in literacy research, however exploring the relationship between them shows why the study of identity is particularly relevant to literacy. This helps to provide the rationale for why studying the identity of specifically teachers of literacy, rather than just teachers in general is of specific interest.

Literacy, via language -written, spoken, and acted, is the essence of how people communicate and interact with the world. Literacy is one of the ways that people author themselves in the world, it is a way identity is displayed and understood. Identity is related to all of the theories that will be explained in this section. Simply, habitus is central to identity, Discourses exhibit identity, and figured worlds are the places where identity enacted. However, all of these concepts also permeate one another and influence the others. So for instance, figured worlds can influence the habitus, just as a person’s habitus influences the way they interpret and interact with the figured world. An understanding of these theories helps to explain the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy.
Figure 2.3
Exploring the relationship of theoretical ideas.

**Literacy events.** Literacy researchers frequently rely on the concepts of *literacy events* and *literacy practices* (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Street, 1984; Heath, 1983; Purcell-Gates, Jacobson, & Degener, 2004). In this dissertation, as will be described in Chapter 3, one of the layers of analysis was coding how *classroom literacy events* related to the identity development of the preservice teachers of literacy in this study. I will offer a brief explanation of literacy events and literacy practices.

Literacy events are “activities where literacy has a role” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8). The concept of literacy events was developed by Shirley Brice Heath (1983) who ethnographically studied literacy learning in different communities. Heath (1983) and Barton and Hamilton (2000) focus on printed text as central to the definition, while I expand this definition to encompass a multimodal (New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) perspective of “text.” This approach embraces language and other forms of representation that includes print, but is not solely based on print. In Figure 2.3, *literacy events* is shown in parentheses inside of *literacy practice*, that is because literacy events are observable and are used to infer literacy practices.
In this dissertation I considered literacy events that I observed or that occurred (based on my interviews with participants) in the field experience classrooms. I considered literacy events such as read aloud, spelling, reader’s theater, writing instruction, high-stakes test practice, and literacy integration with other content areas. These are examples of the events that the preservice teachers of literacy in my study were a part of or observed in the field.

I examined these literacy events as they related to the identity development of the participants in this study. It was in the context of these events that participants’ identities were shaped. The literacy events were what the participants did in their field experiences. They read aloud, they taught spelling lessons, they led reader’s theater, etc. Literacy events were the substance of their acting and thinking and participation in the figured worlds of their field experience that in turn led to their identity development.

**Literacy practices.** Literacy practices tell a story about how literacy is viewed and embed literacy events in larger cultural, social, and ideological frames (Bartlett & Holland, 2002; Street, 2001). Purcell-Gates et al. (2004) defined literacy practices as:

> The socioculturally related ways of using written language, and they involve values, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and social relationships. In this sense, they are not observable per se but must be inferred by literacy events and texts utilized as part of the literacy practice. (p. 32)

The concept of literacy practices allowed me to make a link to identity development because consideration of literacy practices involves considering the context and situation surrounding literacy events. Identity development is rooted in contextual, figured worlds where people use literacy and language as tools to author their identities. Understanding the figured worlds involves considering the beliefs, attitudes, feelings and such of the figured world while also considering the identities (or the beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and such) of the players in the figured worlds. For example, preservice teachers of literacy may value the read aloud as an important instructional tool to help children become motivated to read and to model reading fluency. The read aloud then is an observable literacy event, but it is pedagogically appropriate because of the values and beliefs attached to it as a literacy practice.
**Habitus.** Habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; 1991) is embedded within identity but it also is larger than identity. While habitus is the hub of identity - the nucleus- it is also derived from and rooted in past experiences that are historically and socially situated. Reay (2004) states, “Habitus can be viewed as a complex internalized core from which everyday experiences emanate” (p. 435). Habitus is the foundational interior, a schema that provides structure to operate, structure to reflect, view, act, discern, and to navigate the world. Habitus is also rooted in the sociocultural, historied situations across time and groups of people, it is a “product of history” which insures the “active presence of past experiences” (Bourdieu, 1980, p. 54). Figure 2.3 considered the relationship of several theoretical concepts including habitus, discourse, figured world, and identity. In this figure, the more specific relationship between habitus and identity was difficult to depict graphically. However in Figure 2.4 habitus is placed as central to identity, because of how habitus is a dynamic, driving influence on identity. In turn, identity is about more than just the core, it also involves figured worlds, authoring, etc. Albeit, this is still far too simplistic of a picture to represent the true nature of habitus, because it is difficult to show graphically the historied nature of the habitus which is embedded within identity.

Figure 2.4  
*The Relationship of Habitus and Identity*

Habitus allows for individual agency and predisposes people to act in certain ways. Habitus functions “below the level of consciousness and language” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 466). In this dissertation, findings showed that a habitus of participants related to literacy teaching could be inferred. Although this was not a static habitus because, as I will show, in some participants it morphed over time, it guided the way that they approached literacy teaching. This habitus shaped the way they viewed their field placement sites and influenced the way they authored themselves in their figured worlds.
For example, one of the participants was particularly inclined to focus on the specific children in her classroom. She was driven by a habitus that paid attention to the characteristics and particulars about each of the children in her classroom. The decisions she made about teaching and the ways in which she viewed her experiences emanated from this habitus. In her place as a preservice teacher, she noticed what the cooperating teachers she worked with were doing that served or did not serve the best interests of the children. It was through this habitus, or toolbox of dispositions, that she navigated the path that shaped her developing identity as a teacher of literacy.

Handsfield and Jiménez (2009) used habitus as a frame for analysis in the study of a third-grade teacher’s literacy instruction. This research used the literate history of the participant as a minority whose parents had immigrated from the Philippines to better understand her teaching decisions related to teaching literacy to linguistic and culturally diverse students. They found that “various fields (childhood, motherhood, teaching) are intertwined in the ongoing production of habitus” (Handsfield & Jiménez, 2009, p. 174). Handsfield and Jiménez’s work (2009) was used in this dissertation for a better understanding of the notion of habitus as it relates particularly to literacy teachers.

Discourses. Habitus is rooted in Discourses. Gee (2001) defined Discourses with a capital “D” as always involving language: “A Discourse integrates ways of talking, listening, writing, reading, acting, interacting, believing, valuing, and feeling (and using various objects, symbols, images, tools, and technologies) in the service of enacting meaningful socially situated identities and activities” (Gee, 2001, p. 719). For example, the Discourse of a student teacher of literacy involves thinking and acting in the ways that this role requires. The student teacher must balance their own ideas about effective literacy instruction with what the classroom teacher already has in place. Student teachers consider certain things like the values of the cooperating teacher and the need to pass coursework at the university.

Bartlett and Holland (2002) point out that, “For Gee, Discourses display identity” (p. 11). In these ways, Discourses allow student teachers of literacy to adapt certain propensities to talk and do things in certain ways, to author themselves (Holland et al., 1998) in their figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998). They were shaped by the Discourse they were involved with and authored themselves accordingly. For example, the
participants of this study had to author themselves in Discourses that they did not necessarily agree with related to literacy teaching. Because they were student teachers, to a certain extent they had to follow the routines established by their cooperating teachers. In all of the fifth grade placements, reading was usually structured as a whole class activity. Even though the preservice teachers wanted to try centers and smaller group instruction because they thought it would benefit student learning, their cooperating teachers wanted them to teach within the Discourse they had already established. Thus, the preservice teachers had to author their identity accordingly, despite internal conflicts that might have been contrary to their own habituses.

**Figured worlds.** Discourses refer to how people interact, while the theoretical concept of figured worlds also considers the space, the context in which these interactions happen. Although the context is not the primary focus of the concept of figured worlds, it is considered because it is important to defining that “figured worlds provide the contexts of meaning and action” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 60). In Figure 2.3, figured worlds is placed as the outer most circle because it encompasses the other concepts. Figured worlds are related to everyday activities and events, “sets of situated understandings and expectations” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 57). Holland et al. (1998) pointed out that, “identities are formed in the process of participating in activities organized by figured worlds” (p. 57). For example, without a school or classroom, or literacy time in the schedule, the actions of a literacy teacher would not make sense. Without a cooperating teacher the role of a student teacher would be unclear. The figured world thus helps to make sense of the ways people act and believe.

A figured world comes to life through artifacts, “they are the means by which figured worlds are evoked, collectively developed, individually learned” (p. 61). The artifacts of teaching literacy such as books, paper, and a whiteboard make the figured world different than the mall where the figured world is shaped by stores and merchandise. Literacy teachers use these tools, artifacts, to author themselves as literacy teachers; artifacts allow literacy events to become visible and thus allow the inference of literacy practices. Without a text to read, it could be difficult for the literacy event of reading to happen.
Summary. Literacy as social practice ties together the theoretical ideas of literacy events and literacy practices, habitus, Discourse, and figured worlds because each of these components are rooted in literacy as social. Literacy is a necessary component of interaction with the world - to communicate and author one’s identity in figured worlds. As was described, literacy events are observable situations that allow the inferences of literacy practices. Literacy practices can be inferred by considering the values and meaning of the surrounding habitus, Discourse, and figured world. Habitus, in the case of literacy teachers, is made up of cumulative literacy practices that shape how teachers feel and act. The Discourse surrounding the habitus allows preservice teachers of literacy to speak in ways that are appropriate for the setting of teaching literacy in the elementary classroom. Finally, the figured world subsumes all of these theoretical ideas as a space in which the identity is authored. Understanding how all of these theories relate, helps to better understand the components that make up teachers’ identities.

Literature Review

Bodies of literature related to literacy teacher preparation, teacher identity, and teacher knowledge provide a basis for the present study. This section will examine this literature as it is relevant to understanding the questions and findings of this dissertation. The first section will begin by offering an overview, rather than a review of research related to literacy teacher preparation. I will then narrow the focus and provide more review as the research gets closer to what this study actually examined. In a subsection of the first section about literacy teacher preparation, I will examine research related to the importance of field experiences to the education of preservice teachers. The second major section of this review considers studies related to the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy. A subsection in this second part includes information about a component of teacher identity that is relevant to this study, pedagogical content knowledge.

Literacy Teacher Preparation

Studies related to preservice teachers of literacy have increased in recent years. In this section, I will overview a few studies which point to the increase in research related to literacy teacher preparation. Anders, Hoffman, and Duffy (2000) noted that research about preservice teacher education represented less than 1% of total research in the
reading community from 1970-2000. They issued a call for more research that focused on studying reading teacher education. Another review of research at this time by Hoffman and Pearson (2000) argued for teaching teachers of reading vs. training them in order to best prepare them for the challenges of the next millennium. A focus on teaching teachers naturally connects to this dissertation’s study of teacher identity that is premised on helping teachers understand themselves rather than just equipping the teacher to execute certain pre-established lesson plans.

Literacy teacher preparation was the focus of a special edition of the *Journal of Literacy Research* (2000), showing increased importance from the literacy research community for preservice teacher education. Articles in this issue included a focus on, among other areas, diversity and identity. The focus on identity affirmed the notion that “becoming a teacher involves more than learning theory, methods, and skills” (Barr, Watts-Taffe, & Yokota, 2000, p. 467). It is the premise of this dissertation study focusing on identity development that teaching is related to the self and is more than theory, methods, and skills.

The most widely disseminated research in the arena of preparing future teachers of literacy stemmed from The National Commission on Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction, a group organized by the International Reading Association (IRA, 2003). This commission published a report titled *Prepared to Make a Difference* (IRA, 2003) summarizing the research that examined eight Sites of Excellence in Reading Teacher Education (SERTE). The Commission’s work was followed by a review of literature (Risko et al., 2008) by IRA’s Teacher Education Task Force (TETF). This group also published *Teaching Reading Well* (IRA, 2007) which was similar to *Prepared to Make a Difference* identifying essential features for reading teacher preparation programs.

The *Teaching Reading Well* (IRA, 2007) report relied on the framework established in the *Prepared to Make a Difference* document and synthesized work from Risko et al. (2008). This synthesis led to the identification of “six essential features for creating and sustaining preparation programs that produce teachers who teach reading well” (IRA, 2007, p. 1). These six critical features were: (a) content; (b) faculty and teaching; (c) apprenticeships, field experiences and practica; (d) diversity; (e) candidate
and program assessment; and (f) governance, resources, and vision. A combination of these features in the SERTE sites helped to successfully educate reading teachers. It is important to this dissertation study that “apprenticeships, field experiences, and practica” was one of the essential features for educating reading teachers. It validates the importance of studying preservice teachers while in the field and the importance of field experiences on the education of preservice literacy teachers. This dissertation study focuses on the identity development of preservice teachers while in field experiences.

Several research endeavors in the field of reading teacher preparation emerged from the work of The National Commission on Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction (e.g., Harmon et al., 2001; Hoffman & Roller, 2001; Hoffman et al., 2005; Maloch et al., 2003; Maloch, Fine, & Flint, 2003). Many of these studies focused on the transition from being a preservice teacher into actual teaching, considering the first years of teaching. The work of the Commission served to bolster research in the area of literacy teacher preparation by examining quality teacher education programs and publishing the results so that other teacher education programs could learn from what worked with programs considered to be successful. In studying preservice teachers of literacy, as this dissertation does, it is important to know what the essential components are in quality literacy teacher education in order to inform analysis and to weigh the experiences of the participants of the study.

The aforementioned comprehensive review of literature by Risko et al. (2008) analyzed a set of 82 studies related to teacher education. In the findings, they grouped the studies and provided findings and commentary in four separate subsections: (a) prospective teachers’ beliefs; (b) knowledge and reflection; (c) pedagogy; and (d) research on teacher education programs. Several of the findings are pertinent to this dissertation. First, their findings in the knowledge/reflection subsection focusing on knowledge indicated that researchers generally had a narrow view of knowledge and just assessed what teachers knew. They found that researchers typically did one test of knowledge based on what the researchers thought was important to know about teaching reading. They did not typically include other measures that would give a broader picture of teacher knowledge such as observations or interviews. Furthermore, most studies did not report validity and reliability of the researcher-developed instruments and the studies...
generally just report there were areas of teacher knowledge deficit. But pointing out these deficits did little to advance how to work with future teachers. Secondly, findings in the knowledge/reflection subsection focusing on reflection showed the need for explicit guidance and support in order to deepen reflection. Third, research in the pedagogy subsection differed from research in the knowledge section because researchers attended to the complex factors that may influence knowledge development. This finding is important to this dissertation study because in a similar way, complex factors contribute to the development of identity and knowledge is a component of identity.

Risko et al. (2008) concluded that while much has been learned about reading teacher education, the research agenda must be deepened by, among other areas, studying preservice teachers’ construction of knowledge and studying the complex environments associated with teacher education. This dissertation examines how knowledge is related to identity and examines the environment of field experiences, including a practicum and student teaching.

In the wider field of reading, the International Reading Association recently updated the *Standards for Reading Professionals* (2010). There are six overarching standards; they are further defined by elements with more specific descriptions. The standards are: Standard 1 - Foundational Knowledge; Standard 2 - Curriculum and Instruction; Standard 3 - Assessment and Evaluation; Standard 4 - Diversity; Standard 5 - Literate Environment; Standard 6 - Professional Learning and Leadership.

The 2010 IRA reading standards referred to several different categories of reading professionals. The standards give different descriptions of knowledge, skills, and dispositions depending on the professional role. There are seven categories: (a) *education support personnel* (formally referred to as paraprofessional), (b) *pre-k and elementary classroom teacher*, (c) *middle/high school content classroom teacher*, (d) *middle/high school reading classroom teacher*, (e) *reading specialist/literacy coach*, (f) *teacher educator*, and (g) *administrator*. The specification is made that the standards represent “candidates” who are about to enter the profession. This is to make clear that these standards are a minimum requirement and reading professionals who have been in the field will have additional skills because of their increased experience. Some
researchers have begun to actually examine the influence of standards such as IRA’s on teacher education.

For example, Dillon, O’Brien, Sato, and Kelly (2011) provided a comprehensive review about literacy teacher education and professional development. They considered the influence of the IRA standards and discussed how the standards reach to groups such as teacher educators by providing them with research-based practices to inform their instruction. Findings showed how the relationships between research, practice, and policy informed and were informed by teacher education. Dillon et al. (2011) recommended research focused on gaining a better understanding of teacher knowledge and belief development, attending to “how teachers’ knowledge and practices are influenced by their experiences in teacher education programs” (p. 651). This study contributes to this call for research in seeking how teachers’ knowledge is related to their identity development.

This overview of recent research related to reading teacher education helps to provide context for this study. These studies help to provide the basis for choosing to focus on preservice teachers of literacy. Preservice teachers are being studied from a variety of research perspectives, including considering their experiences in the field and also their identity development.

Field Experiences. An important part of the education and identity development of future teachers of literacy is the experiences they have in the field (IRA 2003; IRA 2007). These experiences allow them to try out the role of teacher as they author themselves as a teacher and develop their teaching identity. In this section I will review research that has shown that field work is beneficial to preservice teachers of literacy (e.g., IRA 2003; IRA 2007; Harmon et al., 2001; Sailors, Keehn, Martinez, & Harmon (2005); Sailors et al., 2004; Cox et al., 1998; Linek et al., 1999; Harlin, 1999). I will begin by offering some general commentary before first turning to a few general studies about field experiences and literacy preservice teachers. Second, I will review studies that focused on field work with individual students. Finally, I will review studies that compared courses offering a field experience and courses that did not offer a field experience.
Field experiences are important for preservice teachers of literacy because it allows them to explore what it means to be a teacher of literacy while under the guidance of an experienced teacher in conjunction with their university coursework. Field experiences allow reflection on what preservice teachers are learning and to begin to make the transition from being a student to being a teacher. Because this dissertation focuses on the experiences of preservice teachers of literacy in the field (during a five week practicum and during student teaching), it is relevant to consider research related to field experiences. Beyond the field of literacy numerous studies support the growth of future teachers in field experience settings (e.g., Rosaen & Florio-Ruane, 2008); however this review will focus on studies related specifically to the teaching of literacy.

Field experiences in literacy, whether they are observational in nature, focused on one-to-one tutoring, allow some experiences working with small groups or the whole class, or full-time student teaching allow preservice teachers to gain experience in teaching. Broemmel (2006) examined the voices of practicing elementary reading teachers related to what was relevant for teacher education reform. She found that practicing teachers cited field experiences as a valuable component of teacher education.

**General studies about the importance of field experiences.** Practicing teachers are not the only ones to credit the value of field experiences. IRA’s (2003; 2007) National Commission on Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction and the report by Harmon et al. (2001) based on this work reported that one of the features of excellent reading teacher preparation programs is field experiences. The *Teaching Reading Well* report highlighted the importance of fieldwork, “Excellent teacher education programs engage beginning teachers in a variety of field experiences in which they have opportunities to use their coursework and interact with excellent models and mentors” (IRA, 2007, p. 10). Furthermore, extended field experiences with authentic fieldwork closely tied to coursework provided good experiences for preservice teachers of literacy to learn.

Sailors et al. (2005) further showed participation in field experiences related to literacy, particularly early field experiences, were valued by new teachers. Sailors et al. (2005) brought together the work of the IRA commission’s features of the eight Sites of Excellence in Reading Teacher Education (SERTE) programs with the values of first year
teachers. Sailors et al. (2005) chose participants who were a part of the SERTE programs and then interviewed them during their first year of teaching. Seventy-three participants were phone interviewed in the middle and at the end of their first year of teaching. The questions focused on classroom reading instruction, student progress, and what the valued about their teacher education programs; no specific questions were asked about field experiences. Despite not being probed, 90% of the participants identified early field experiences as something they valued. There were many reasons for this ranging from the opportunity to build professional relationship to learning classroom management skills. This shows that field experiences were valued by beginning teachers as an important part of their teacher education.

In a descriptive qualitative study that included a substantial field experience component, Harlin (1999) studied the changes of 18 preservice teachers. The preservice teachers were enrolled in a reading and language arts course and completed a semantic mapping and narrative development activity developed by Meyerson (1993). Analysis explored the changes in the maps over three iterations as the students progressed through the course. Four factors emerged as influential to future literacy teachers: influences beyond the classroom, influences from children, influences from other professionals, and influences from teacher’s personal and professional development. These factors converged, along with the influence of the opportunity to assume the role of a literacy teacher during fieldwork, in order to help define who each teacher became – or their identity as teachers.

The body of research related to the importance of field experiences shows that indeed field experiences are important to the development of preservice teachers of literacy. Field experiences that included the opportunity to work with the whole class helped preservice teachers to grow as literacy. However, some programs also included the opportunity for future teachers to work individually with students.

**Field experiences tutoring individual students.** The research surrounding the growth of preservice teachers in one-on-one tutoring situations is abundant (e.g., Al Otaiba & Lake, 2007; Hedrick, McGee, & Mittag, 2000; Maheady, Mallette, & Harper, 1996; Lysaker, McCormick, & Brunette, 2004; Massey, 2003; Morgan, Timmons, & Shaheen, 2006; Nierstheimer, Hopkins, Dillon, & Schmitt, 2000; Worthy & Prater,
1998). Findings of these studies suggest prior personal experiences, beliefs, and dispositions impact preservice teachers’ attitudes and approaches to teaching struggling readers. Educational contexts incorporating inquiry and self-reflection, where cognitive conflict happens, allowed preservice teachers to expand and articulate their theoretical understandings of teaching reading. A field-based environment, including tutoring struggling readers with strong support from a university instructor, provided benefits. This research base serves to inform the importance of field work for the identity growth of preservice teachers of literacy.

For example, in a course including a tutoring component with the features of Reading Recovery, Nierstheimer et al. (2000) studied students over a period of three semesters. As defined by the researchers, results indicated a shift in their beliefs toward accepting responsibility for helping struggling readers. In post-course evaluations and discussions 36%, compared to 58% at the beginning, attributed reading problems to something wrong with the child, such as a learning or psychological problem. At the end of the course, preservice teachers had more ideas about what could be done to help struggling readers, such as using a variety of strategies to create engaging lessons building on children’s strengths. These increased strategies to help children having difficult learning to read, moved prospective teachers away from turning responsibility for teaching struggling readers over to others, and allowed them to focus on what they could do to help. These studies illustrate the wider body of literature related to preservice teachers working with individual children in field experience contexts. Other studies compare the differences between coursework at the university and completing coursework in the field.

Comparison studies. Two of the studies (Cox et al., 1998; Linek et al., 1999) that considered the importance of field placements and preservice teachers of literacy made comparisons between field experience settings and settings not in the field. These studies show the power of the physical location of preservice teachers’ classes. In a qualitative comparison study, Cox et al. (1998) randomly assigned 33 preservice teachers to different literacy blocks in order to test the effect of course location and field components. The purpose of the qualitative comparison study was to compare the influence of holding the course in the field or at the university. The first group of students had classes at the
university and also spent 30 hours in a field experience. The other group actually held class in an elementary school but had the same tutoring experience as the first group. Group two also observed teachers and interacted informally with students and staff. The participants independently completed pre and post concept maps responding to the question “at this point in time, how would you teach reading/language arts in your own classroom” (Cox et al., 1998, p. 511). Findings showed that the school-based preservice teachers constructed more professional and complete post concept maps with richer content. Cox et al. (1998) concluded that the setting of the course facilitated deeper conceptual understanding for the students who had class in the elementary school.

Linek et al. (1999) also designed a study to explore how preservice teacher beliefs were influenced by three settings: no field experience, unsupervised field experience, and a field-based course. This case study used the Philosophical Orientation to Literacy Learning (POLL) and analyzed 40 responses across two different universities. While preservice teachers in all of the settings experienced growth over the course of the semester, those enrolled in the field experience that was integrated with the course indicated the field experience was critical in their understanding of literacy teaching and learning. Even the students in the group with no field experience pointed out that the opportunity to try out their ideas in real classrooms would be helpful.

In conclusion, the studies mentioned provide a basis to show that the field experience component is a particularly influential aspect of the preservice teacher of literacy’s preparation program. This dissertation uses field experiences as a frame to consider identity development. Field experiences are an important contextual piece in the journey of developing the identity of a teacher. The context or figured world where a teacher learns to be a teacher influences the experiences they have and thus the identity that they develop.

Teacher Identity

This section is divided into three parts. I first overview general studies pertaining to identity and preservice teachers without a focus on literacy. In the main part of this section I spend time reviewing studies related to identity and preservice teachers of literacy. Finally, I briefly mention studies concerned with teachers of literacy where the focus is on practicing teachers.
**Studies related to preservice teachers.** The literature related to preservice teachers’ identity development is abundant (Alsup, 2006; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2010; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Britzman, 2003; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Danielewicz, 2001; Gee, 2001; Marsh, 2001; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Olsen, 2008a; Olsen, 2008b). The identity of preservice teachers is considered from a variety of angles. Several reviews (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Rodgers & Scott, 2008) organize the information about the identity of teachers and preservice teachers considering themes that are found in the research literature. For example, Beauchamp and Thomas (2010) discussed the challenges of establishing a definition of identity due to the different disciplines and various issues that are contained within studying identity. They pointed out that identity explores issues such as self, emotion, story, context, reflection, agency, and teacher education responsibility and that this variety of concepts makes defining the construct of identity challenging. This range of concepts was supported as I considered a definition for identity in this dissertation study. Identity is a wide concept that must be narrowed to more specific ideas such as pedagogical content knowledge in order to obtain rich descriptive findings.

In their review, Rodgers and Scott (2008) considered how the literature represented identity development through a constructive-developmental lens. They explained that researchers have explored identity development as transpiring through a series of stages such as retreat, growth, stasis, and confirmation. Also, four different historic models of teacher education programs were reviewed to show that good teacher education programs share expectations that call on teachers to think about their own identity. Although the model programs may not have used language containing the word “identity” specifically, they spoke about goals such as being aware of your personality, taking a critical look at yourself, reflecting on educational experiences, etc. Teacher education programs have historically included concepts related to identity formation, although they might not specifically label them as such. Because of this history, the continued study of the role of identity and in particular more of the nuances of identity is important.

Although Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop’s (2004) review did not focus specifically on preservice teacher identity, like Rodgers & Scott’s (2008) review, I have considered it
here because one of the categories focuses on teachers’ identity formation and examines studies with preservice teachers. Beijaard et al. (2004) reviewed literature related to teachers’ professional identity and found four features that were essential for teachers’ professional identity. They noted that (a) professional identity is an ongoing process; (b) person and context are both important to identity; (c) sub-identities work across different contexts and relationships in order to characterize a teacher; and (d) agency is important to identity because teachers need to be active in the process of their own development. These findings are important as a basis for understanding definitional aspects of identity that were relevant to this study. Specifically, the ongoing process of identity development occurred as the participants journeyed through their field experience contexts. The context became an important aspect of what the participants experienced that led to their identity growth. Whereas Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop’s (2004) review focused on the general characteristic of identity formation, others have considered more particular nuances of identity formation.

For example, Alsup (2006) looked at the nature of how the personal and professional intersect in teachers’ identities, studying the importance of “borderland discourse” Alsup’s work facilitated better understanding of the holistic teaching self. Britzman (2003) also considered the relationship of discourses and identity in an ethnographic study of learning to teach in a high school. In part of her study, she examined discourses related to the tensions that are a part of becoming a teacher. Tension is sometimes an important variable in the identity development of a teacher. Another variable of identity development, which Olsen (2008a) considered, is the context. Olsen (2008a) considered the epistemological, social, and political underpinnings of becoming a teacher focusing on the unique, context-dependent variables that shape and reshape teacher knowledge. Marsh (2001) focused also on context through the consideration of the social nature teacher identity development. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) also looked broadly at identity focusing on identity as a place of narrative story where identity exists and is shaped in stories. All of these researchers took slightly different angles on the study of teacher identity development helping to make the field rich with different approaches. It is from this general field of considering the identity development of
teachers and preservice teachers that I based this dissertation study as I narrowed to consider the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy.

**Studies related to identity and preservice teachers of literacy.** The literature related to *preservice teachers of literacy* and their identity development (Assaf, 2005; Larson & Phillips, 2005; Larson, 2006; Phillips & Larson, 2009; Kelly, 2010) is not as extensive as the wider body of literature exploring the identity of teachers and preservice teachers in general. In this section of the literature review, I examine studies related to the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy. These studies serve to inform this dissertation, which focuses on the nature of the construction of identity during field experiences for preservice teachers of literacy. I will first consider three studies that use a specific framework to study preservice teachers of literacy in a more general, broad way. Then, I will turn to a study that considered difference as the basis for studying identity. Third, I will mention a study that considered identity and transitioning to teaching before lastly discussing a study about the relationship between personal literacy experiences and literacy teaching.

**General preservice teachers of literacy.** There are a few pieces of work by Larson and Phillips (2005; Phillips & Larson, 2009) as well as Larson’s dissertation (2006) that use poststructural feminism as a theoretical framework. Larson and Phillips’ (2005) qualitative research was done in a field placement site where the student teacher did not necessarily agree with how she was expected to teach. They explored how a scripted reading program collided with the philosophical conceptions of a preservice student teacher. A student teacher in Larson and Phillips’ (2005) study was forced into a scripted program that was being used because of a grant. Instead of using this scripted program the preservice teacher wrestled with wanting to adopt an approach that would be better for the kids. The preservice teacher wanted to use more varied texts and instructional approaches. Larson and Phillips (2005) wrestled with several questions in the findings. First, they encouraged teacher educators to think about how to “resist setting up binaries” (p. 321) that force preservice teachers to choose between various discourses? Second, they urged teacher educators to “resist the lure of patriarchy” (p. 322) which compels teacher educators to protect preservice teachers from the political tensions that exist in school surrounding reading instructional methods. Instead, they
argued that teacher educators should “teach the skills of deconstruction” (p. 322) which would empower future teachers to think critically and have the skills to advocate for students. Finally, they pointed to the “power of student collaboration” as instrumental in helping preservice teachers feel more agency and form their own conceptualizations of literacy teaching. This study showed that even in a context that presents a conflicting situation, preservice teachers do experience identity growth. Further, these sorts of situations can be supported by teacher educators and student collaboration in order to make the most of what could be a challenging situation.

In another qualitative study, Larson (2006) explored what mattered to preservice teachers as they developed a literacy teaching identity; her findings explored the nuances of various discourses as they were relevant to identity development. She began with 30 participants and then followed seven elementary and middle school graduate preservice teachers during their student teaching. Data were from course documents, group conversations, interviews, email, and classroom observation. Larson (2006) found three authoritative discourse sites that emerged from the data: literacy biography, literacy courses, and student teaching. These discourses influenced the preservice literacy teachers’ subjectivity. Larson labeled these deconstructive discourses because they were places where preservice teachers looked back on their life and took apart what they were learning about literacy. Reconstructive discourses, or places where participants “imagined, explained wondered, and shared who they wanted to become as teachers of literacy” (p. 62) were identified as well. Finally, the third theme was agency, which dealt with the strategies and discourses preservice teachers used to negotiate and act in their student teaching placements. This work was helpful in understanding what was relevant for preservice teachers in the specific discourses of their identity development.

Larson (2006) took a broader look at several preservice teachers considering field experiences and university course work. Phillips and Larson (2009), on the other hand, narrowed their study to a university course and only explored the literacy biographical discourses of two preservice teachers. The descriptive findings showed how different people made sense of the material in the course in different ways. The findings showed that teacher educators often present teaching literacy in a way that assumes things about the backgrounds of their students. Teacher educators often present teaching reading in
terms of the connectedness of reading and writing, in congruence with current theories of literacy. The participants in Phillips & Larson’s (2009) study differently made sense of the material presented in the course and how they envisioned themselves as future teachers. Phillips and Larson (2009) recommended designing courses that differentiate assignments based on listening to the needs of students that emerge from their identities. This work highlighted that each preservice teacher has their own identity that influences how they receive and interpret what they are learning as they become teachers.

This group of studies shows several things including the importance of the field in the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy. Also, specific discourses that influence the identity development of literacy teachers were identified by this work. In addition, teacher educators gained specific ideas of how to incorporate identity development into coursework from the aforementioned research.

**Difference as a basis for studying identity.** While the work of Larson and Phillips (2005; Phillips & Larson, 2009; Larson, 2006) considered the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy, it was from a more general angle that did not specifically label a type of identity or categorize the participants according to specific characteristics. Assaf (2005) took a different approach and considered more specifically what it was about the identity of the participant in her study that set her apart and made her unique.

Assaf’s (2005) case study explored the identity development of a preservice teacher in a reading specialization program. She focused on the identity shaping aspects of a particular female preservice teacher who emigrated from Europe and how those variables, as well as the student’s interest in a degree in poetry, shaped her student teaching experience. The findings explored how the participant’s immigrant status informed her developing identity and interactions with others. Specifically, dialogic tensions arose when the participant felt conflict between her own personal experiences learning English and those presented in course readings. Furthermore, findings showed the participant identified herself as a poet/writer and used this identification to position herself in relation to her preservice teacher peers. She looked through the eyes of a writer in interpreting experiences and readings in the program. In addition, the participant felt a sense of belonging within her teacher education cohort; this sense of connectedness
allowed her to develop an understanding of child-centered pedagogy. Assaf’s (2005) study drew from a perception of identity that emphasized Discourses of the participant’s difference from others in order to show a unique trajectory of identity development. In contrast, in this dissertation, I purposefully chose participants who were represented the most common group of preservice teachers in their demographics (white, female, middle class) in order to look for elements of identity development that were not based on race, class, and gender as the defining trait of identity.

**Transitioning to teaching and personal literacy experiences.** Kelly (2010) considered the transition to teaching by examining the knowledge, beliefs, and identities of reading teaching. In this study Kelly (2010) focused on 2 preservice teachers, 2 first-year teachers, and 2 third/fourth-year teachers. Kelly (2010) found that teachers indeed learned and grew in terms of their identity as teachers from their teacher education programs and practicum placements; and often this knowledge was attached to their practice. She found that the participants felt confident in their identity as teachers during their first years of teaching but would benefit from mentors to support their learning. Another conclusion of the study was that the teachers felt a weakness in terms of assessment-driven reading instruction. Finally, the contexts of teaching caused the participants to feel constrained however, some teachers were able to adjust the contexts to better align with their own beliefs and identities as teachers. This study presented a cross-section of teachers in different places in their careers, considering a common focus on knowledge, beliefs, and identities at these different key times.

While Kelly focused on the transition to teaching, Roe and Vukelich (1998) examined the relationship between personal experiences related to literacy learning and education to be a teacher of literacy. This study of 319 undergraduate literacy course participants sorted the prior experiences of preservice teachers of literacy into three categories of influence: models, materials, and epiphanies. Findings indicated that in terms of intentions, their prior experiences did not outshine the influence of their university coursework. Even though preservice teachers come to teacher education with many experiences from the “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975) or their time as students observing in schools, these experiences do not always persist in their identity as teachers. In the study the participants indicated that they planned to adopt practices they
learned in teacher education. Thus, the prior experiences of preservice teachers are important in addition to their teacher education experiences. Preservice teacher identity is made up of many different parts and can be studied considering many different angles of identity. The research literature about the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy was not abundant, therefore I also considered literature related to identity and practicing teachers of literacy.

**Studies related to identity and practicing teachers of literacy.** There are a few pieces of literature related to the identity development of *practicing* teachers of literacy or teachers of language (e.g., Assaf, 2008; Handsfield, Crumpler, & Dean, 2010; Gomez, 2009). These works explored in-service teachers of literacy and their identity development.

Assaf’s (2008) case study explored one reading teacher’s practices as she was faced with tensions between district-based standardized testing pressures and her own beliefs. Assaf (2008) looked at the identity growth of this teacher who was conflicted about what the district wanted her to do and what she felt was best for her students. She used observation, field notes, artifacts, and interviews to collect data over four months. Findings indicated that the reading teacher shifted her instructional practices to align with the pressures of passing a standardized test despite that this went against her professional beliefs. Assaf (2008) indicated that the participant’s “aspirations to nurture real readers was overshadowed by the testing and accountability aims set by her school and state” (p. 245). Also, the responsibilities of the reading teacher who was the focus of the study shifted from helping readers to reviewing testing reports for areas of weakness, figuring out how to help the students pass the test, and informing parents and students when they had failed.

Similar to Assaf’s (2008) study that explored the pressures of a teacher’s identity due to the surrounding figured world, Handsfield et al. (2010) also explored a teacher’s identity and how it was mediated by the surrounding networks of power. In this case study, which was part of a larger project, researchers collected data for two years about a teacher in a fourth-grade bilingual classroom. The class had 14 students the first year and 8 students the second year; the teacher was identified as competent and creative by her principal. Data were collected from study groups, interviews, six observations, and other
artifacts. The findings showed how the teacher adapted discourses and identified with different competing discourses of literacy because she recognized the various tensions involved in the practice of teaching. For example, she recognized value in having a curriculum aligned with state standards but also distanced herself from standardizing practices by doing a workshop approach. In this way she redesigned the curriculum and forged “multiple simultaneous possibilities for her teacher identity” (Handsfield et al., 2010, p. 428).

While Assaf (2008) and Handsfield et al. (2010) explored the way that contexts influence the identity of practicing teachers, Gomez (2009) researched the influence of teachers’ personal literacy beliefs on classroom literacy practices. Twelve teachers who were enrolled in a reading specialist master’s course participated in the mixed-methods study. Data were collected from a survey, a literacy diary, and an in-depth interview. Literacy played an important part of the lives of all of the participants. Findings indicated that classroom literacy practices were most frequently connected to areas that were personally meaningful to the teachers and 80% of the teachers reported that their personal literacy lives transferred into the classroom. Teachers connected their personal literacies with the classroom by doing things like bring favorite childhood books and talking about favorite authors in order to inspire their students. In sum, these works show that the identity of in-service literacy teachers is an influential component of their teaching.

**Teacher knowledge as related to identity**

Knowledge is a component of teacher identity and a certain knowledge base is needed to teach literacy. I begin this section by considering the popular theoretical frame based on Shulman’s (1986, 1987) work, and then turn to evidence that shows there is a knowledge base for teaching reading. Also, in order to show increased importance for the focus on teacher knowledge, I discuss studies that look at the impact of teacher knowledge on student achievement.

**Teachers have specific unique knowledge.** Theoretically, researchers have explored the idea of a special type of knowledge that teachers must possess in order to be able to explain material to their students. Teacher knowledge is a topic with a strong research base (Alexander, Schallert, & Hare, 1991; see Munby et al., 2001 for a review).
Many have based their ideas on Shulman’s (1986, 1987) work where he conceptualized different categories of knowledge for teachers. He made distinctions between content and pedagogical knowledge, specifying that the knowledge of the topic was different from general pedagogical knowledge of how to teach. Pedagogical content knowledge is more specifically knowledge for teaching; this refers to knowledge that would give the ability to create representations of complicated information in order for students to best understand. Further examples of pedagogical content knowledge include such things as having an understanding of the material with regard to variables related to students, such as where they might struggle or steps to implement in order to get them to best understand the content.

Specific knowledge exists for teaching reading and teacher knowledge influences student performance. Research has shown that this specific pedagogical content knowledge is possessed by teachers and is important Reading teachers need specific knowledge of texts, language, and the development of reading in order to effectively instruct students (Block & Parris, 2008; Dole, 2003; Hoffman & Pearson, 2000; National Reading Panel, 2000; Osborn & Lehr, 1998; Phelps, 2009; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005).

In one study, Phelps (2009) examined whether teachers held knowledge about reading that differed from non-teachers. He gave the Content Knowledge for Teaching Reading (CKTR; Ball, Phelps, Rowan, & Schilling, 2004; Phelps & Schilling, 2004) assessment to 50 elementary teachers and 55 non-teacher adults who had never taught reading or participated in any teacher preparation. The participants also took the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Brown, Fishco, & Hanna, 1993) showing they had similar levels of reading competence. The between group effect sizes for the CKTR were significant, showing that teachers did possess a unique knowledge of reading related to teaching. This is important because it shows that teachers do need a specific body of knowledge as a part of their identity as reading teacher in order to teach reading.

Along with studies that show teachers have unique knowledge, research is also beginning to show that students who are in classrooms with teachers who have more knowledge about reading experience greater success (e.g., Carreker et al., 2005; McCutchen, Green, Abbot, & Sanders, 2009; Podhajski, Mather, Nathan, & Sammons,
The relationship of preservice teacher knowledge to student achievement is difficult to study because of the challenge of isolating the cooperating teacher’s influence. Therefore, this is purely speculative to consider as relevant to this study as preservice teachers with a strong knowledge base are likely to carry this knowledge with them into their own classrooms.

The studies showing the importance of teacher knowledge to student success suggest that teachers with strong content knowledge have an ability to communicate or articulate content successfully to their students. Possibly they possess a stronger subset of teaching skills – maybe verbally, intellectually, or in other ways related to their specific identity. The relationship between verbal ability and teacher effectiveness is often touted in the political arena of educational policy (e.g., U. S. Department of Education, 2002 – U.S. Secretary of Education, Rod Paige’s report). In choosing the participants for this dissertation, I considered the possibility that those teachers who displayed higher levels of content knowledge may provide a better case study group. It is plausible that teachers who are more confident with content, also would better be able to articulate their views and thoughts, not only to their students, like the education policy makers believe, but also to me as a researcher.

It is evident from this reviewed research, that the knowledge of teachers that is a component of their identity is becoming increasingly relevant in today’s educational setting. This study seeks to infuse the study of identity with considerations related to teacher knowledge – hoping to bring these two epistemological conversations into discussion in order to better understand preservice teachers of literacy.

**Summary**

This study’s approach to the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy in field experiences was situated within two wider considerations. First, it was situated within the broader societal perspective of knowledge which views knowledge as easily measured via standardized tests. Second, the importance of literacy teacher education and the value of field experiences was another entry point for studying identity.

Conceptually, an anthropological definition of identity (Holland et al., 1998) as ever evolving and dependent on figured worlds was central to this study. Shulman’s (1986, 1987) work on pedagogical content knowledge provided a conceptual entry point
for the understanding of knowledge. Phelps’ (2009) study showed the unique knowledge possessed by literacy teachers. Of additional importance was the relationship between theories about literacy as a social practice. The idea of habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; 1991) as central to identity and the relationships between literacy events and practices (Barton & Hamilton, 200; Street, 1984; Heath, 1983; Purcell-Gates, Jacobson, & Degener, 2004) as well as Discourses (Gee, 2001) and figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998) provided further grounding for this dissertation study.

The research literature that supported this study ranged from general studies about literacy teacher preparation that showed the importance of field experiences to teacher development (e.g., IRA, 2007; Risko et al., 2008) to more specific studies on preservice literacy teacher identity (e.g., Assaf, 2005; Larson & Phillips, 2005; Larson, 2006; Phillips & Larson, 2009; Kelly, 2010). These studies showed the importance of the identity of teachers in orchestrating a literacy curriculum, including the way that teachers involve their own personal literate selves in their teaching. The studies pointed to the ways that identity was seen in different discourse of being a teacher.
Chapter 3: Methods

Study Design

A qualitative multiple case study was used for this study because case studies allow focus on depth and particulars in bounded situations. In order to understand the identity development of preservice literacy teachers, close examination of their particular situations was warranted. Identity, and the consideration of the role of knowledge within identity, is something that can be best understood with a focus on the “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) available when focus is given to a smaller number of individuals.

A case study is defined by the bounded system that is the focus of analysis rather than a topical focus (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2008). In this situation, preservice teachers of literacy, particularly the field experiences of these teachers, characterize the bounded system. Due to this narrow focus and the desire to obtain details and stories from the participants it was not possible because of time, resource, and scope limitations to study the whole of this bounded system. Therefore, participants who offered the “opportunity to learn” (Stake, 2008, p. 131) were chosen. Case study was chosen as opposed to ethnography because the focus of ethnographic study is on the cultural aspects of a group (Creswell, 2007) and this study primarily considered individuals as one piece of a cultural group.

The purpose of this case study was to consider the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy in a field experience and during student teaching with regard to the role of knowledge. Participants were chosen because of the potential they offered for insight into the identity development of preservice literacy teachers. Three participants were used to provide a more balanced consideration of the possible influences on identity. Three participants allowed similarities and differences of interest to arise without direct comparison of only two participants. Since more than one participant was used, it is referred to as a multiple case study (Stake, 2008) or collective case study (Creswell, 2007) which is an extension of the instrumental case study that focuses on the particular in order to give insight to an issue (Stake, 2008). In the case study design emphasis is given to time and particulars; sufficient data, typically in natural settings, must be collected in order to make interpretations about the nature of the case (Bassey, 1999). Identity is something that develops over time and in specific figured
worlds (Holland et al., 1998). The nature of identity and the particular research focus of this study therefore made case study an appropriate design choice.

**Researcher Position**

Considering the lens of my own interests was important in this qualitative study to note the influence of my background and prior experiences. Qualitative research is interactive and unfolds according to what the researcher sees as important. The questions that emerge and the paths that are followed depend on what emerges as interesting through the lens of the researcher. Setting aside the perspective and influence of the researcher, or bracketing it, is not the goal of this type of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Rather, throughout the course of the study, in ongoing analysis, it was important to consider the perspective from which the emerging ideas were contemplated, considering my own interests and background, and also shifting the orientation to account for a variety of potential interpretations (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008). For example, I shifted to consider what the cooperating teacher may have been thinking, or what the students in the classroom may have perceived about a certain event. Because of the importance of my lens as the researcher in analysis and interpretation of the data, it is necessary to articulate reasons I was interested in this study, and to consider related experiences that may have influenced my interpretation of the data.

My interest in beginning literacy teachers stemmed from my own difficulty in transitioning from a student to a teacher. I did not expect the struggles that I encountered during my first year because I had experienced so much success in my preservice course work and field experiences. But my first year was very difficult, meeting the needs of 28 fifth-graders and the administrators in my building proved very challenging. Teaching literacy was particularly difficult, which was a surprise because I had taken extra reading and writing courses and received a certificate in reading/language arts. I was unprepared for the demands of meeting the needs of a range of learners and did not know how to select an appropriate purpose for my reading lessons. I developed mono and my mentor thought I would quit; however, I persevered and learned much from that year. Reflection on it has inspired me to learn more about how beginning teachers move from the space of being a student into being a teacher, with the hope of learning something which may help future teachers make the transition with greater ease. My experiences as a first year
teacher and the difficulties that I had, motivated me to look into something deeper about being a teacher. I wanted to look beyond what it took to successfully pass undergraduate elementary education course work because I did that – I passed my undergraduate courses, summa cum laude. But what else is there about being a teacher, besides the knowledge? There was something to being a teacher that I did not have, something that made me not feel like summa cum laude my first year.

As further inspiration for this study, for three years prior to beginning this study I worked closely with the “professional block” of classes in the elementary teacher education program at a research-intensive university. During this “professional block” the students take math, science, social studies, and literacy courses. Over the three years I served in numerous capacities within this block including: an instructor of the social studies course, an instructor of the literacy course, and coordinator of the “teaching and learning studio.” The instructors in the four content courses, and others in the department, teamed together to create the “teaching and learning studio” (McCrary & Grow, 2008; Research University, 2006) The teaching and learning studio was part of the strategic plan for the department of education at the research intensive university located in the southeast United States. This model emphasized collaborative learning in an environment that encouraged teacher education students to cooperate in designing, delivering, and evaluating instruction. Students met in the morning for the individual curricular areas and then in the afternoon for technology, theory, and cross curricular course work. These courses were taught by rotating faculty who taught sessions in concurrence with their areas of expertise and interest.

My experiences working with students in this block allowed me to see that there was something special about this time of transition for students, the eagerness to participate in real classrooms but the uncertainty about doing so. As I watched them complete coursework and reflect on their experiences in the field, I could see that they were becoming more and more like teachers. Their identities were developing in important ways during their time in the “professional block,” especially as they spent time in the field. This motivated me begin examining identity at this point - of almost being in the classroom but still being a student at the university.
As I worked on this study, collecting and analyzing data, it was important for me to keep these experiences and interests in mind as they situated the perspective from which I interpreted the data. It is important for the reader to understand these positions in order to better contextualize the assertions I have made and the findings of the study. For example, my own difficulties as a first year teacher allowed me to particularly connect with the participants when they encountered challenging situations. My experiences working as an instructor in the professional block also served to filter my understanding of the experiences of the participants in this study; I had a perspective on their coursework that shaped how I considered the data. Also, in the process of the study, I consulted with other individuals, namely those on my committee, helping me to broaden my own lens of interpretation.

This study was developed from the ontological position of reality as complex and socially constructed (Glesne, 2006). As the researcher, I approached the study with guiding questions and methods, but remained flexible in order to allow an interactive, emergent design process to unfold based on the participants and the items of interest that occurred in the research process (Maxwell, 2005). In this approach, with the researcher as “bricoleur” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) different tools, strategies, and approaches were pieced together in a pragmatic way in order to best attend to the developing situation, while always keeping the question and end result in mind (Cherryholmes, 1992; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

As a researcher it was also imperative to consider my role in the field, I will discuss the specifics of observation in the data collection section, but articulating my position in the field is important. On the continuum between participant and observer (Merriam, 2009), I took a position more as an observer. I took special care in the field to be sensitive to the demands of the field placement and student teaching experiences. I recognized that the preservice teacher was a guest in the classroom of the cooperating teacher and I did not want to cause additional burdens or disturbances. Further, I did not want to be viewed as a person who was evaluating the preservice teacher or cooperating teacher and worked to establish a rapport as a non-judgmental presence.

In order to help establish rapport with the preservice teachers, I served as their “scholastic book order representative” during the professional block semester. In this
role, I was able to visit the literacy methods courses in order to present information about ordering books. Because I was not teaching in the professional block during the year I did this study, this allowed me to interact with the preservice teachers in a positive way in order for them to become familiar with me. I also worked to build rapport with the participants by mutually sharing book recommendations and asking them to teach me about technology they were familiar with that I was not that they used in their lessons. I asked for their expertise about situations in the schools and for their opinions in order to help them feel that their role was important.

In summary, in collection and analysis of data, my lens as a researcher played a role in my interpretations of the data and the findings. My lens influenced what I saw and what I singled out as important. It allowed me to categorize things in certain ways. For example, I knew the type of material the students were taught at the university, so when some of the participants were required to teach whole group reading lessons with all of the children reading the same book, I knew this would conflict with what they learned at the University. I then focused my attention on how they might handle that conflict, and could tune into the ways they talked about their experiences and their struggles with a view of what they learned and what they were experiencing. My perspective as a researcher inclined me to look on the data in the study in inescapable ways, in ways that were uniquely rooted in my experiences and identity as a person. The findings of the study stem from this vantage point; this personal twist is impossible to escape and therefore I embrace it because I believe we can all learn from the perspectives of one another.

**Participant and Site Selection**

**Participant Selection**

A purposive sample (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) of three teachers was drawn from a group of preservice elementary teachers who attended the same university in a mid-size city in the southeastern United States. The university is a state land-grant institution with a focus on research. The elementary program admits approximately 70 students each semester to the fairly competitive program. Students move through the program in a loose cohort, taking classes with the same general group for the semesters after they are admitted to the program.
The participants for this study were drawn from the group of preservice teachers nearing completion of their program. The final semester before they student teach was referred to as the “professional block.” Students took methods courses in science, social studies, math, and literacy as well as a field experience or practicum course. They had integrated courses in the afternoon “studio” sessions that included technology, theory, and cross curricular courses. In this block students went to the field for a five week, full-time placement with a teacher in a local classroom. They were supervised by university personnel and completed assignments from their content courses, including teaching lessons while in the field.

This study specifically focused on preservice elementary teachers and their literacy teaching. As elementary teachers, they will likely teach all subject areas including literacy; however, this study focused specifically on the literacy teaching aspects. One reason for the focus on literacy is because of the concentration on reading and writing in today’s education climate. Today’s educational climate has increased pressures for the students and teachers to meet certain standards and prepare U.S. students to be competitive in a global market. Literacy is emphasized due in part to its influence on students’ abilities to succeed across the content domains (Alvermann, Phelps, & Gillis, 2010; Bean, 2000). The effective use of literacy, including reading and the use of language both oral and written, is paramount to success and understanding in many other areas and transactions both in and out of school. The National Assessment Governing Board noted, “In a modern society, the ability to read well is the cornerstone of a child’s education. In a modern economy, literacy is a prerequisite for a successful life” (NAEP, 2009, p. 10). Therefore, studying how beginning teachers develop in relation to their ability to teach literacy is pertinent.

The sample was drawn from students enrolled in the literacy methods course. I consulted with the instructors of the course as well as with instructors of the prerequisite course for participant recommendations. In studying identity, I was looking for a “certain kind of person” (Gee, 2000); specifically an above average student who excelled in their literacy course work at the university. I told the instructors about my study and then asked them each to indicate several potential participants. I asked them to identify individuals who had the ability to articulate their ideas well and who had demonstrated an
above average understanding of the content material in the course. I asked the instructors to consult their grade books for students who showed a solid understanding of the pedagogical and literacy content as demonstrated on course assignments. I specifically asked the instructors to identify students demonstrating high content knowledge due to of my interest in how knowledge relates to identity development.

I was specifically looking for a certain “kind” of preservice teacher, one who had already put forth something about their identity that caused others to label them as knowledgeable. In Gee’s (2000) four perspectives on identity, I was looking to the discursive perspective of identity, which through discourse and dialogue labels and recognizes individuals as certain types of people. I was looking for knowledgeable, smart, articulate individuals. Some researchers believe teachers need a specific body of knowledge to successfully teach reading (e.g., Ball, Phelps, Rowan, & Schilling, 2004; Block & Parris, 2008; Dole, 2003; Hoffman & Pearson, 2000; National Reading Panel, 2000; Osborn & Lehr, 1998; Phelps, 2009; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005) and knowledge is related to the first International Reading Association standard (2010). In choosing the participants, I considered the possibility that those teachers who displayed higher levels of content knowledge may provide a better case study group as it is plausible they are more able to articulate their views and thoughts. Thus, this study explored the identity development of highly knowledgeable preservice teachers of literacy. I did not want the study to turn into a comparison between preservice teachers who were more or less knowledgeable that is why I wanted to equalize the participants in terms of their content knowledge as perceived by university instructors to begin the study.

After the course instructors provided recommendations, I looked for overlap between the recommendations of the instructors from the professional block and the prerequisite course. I considered preservice teachers that had been recommended by more than one university instructor first. Before I sent potential participants an email (see Appendix B) explaining the study and asking them to volunteer, the final step in choosing the participants was considering the field placement sites.

**Site Selection**

Considering the field placement site was another layer of importance as I selected. Because the primary research question revolved around the nature of preservice literacy
teachers’ identity formation during field experiences, the field experience site was relevant. It was important to consider the contexts of the teaching placements because the identity of preservice teachers of literacy develops in the figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998) in which they participate (e.g., Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006; Flores & Day, 2006). Theorists including Street (1984) have made much of the context in which activities transpire. Sociocultural theorists (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978; Fosnot, 1996) contend that the environment and subsequent interactions in which learning occurs has an influence on the learning that takes place. Context is important in the negotiation of teaching behaviors as well (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008) because teaching occurs in the particulars of practice and is a socially negotiated endeavor (Ball & Cohen, 1999).

Two field experiences were involved in the study, a five-week field placement and the student teaching experience. I was not a part of the team who made decisions about where the preservice teachers were placed, but after speaking with the placement coordinators I found that one of the placements would be in a primary grade and the other would be in an intermediate grade. I also was told they attempt to place the students in different types of schools (based on variables such as socioeconomics, achievement, location, etc.) for each placement.

Therefore, in selecting my participants my first consideration was related to the aforementioned recommendations from the instructors. I looked for students who were recommended by more than one instructor, which only happened for one of my participants. I asked three instructors, two who were currently teaching in two different sections and one who had taught them all the previous semester. Because the instructors who were teaching them at the time of the study did not have exposure to the whole group of preservice teachers, their recommendations were based solely on who was in their section. Each instructor gave recommendations based on his or her own impressions of the students and the assignments given up to that point in the semester. Initially, I hoped to give the whole body of potential participants a content knowledge measure in order to equalize the subjective interpretation of knowledge that different instructors have. I recognize the instructors all had different opinions of the students, connected with them differently because of their individual personalities, and had
different opinions of what it meant to be a knowledgeable preservice teacher. I recognize this subjectivity as a limitation of my study. What was important was that the chosen participants stood out to these experienced university instructors as top-notch preservice teachers.

The next layer of consideration was the five-week practicum placement because that was the only placement available at the time of participant selection. Considering that the student who was recommended by both the current and past instructor was placed in a fifth grade classroom, I looked for other participants who were also placed in an intermediate grade. I wanted the experiences of the preservice teachers to be somewhat similar in order to have a better understanding of the nature of identity construction in field experiences and to look for the influence of content knowledge on identity.

**Participant and Site Information**

In this section I will begin by describing the teacher education program because it is relevant to better understanding the contextual experiences of the participants. I will then briefly describe each participant; however more descriptive information will be presented in Chapter 4 as I consider the findings related to identity development. I will also present demographic information about each of the schools where the participants student taught and had their field experiences. Table 3.1 and 3.2 provide an overview of information about the participants and the schools.

**Teacher Education Program**

All participants in this dissertation study received their teacher education at the same mid-larger size research based university. The town surrounding the university, located in the southeast United States, has a population of approximately 296,000. Research University has a student population of approximately 27,000 with 71% of the population undergraduate students.

The college of education conferred 588 degrees in 2010 (Research University, 2010). The professional degrees are accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and approved by the state Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB). The undergraduate elementary education program is one of the larger majors in the college. In order to obtain entry into the program students must have completed 45 hours of general university course work with a 2.5
grade point average. There are different tracks offered leading to teacher licensure, however the most common for elementary education students (and applicable to the participants in this study) is obtaining a bachelor’s degree. Appendix C details the courses required for the elementary program after the general university studies are completed. The elementary program includes a sixteen week student teaching placement at one location.

**Participant Information**

In this study about identity, it is particularly important to “meet” the characters because the unfolding of their stories will be at the core of the findings presented in later chapters. Understanding demographic information and brief information about their literacy histories will provide a basis for understanding the participants. Table 3.1 supplements the narrative information presented here by providing an overview of information about the participants and the schools. In order to protect the identity of the participants all names and location names are pseudonyms.

**Heather.** Heather, 22, always wanted to be a teacher. As the youngest of three, she grew up in a family that valued education. “We always had to really perform in school because my parents took it seriously,” Heather reported in the first interview. Her mom was the high school valedictorian and had a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree in social work and her father graduated from high school. The only teacher in her family was her aunt who was in the field of education for 36 years as a teacher and principal. Heather was from a town in a neighboring state of 23,000, although the town was part of a larger metropolitan area with a population of 841,502. She chose to attend Research University (RU) because she did not perceive there were many teaching jobs in her state and she has always like RU.

**Literacy background experience.** Heather was reading by the time she was four and remembers learning to read from her parents with an activity book that came with a video. She remembers her nanny, grandparents, and parents reading to her all the time and having conversations about what things say in her environment. As a self proclaimed “book nerd,” she remembers being one of the few children who really enjoyed reading. Two giant bookshelves that Heather described showed the importance of books in her life. Heather’s aunt owned a bookstore and frequently sent them books as gifts. She
spoke fondly of a favorite middle school teacher who really helped her to find her own
voice in writing and helped her to enjoy reading even more.

**Madison.** Madison, 21, reported always wanting to be a teacher and recalls
replying “teacher” to the surveys that asked what she wanted to be when she grew up.
Her mom, a teacher of 27 years, was inspirational to her as she recalls going to school
with her, playing with old books, and helping grade papers. Her mother had a master’s
degree in education with a reading endorsement and special education certificate. Her
father graduated from high school and attended a university for two years but did not get
a degree. Madison attended a private, catholic school and felt positive about the quality
of education she received. In fact, she reported she felt called to teach in a Christian
school in her future. Madison grew up with a younger brother in a town of 29,000 and
attended high school in the metropolitan area of 350,000 in the bordering state. A high
school “cadet” teaching experience in a preschool helped to solidify that she wanted to
attend school to become an elementary teacher.

**Literacy background experience.** Reading and writing were valued in Madison’s
house; in an interview she reported, “Not doing well was not an option in my household.”
Madison remembers learning to read because of the things her mom taught her at home;
she reports she was reading “big chapter books” by the time she was in first grade.
Journaling and reading books were a part of Madison’s home life and she remembered
getting books every Christmas. Madison felt she was a strong writer, “I don’t have
problems with grammar or spelling…writing papers comes pretty easily,” she said in an
interview. She attributes some of this to “top notch” instruction at the private school.
She remembers finding the Accelerated Reader program at school motivating and also
commented that during middle school and high school she felt more forced to read and
did not appreciate the lack of choice she had about books to read.

**Brandi.** Brandi, 26, changed majors several times, and then spent time working
for a cosmetic company before returning to college to major in elementary education.
She said she did not want to do what all the other females in her town were doing and so
she tried other things before settling on elementary education as a career path. She
reported in an interview that “coming back to it [education as a major] allowed me to see
that it is an actual passion that I have.” Brandi and her two older sisters were raised by
her mom as her parents were divorced. Brandi’s mom instilled a value for education and also for being able to take care of oneself. Her mom obtained a degree in elementary education but never used it as she found a job working for the state. Brandi had two aunts who were teachers and both of her sisters went to college.

**Literacy background experience.** Brandi remembered being “obsessed” with learning to read before she started school, so much that she called “hooked on phonics” after seeing a commercial on television to inquire about their program. Her mom did not purchase the program but Brandi remembered learning to read in other ways. She remembered examining billboards and environmental print and trying to figure out what they said by recognizing the symbols. As far as learning to read at school, she reported reading “Tip” books – “Tip can run, Tip can eat.” She talked about using wipe off books with traceable letters to learn to write and trying to keep up with her older sisters by scribbling “big stories” as an emergent writer. Brandi reported that she has never been one to sit down and read a book. She said she likes to read, “I’ve just never been a big fiction book reader.” Instead she likes to read true stories, biographies, and things related to criminology.

Table 3.1

_Demographic and Literacy History Information about Participants_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Heather</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Brandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about yourself.</td>
<td>-22 years old</td>
<td>-21 years old</td>
<td>-26 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-White female</td>
<td>-White female</td>
<td>-White female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What interested you in teaching?</td>
<td>-Aunt is principal</td>
<td>-Mom is teacher</td>
<td>-Majored in sociology, political finance before Elementary Ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-From a larger town in bordering state</td>
<td>-Always wanted to be teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Youngest of 3</td>
<td>-Went to school with mom, grade papers, played with books</td>
<td>-Worked for a cosmetic company before returning to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Had influential teachers</td>
<td>-1 brother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 3.1  
Demographic and Literacy History Information about Participants (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What memories do you have of learning to read or write?</th>
<th>Heather</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Brandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Book nerd - Reading before Kindergarten - Middle School</td>
<td>- Mom did extra work with her related to reading at home, doesn't remember</td>
<td>- Parents divorced</td>
<td>- Fear that others would know how to read and she wouldn’t be &quot;hooked on phonics&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Practice books with parents - Mom is a “school junky” - Had to perform in school - Remembers learning with sight words, mail, environmental print, memorizing books</td>
<td>- Read young, chapter books in 1st grade - Mom read to them, they read to mom</td>
<td>- &quot;Not doing well was not an option&quot; - Private school, top notch instruction especially writing - Wrote in a journal - Limited TV/Video games - Loved AR tests</td>
<td>- Scribbled like emergent writer to mimic sisters - Wipe off traceable books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other about self</td>
<td>- Reads for leisure</td>
<td>- Teaching experience in HS where she helped with a preschool</td>
<td>- Not a big reader of fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Aunt owns bookstore - Loves books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Liked to read true stories not fiction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Site Information

Table 3.2 provides an overview of information about each of the schools where the participants did work in the field. It also includes the grade level of each placement as well as an estimated age of the cooperating teachers. The participants had relatively similar practicum placements; they were all in a fifth grade classroom with a white female teacher. The free and reduced lunch enrollments were similar in Madison and Brandi’s schools, while Heather had a higher percent of enrollment in this program.

For student teaching, both Madison and Brandi were placed in a Kindergarten classroom while Heather was placed in third grade. The percentages for free and reduced lunch were higher than the practicum for all of the preservice teachers, with Brandi’s the highest at 75%. Madison’s cooperating teacher was a Nigerian female, while the other two cooperating teachers were again white females.

Table 3.2
Information about Field Experience and Student Teaching Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practicum School</th>
<th>Heather</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Brandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>H-1 Elementary</td>
<td>M-1 Elementary</td>
<td>B-1 Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>707</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Balance %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 3.2
Information about Field Experience and Student Teaching Schools (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practicum grade</th>
<th>Heather</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Brandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CT* information</td>
<td>White female, late 40’s</td>
<td>White female, late 20’s</td>
<td>White female, early 30’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Teaching School</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Racial Balance %</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H-2 Elementary</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-2 Elementary</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-2 Elementary</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student teaching grade</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CT information</td>
<td>White female, late 20’s</td>
<td>Nigerian female, 30’s</td>
<td>White female, 30’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. For ease in identification, I have labeled the schools by the first letter of the participant’s name and 1 or 2 to represent the first and second placements. *CT = Cooperating Teacher

Data and Data Collection

Data collection for this study centered on artifacts, interviews, and observations.

Artifacts

Artifacts collected in the field and in the university setting prior to and after the field experiences were useful in providing another form of data. I collected specific
artifacts across all participants and also gathered other artifacts as they arose as pertinent to each individual. The primary artifacts were: lesson plans, a case study report, field reflections, miscellaneous teaching materials, and the Literacy Instruction Knowledge Scale – Written Subscale (LIKS-WS, Utah State University, 2009).

In terms of identity development, examining physical items can be representative of figured worlds. Bartlett and Holland (2002) identify artifacts as “social constructions or products of human activity” which can “become tools engaged in processes of cultural production” (Bartlett & Holland, 2002, p. 13). Artifacts in this sense help to “open up” (Holland et al., 1998) figured worlds “they are the means by which figured worlds are evoked, collectively developed, individually learned, and made socially and personally powerful” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 61).

The artifacts helped me look more closely at the pedagogical content knowledge aspects of the participants because many of the artifacts came from the university requirements that consequently connected to pedagogical content knowledge. The university assignments that I collected were lesson plans, case study reports, and field reflections. Many of these assignments dealt directly with the preservice teachers’ understanding of literacy content.

The artifacts that were collected across all participants were those required for the literacy methods course. As I was able, I collected the lesson plans and reflections for the literacy lessons I observed. In addition, a few participants sent me literacy lessons that I did not observe. Examining the lesson plans allowed me to get an idea of what the participant intended for the lesson as well as to gauge how they felt it went in the reflection. The case study project asked preservice teachers to select a reader to assess and then work to develop individual lessons to help the reader progress. This was a self-driven project that demanded the preservice teachers analyze assessment data and incorporate ideas from literacy methods classes to plan for the intensive instruction of one student. The field reflections were weekly reflections based on a given prompt that were sent to a practicum supervisor during the practicum field experience. The participants also did periodic reflections during student teaching as a part of the requirements for their program, but I had less success obtaining these with consistency from the participants.
Other artifacts included items such as: abbreviated lesson plans, materials developed for teaching, and emails. I was able to view several artifacts while in the field, but did not have the opportunity to obtain a copy as these were part of the student teaching notebook and I did not feel it would be appropriate to ask for a copy. The artifacts provided another way to triangulate data as I analyzed for themes.

**Measure: LIKS-WS.** The Literacy Instruction Knowledge Scale – Written Subscale (LIKS-WS, Utah State University, 2009) test was used in order to gain a greater understanding of the pedagogical content knowledge of the participants. I wanted to use something with a multiple-choice format in order to attempt to gain information about the content knowledge of the participants. This type of data differed from the other data in the study as it was a more standardized approach to knowledge with predetermined right and wrong answers. In this way, I designed the study with the ability to triangulate across different ways that knowledge can be seen. Because I rooted this study in the “broader societal context for the teaching profession” (see Chapter 2), I considered ways that society values in terms of displaying knowledge. The increased accountability pressures based on recent legislation such as No Child Left Behind (2001) has led to increased pressure for highly qualified teachers. Often this pressure results in standardized testing to prove a certain knowledge base, this is most frequently seen in the tests that children take, but tests such as the PRAXIS are often required for teacher licensure.

The LIKS-WS measure as a whole consists of two components: a Written Subscale (LIKS-WS) and a Classroom Observation subscale (LIKS-CO). The LIKS was developed as a part of an Institute of Education Sciences Grant at Utah State University. It was designed in order to help better understand the nature and content of the knowledge teachers need in order to teach effectively (Reutzel et al., 2009). The instrument was developed for use with practicing primary grade teachers. The test was developed through a series of stages including research, piloting, and validating efforts.

For the purposes of this study, I only used the written component because I was directly interested in content knowledge as it can be measured with written assessments. The observation subscale did not serve the purpose of this study because of the formalized approach to observation that focused specifically on literacy events in the
classroom. Because this study was focused on the identity of the teacher, in my observations I wanted freedom to be able to consider nuances of the sociocultural figured world, rather than to be pinned in with the specifics of this type of observational instrument, which was designed for other purposes. The entire written portion consists of 97 items. The written component is further divided into three domains or subscales: decoding (32 items), comprehension (43 items), and writing (22 items).

The written test is multiple choice, with each item presenting three or four choices. It is comprised of items that are scenario based, which tend to measure pedagogical content knowledge, and other items that ask content questions more directly. For example, the scenarios are intended to give the teacher a sense of the classroom and the kinds of instructional decisions a teacher would make such as: choosing appropriate activities and instructional approaches, responding to students, considering material choices, and appropriately assessing student knowledge. For security reasons the test cannot be included in the appendix.

The LIKS-WS was submitted to a series of revisions, with the final, fourth version showing reasonably high levels of reliability (Cronbach’s alpha: Decoding = .68, Comprehension = .77, Reading combined = .84; Ravkov’s Coefficient: Decoding = .79, Comprehension = .87, Reading combined = .92). Test-retest reliability was performed with 36 teachers, separating the time of taking the test by two weeks (Pearson r: Decoding = .76, Comprehension = .83, Reading combined = .87). Confirmatory factor analysis was used to help select questions which best represented each construct, helping the researchers to revise the test battery to include the best items and to show validity in the items chosen.

In this study, I used the comprehension and decoding subscales. I used the comprehension scale because it was most closely related to the content of the university course from which I selected the participants. I also had the participants complete the decoding subscale because I felt it would be relevant to the primary grade classrooms where they completed their student teaching assignments. I wanted to see how the knowledge they displayed on the written assessment would converge with their practice in the field placements and their developing identity as teachers.
Interviews

Interviewing was used to collect data throughout the study. Interviews are vibrant and dependent on the interplay between individuals to bring forth material; the interviews were a dynamic, co-constructed, collaborative process of interaction (Lomax & Morrisey, 1989; Perks & Thompson, 2006). Specifically, two types of interviews were used, each with a different purpose and goals: formal, scheduled interviews and informal interviews.

Scheduled interviews. Three formal, scheduled interviews were completed with each participant. The purpose of the scheduled interviews was to obtain similar information across the participants in order to provide continuity in the study as far as the constructs that are considered. The interview prompts in Appendix D provided a guide as to what constructs were investigated across participants. For example, in the first interview I sought information about their literacy history and perspectives about literacy as well as began to understand information related to their field experiences. Follow up probes allowed me to build clarity and gain understanding of the core constructs that were being investigated.

Table 3.3 shows the location, time in which the interview took place, and length of the interview. I attempted to interview the participants at similar times; however situations such as participant illness and scheduling difficulties precluded that ideal from happening. Overall, I spent a similar amount of time across the three interviews with each participant. There were subtle differences in the amount of time for each specific interview due to the organic nature of conversation, but these small differences did not influence the findings because I was able to discuss similar topics with each individual. Also, the timing of the interviews was slightly different across the participants, which could be seen as a limitation. For example, Brandi’s first interview took place after her practicum placement rather than near the beginning of it like the other two participants, this altered the timing of her other interviews as well which led to findings that were more focused on her student teaching rather than her practicum placement. Also, Brandi’s second and third interviews were at her student teaching school which led to a different type of conversation because she frequently referenced items in the classroom as we talked. But because the identity development in field experiences as a whole was the primary focus, these differences did not prove to be a limitation.
Table 3.3
Scheduled Interview Locations and Lengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 1:</th>
<th>Heather</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Brandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Beginning of</td>
<td>Beginning of</td>
<td>After practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>practicum</td>
<td>practicum</td>
<td>placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67 minutes</td>
<td>65 minutes</td>
<td>53 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Student Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Before student</td>
<td>Before student</td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>teaching</td>
<td>teaching</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; week of student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54 minutes</td>
<td>58 minutes</td>
<td>teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 3:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Coffee Shop</td>
<td>Student Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week of student</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week of student</td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>teaching</td>
<td>teaching</td>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week of student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49 minutes</td>
<td>68 minutes</td>
<td>teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>170 minutes</td>
<td>191 minutes</td>
<td>176 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each of these interviews, since identity is a relatively unthought-of and intangible concept it was important to provide scenarios and visualization techniques (Glesne, 2006; Slim & Thompson, 2006) to help the participants capture the construct. Similar to an oral history interview, the interviews were based on a collaborative relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. The rapport and level of trust I established helped the participants feel comfortable telling stories and ideas of a personal nature. As mentioned, one of the attempts I made at becoming familiar to the participants
was by being the scholastic book representative in their literacy methods courses during the semester of practicum. This provided a non-threatening way for the participants to be introduced to me. I also attempted to make the interviews as comfortable as possible, letting the participants choose the location and time that was most convenient to them. We talked some about other interests, such as family and their job searching, in order to build the relationships I had with each of the participants. I conducted the interview sessions in a friendly manner, sharing my own stories when appropriate and providing a positive, encouraging tone. I attempted to have the interview not “sound like questioning” (Terkel, 2006, p. 126) and presented questions in a manner that followed the direction the interviewer desired. I asked open questions that allowed for the participants to take the topic and go in a meaningful direction for them; which allowed for more interesting nuances to be revealed. Questions were asked from different perspectives to allow for varying degrees of generality in potentially sensitive topic areas (Glesne, 2006). For instance, I often started with a broader question then used the interviewee’s response to gauge whether I followed up with more or less depth.

I digitally recorded the formal interviews in order to analyze them later in detail. During the interview I listened to the participant intently, giving eye contact to them and engaging in the conversation. I took occasional notes, only to remind me of a question I wanted to ask later in the conversation or to write down details about scheduling observations. I listened to the recording after the interview session, making an interview log (Glesne, 2006) to record important phrases and concepts.

The interview log (Glesne, 2006) contained three columns, one which noted the time, one which contained phrases that the participant said, and the third column was for analysis, see Appendix E for an example. I used the analysis column for questions and ideas that emerged as I listened to the recording. I also used this column for coding the interviews. The analysis column was instrumental in helping me in the ongoing, iterative processes of data collection. I then was able to use the interview log to transcribe word for word portions of the interviews that were relevant to my analysis and emerging themes. I did not transcribe the full interviews because much is lost in attempting to put speech to paper and I wanted to be able to devote more time to listening and thinking about the interview rather than trying to catch word for word what each participant said.
Often the essence of the conversation was more important than each particular word, especially with the more holistic analytic approach that I used.

**Scheduled interview 1.** The goal of the first interview was to gain background information about the participants’ experiences and begin to get a perspective of elements that were related to their identity development. The first interview was important in establishing rapport and gaining trust with each of the participants. Different constructs were explored in order to get a larger, grand tour (Spradley, 1980) sense of the participants. I asked questions to understand their literacy histories and previous perceptions of field experiences as well as their perceptions of literacy (Appendix D). For instance, in order to understand their literacy histories, I asked them to tell me about some of their experiences with literacy and literacy teaching. Questions like this helped to build rapport because the participant had the chance to talk about themselves as I listened and probed non-judgingly.

An interesting question I asked in the first interview was related to what tools the teacher would need to teach literacy in the middle of a rainforest. This led to description of valued literacy tools or artifacts (Holland et al., 1998) the participants saw as relevant in order to create literacy events (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Heath, 1983). See Appendix E for a display of this information. Also, identity development has been linked to reflection and anticipatory reflection (Conway, 2001; Ward & McCotter, 2004). By asking the participants what they envisioned for the field placements and their goals for learning, I accessed forward looking, which can be revealing of identity. See Appendix D for the full range of questions and prompts.

**Scheduled interview 2.** For two of the participants, the second interview focused on the learning that happened in the practicum experience and began a discussion of what they anticipated about the student teaching placement. Brandi however, was into her student teaching when we did the second interview. Therefore, the data I gathered for Brandi in the second interview was focused more on the student teaching placement and comparing it with her practicum placement. This did not greatly influence the overall findings, it just shifted the focus of examples more to her student teaching.

Because a window into identity is reflection, (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Rodgers & Scott, 2008), this interview included elements which required the participants
to reflect. The goal of this interview was to have participants reflect on their experiences in order to discern particularly relevant events and situations that may have been influencing their identity as a teacher. I asked them to talk about what they had learned about literacy teaching from the practicum experience. I asked about particular stories that will be memorable to them as influential in the future. I also asked them what words they would use to characterize themselves as a literacy teacher. In order to further explore the research question related to the relationship of prior knowledge and identity, I asked questions about their experience with the LIKS assessment. See Appendix D for more details about the questions and prompts.

Scheduled interview 3. The goal of the third interview was to continue to understand field experiences as they related to the developing identity of the preservice teachers of literacy. I asked the participants questions that helped them reflect on the overall experience. In addition, during the third interview I asked about tensions because tensions or places of struggle have been shown to be a window into identity development (e.g., Alsup, 2006; Olsen, 2008a). The ability of the preservice teacher to negotiate and rationalize these conflicts could be revealing of their identity development. Horn, Nolen, Ward, and Campbell (2008) noted that new teachers who learned the most experienced tension in the gaps between their university experience and their field placement. Danielewicz (2001) refers to differences of opinions as “oppositional affiliation,” noting that developing teachers often are presented with conflicting ideas when it comes to teaching. Asking the preservice teachers about sources of conflict revealed information about their developing identities.

The last formal interview was also a time of member checking where emerging ideas and themes were discussed with the participants in order to make sure I was getting a good sense of the developing data. I shared with them some of the conclusions I was reaching regarding their identities and asked if these thoughts were representative of them. In particular, with Brandi and Heather I was able to discuss my sense of their core identity or habitus to see if I was accurate about these assumptions. Madison’s interview did not lend itself to this due to the timing and content. She was feeling particular stress about her placement and I was able to serve as a listening ear. Thus, I checked back in with Madison later about my ideas via email.
I gave the participants a chance to confirm my inferences or to clarify by adding more depth and explanation. Along with checking to see if I was representing them accurately (Glesne, 2006), I also opened a space for deeper conversation surrounding matters of identity which helped lead to more insights. Member checking in this manner helped to rule out misinterpretations (Merriam, 2009) and provided the possibility for richness in the study as a whole by creating a more open relationship with the participant.

**Group conversation surrounding LIKS-WS assessment.** Another type of communication I had with the participants was a group conversation/interview following the administration of the Literacy Instruction Knowledge Scale – Written Subscale (LIKS-WS, Utah State University, 2009). The participants took the test individually, but in the same room at the same time. The test was administered at the same time so that we could converse afterward as a group about the testing experience. I hoped that bringing the participants together for this type of conversation would allow them to speak more freely about the experience of the assessment and their struggles and successes with it. Sometimes being in a group removes the pressure of being the only one who does not know something. Also, I had the hope that taking it together while eating pizza would help the participants to feel less burdened by taking this relatively time consuming test and I would continue to build rapport with them because I could be involved with conversations they had with one another.

After they completed the comprehension and decoding subscales of the test, we briefly talked about their impressions of it. The goal of this conversation was to learn more about the nature of the preservice teacher’s prior pedagogical knowledge as it was demonstrated on a standardized test and to better understand how that related to their identity. I first asked them, “What did you think of the test?” and followed up with: “Were there certain items that were difficult or easy? Did any stand out to you? Why?” These questions prompted a discussion of the test format and content. The participants were curious to know the answers to a few of the questions with which they struggled, so we discussed those. They also spent time talking about whether they felt prepared to take the test by the university and were surprised about how hard some components of it were.

**Informal interviews.** Another source of interview data was from informal interviews. The purpose of the informal interviews was to obtain “in the moment”
information from the participants. These interviews occurred during in-between moments as I observed in the field placement and student teaching settings. I asked questions to the participants to clarify the specifics of observations, asking for more information, or getting their opinions. For example, as a student teacher walked around the classroom I was able to catch her to ask about materials the students were using that I did not understand.

These informal interviews took place in a variety of locations and across various times. I completed 4-5 informal interviews with each participant – at least one per observation. For instance, I approached the teacher as they were circulating around the room to ask a quick question or I asked a question in the transition between lessons in order to gain insight on a lesson they just taught. The goals of each interview were different according to situations that arose. I took notes as I spoke with the participant or wrote down information as soon after the informal interview as possible.

Sometimes the students would be out of the room when I arrived before a lesson observation. This provided a unique opportunity for me to talk to the participant in the setting of the classroom. The participants usually wanted to show me materials they were using, examples of student work, a bulletin board they had created, or let me see their student teaching binder as a reference for recent lessons.

Often I was able to talk briefly with the preservice teacher after the lesson. It seemed they were in a mode where they felt because I was observing them that I would want to debrief afterwards. I think they were used to conversations with their supervisors after they had been observed for a lesson to evaluate their teaching. I welcomed these opportunities but stressed that I did not need to talk to them after and told them that I was not there to evaluate them. As I conducted these informal interviews I kept in mind the overarching research question of identity development and the specific influence of content and pedagogical knowledge on identity.

Heather in particular seemed comfortable and eager to talk to me when I came to her field placement and student teaching classrooms. After I observed a lesson in her field placement, the cooperating teacher took the students out for recess. Heather then had about 15 minutes where she talked to me about the rationale for the lesson she had just taught and explained how she would have done it differently in her own classroom.
She also told me a lot about the specific students in the classroom, pointing to their desks and describing what they were wearing that day so that I could recall who she was talking about. When I observed in Heather’s student teaching classroom she would often draw the cooperating teacher into conversations about the students and the classroom procedures that she was having with me. These informal interviews provided me the opportunity to understand the thoughts and feelings of the preservice teachers as they went about their teaching.

**Observations**

Observation in the field was another method of data collection. I observed in the classrooms during literacy time and observed a range of literacy activities include reading and writing instruction. I took the role of participant observer (Spradley, 1980); and on the continuum between participation and observation (Merriam, 2009), I tended more toward observation. I did not actually participate in teaching except on the occasion where I was asked to participate by the teacher. Also, it is important to note that I recognize that my presence alone was a source of participation in the classroom; things were different because of my presence. For example, the participants often took a moment away from their students to greet me or they come to me during a transition to explain something about a particular scenario. The students also noticed my presence, asking who I was and occasionally watched me as I observed; they may have behaved differently because of my presence making the instructional setting slightly different.

I began my observations with a “grand tour” (Spradley, 1980), observing the physical space of the classroom and noting the relationships between people. In the beginning of my observation, I drew maps of the physical space and became familiar with the schedule and demeanor of the classroom. I also made note of materials that were being used for literacy instruction. As I observed, I made a running log of what was happening in the classroom, noting the time and the activity. I also focused in on conversations or particular things that the participants said, capturing direct quotation occasionally. Later, as soon as possible after the observation, I went through my notes and added more details, typing up the observation to include as much as I could remember.
Observations were planned depending on the classroom schedules. I observed not only when the preservice teacher was teaching but also when the cooperating teacher was teaching in order to get a sense of the climate of the classroom. I was able to observe each cooperating teacher during one literacy lesson except Brandi’s practicum teacher and Madison’s student teacher. Circumstances did not work out after multiple attempts at scheduling an observation; and in one situation, I did not feel welcome to ask to observe the cooperating teacher. In these situations, I took extra care to ask questions about the environment when the cooperating teacher was the lead instructor. Because the dissertation focused on the identity development of the preservice teacher, it was most important to the study to observe them and obtain their opinions and thoughts about the classroom.

Table 3.4
Record of Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Heather</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Brandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During practicum</td>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>Whole class reading lesson with a trade book</td>
<td>Whole class lesson about personification using picture book</td>
<td>Whole class lesson reading chapter book and writing persuasive letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicum CT</td>
<td>Whole class reading lesson based on comparing picture books</td>
<td>Compare contrast lesson colonial children vs. today</td>
<td>Unable to schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1 student teaching</td>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Week 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 5 student teaching</td>
<td>Small group reading lesson</td>
<td>Whole class writing lesson about small moments</td>
<td>Leading a center related to sequencing and writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(continued)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.4

*Record of Observations* (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Heather</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Brandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2 student</td>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Week 9 (taped)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching</td>
<td>Whole class synonym lesson with smart board,</td>
<td>Small group reading using</td>
<td>Small group guided reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>explanation of centers, and small group</td>
<td>basal series</td>
<td>(watched video due to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reading lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td>scheduling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teaching CT</td>
<td>Whole class lesson about contractions &amp;</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
<td>Small group guided reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vocabulary lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I focused my observations on specific areas of interest such as looking for classroom literacy events (Heath, 1983). I considered areas such as lesson planning and delivery, interaction with cooperating teacher, and interaction with students. I specifically looked for ways in which pedagogical content knowledge was displayed and how it influenced the preservice teachers’ identity. For example, I watched Heather teach a lesson to the whole class where they read out of one trade book and then discussed it. I was able to talk with her afterwards about how she felt this went against what she knew about literacy instruction from her coursework at the university. In terms of her identity development, she felt very conflicted because she needed to do what the cooperating teacher wanted her to do, but this went against what she believed was best for students.

During the observations I took field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) with a notebook and pen, capturing situations including quotes and their surrounding contexts during literacy instruction. I attempted to capture all that I could as I observed, writing what was happening in the classroom, periodically noting the time. When something was particularly relevant to my study, I would try to capture a direct quote or take more time explaining that event on my notes. I recognize the choices I made in taking the field notes provided a layer of analytic decisions because I recorded events that I thought were
important. After the observation, I reviewed my notes, and then typed up everything I could remember, adding more description. I read through the notes to continue my analysis, finding emerging ideas I wanted to focus on in more detail during subsequent observations and seeking questions to ask the participants. I used the observations to triangulate across sources as I considered the developing identities of these preservice teachers of literacy. I felt my observations in the classroom allowed the participants to talk more freely during the interviews because they knew I had been in their classrooms to understand situations they referenced.

**Data Analysis**

As mentioned, this study was designed in a pragmatic manner, taking into account different epistemological positions related to the perspective of knowledge. For example, the primary theoretical perspective was a sociocultural approach with the study of identity, but I also relied on cognitive theoretical notions through the inclusion of the LIKS (Utah State, 2009). Relying on both of these theoretical positions was a pragmatic way to approach this study in order to focus on the research questions. It follows then that a pragmatic approach was used for data analysis. A pragmatic approach considers that whatever is best for the end result is done in order to arrive at the final product (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). While I primarily relied on grounded theory, I used a variety of approaches during analysis in order to draw conclusions and make assertions from the data.

I always kept the questions that were guiding this study at the forefront, taping them to the computers where I worked, pasting them into the beginning of interview documents, and referring to them during the coding process. I was guided in this dissertation by the primary question: What is the nature of the construction of identity during field experiences for preservice teachers of literacy? Sub questions were: (a) what characterizes the path of identity formation/shaping as preservice elementary teachers of literacy engage in field experiences? (b) what is the role of prior pedagogical content knowledge to identity development?

**Grounded Theory**

The primary approach I used for data analysis was grounded theory. I used this because some contend that the pragmatic approach is tied strongly to grounded theory.
methods of data analysis (Strübing, 2007). There are several different approaches to grounded theory. Bryant and Charmaz (2007) highlight the three main approaches as the Glaserian school, the Strauss and Corbin school, and the Constructivist. The Glaserian school is rooted in a positivist approach and as is the Strauss and Corbin approach, though with a different emphasis (Charmaz, 2008). I primarily used elements of the Constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2006), which adopts a reflexive tactic where categories arise through interpretation of data (Charmaz, 2008).

This approach for data analysis relies on a qualitative recursive and iterative approach. Approaching data in this manner allows for a flexible, interactive model of analysis that is tied to an evolving design (Maxwell, 2005). Data were analyzed in this qualitative case study in a cyclical, spiral manner (Creswell, 2007). The iterative and recursive nature of data analysis allowed for a continual loop of considering data and collecting new data as it was relevant to developing themes and interests. Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously in order to focus the study and to question developing patterns during data collection (Merriam, 2009).

For instance, the answers a participant provided in an interview caused me to use a specific lens to understand them because I relied on other data such as my experiences observing the participant in the field in order to analyze and make sense of interview comments. My own background and experiences as a teacher also factored into the way that I understood the data. For example, Madison indicated that she felt the students in her fifth grade practicum placement were reading too much historical fiction due to the structure of reading class which was heavily integrated with social studies. When I considered her comments during analysis, I thought about my observations in the field – and thought about how Madison put on a “game face” that allowed her to hide her displeasure with the integrated curriculum. I do not think she ever discussed her concern about the curriculum with her cooperating teacher. Part of that was likely due to her positional identity as someone who was learning to be a teacher and a guest in the classroom. But, part of how I came to understand Madison and these types of behaviors was because of my analysis of her habitus as one who valued the relationships with others as important to teaching. Also in my analysis, I considered my lens as a former teacher in the methods block – I knew that integration was a strong element of the
curriculum during the practicum semester. I then asked some questions to myself as I analyzed the data—thinking about why Madison would be so opposed to the integration that was happening in her field placement when cross-curricular integration was valued in her teacher education courses. Thus this example shows that in analysis I looked through several different lenses in order to interpret the data and to draw conclusions.

**Coding Procedures**

As data were collected I reflected on them, reviewing them once before drawing conclusions or coding. For example, I read through my field notes as they were written before I began adding to them and analyzing them. Reading them through allowed me to obtain an overall feel for the situation as a whole, allowing me to contextualize the data before looking for deeper meanings.

The primary source of data was the interviews with the participants. These interviews were rich in information that led to the ability to make inferences about identity. Another reason the interviews ended up being the focal data sources was because I was able to guide the participants to discuss topics that helped me to answer my research questions.

In the case of the interviews, after I completed the interview I listened to it and created an interview log. Creating the log was a first layer of analysis as I did not attempt to capture word-for-word every element of the conversation. I felt that leaving the segments whole in audio form was more valuable for future analysis than attempting to capture everything in the flat form of paper. But, in deciding not to completely transcribe, I made decisions about what was important to capture on paper. I attempted to capture as much as possible without having to stop the recording constantly to type. In certain spots, I did make an effort to transcribe word-for-word as some elements were particularly important to the developing themes. For instance, if a participant said something particularly poignant that resonated closely with one of the research questions, I transcribed word-for-word. Having a detailed log like this allowed me to return to the audio interview to listen for specific elements during analysis. I was also able to easily return to transcribe sections that were important for the findings. For example, I returned to the log during analysis as I began to see certain themes in the data in order to transcribe word for word particular examples that illustrated the themes.
After creating the interview log, I reviewed the log while doing a first level of coding. During the coding process I sought to simplify the data by assigning descriptive labels to particular ideas which emerged as interesting, I will describe more about this in the following sections. During the coding process I began to interpret the data, looking for meaning in it. Coding requires an analytic lens, which differs for each researcher who views the data; also analytic lenses may vary depending on what the researcher is looking for while coding (Saldaña, 2009). I used different lenses for analysis to look for a variety of possible code ideas. Two primary coding lenses that were employed were descriptive coding and structural coding (Saldaña, 2009).

**Descriptive coding.** Descriptive coding summarizes the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data (Saldaña, 2009) and was used to code for the essence of the data. Many qualitative studies look first to discover what is going on at a more general level, and descriptive coding makes room for this type of overview. Table 3.5 shows an example of descriptive coding from an interview with Heather. I simply read through the interview log as I thought about the recording and wrote observations, questions, insights, and other ideas that came to mind.

Table 3.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Interview Log</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44:10</td>
<td>We have a kid who reads orally in the most eloquent way…When you ask questions about what he just read, nothing registers, I mean he doesn’t comprehend any of it. I think it’s because he doesn’t enjoy what he’s reading.</td>
<td>‘We’ pronoun ownership Comprehension and enjoyment/motivation are related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Never volunteers to read aloud. But when he reads aloud you’re like, oh my gosh, he’s very fluent, very articulate. No comprehension whatsoever… I was talking to my teacher today, we’re trying to figure out what we’re going to do with him for this next book.</td>
<td>Fluency ≠ comprehension Problem solving (continued)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.5

Descriptive Coding Example (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Interview Log</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Because he doesn’t like history. I told her get him a science fiction book to read or something, but she was like that’s not what we’re teaching. It makes it hard because we’re not doing reading groups right now. I told her I would look up this weekend, some science fiction books ….I told her I would look up maybe some new science fiction, children’s books focusing on science topics. Science mysteries. She said I could come up with my own comprehension questions if I have time. To see if he’s comprehending what he’s reading. … I’m convinced because of how well he’s doing in other subjects that he can do it. He’s just not engaged.</td>
<td>Feels comfortable making suggestions to CT Initiative to find books Comprehension questions to assess Optimism Engagement matters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another component of descriptive coding was creating the ability to look across the cases, with a table that showed how each participant responded to the interview questions. In order to create this table, I took the responses of the participants from the recording and interview log and shortened them into a word or short phrases. This allowed me to look at the data in a simple manner, getting at the essence of what was topically important by removing the extraneous conversational wording. I used the words of the participants when possible and pulled out the main ideas from the interview conversation. I then had a table of simplified responses, so that it was easier to look across the cases for descriptions as well as similarities and differences. Table 3.6 provides an example of how I summarized and synthesized the answers to the interview question of what the participants hoped to learn in student teaching. I did this so that I could easily look across the participants.
Within descriptive coding, primarily in consideration of the first question, I used elements of discourse analysis. This was not a formal, socio-linguistic analysis of the discourse – it did not involve parsing or considering units of analysis. It was used primarily for descriptive coding at a general level in the spirit of Gee (2005) to notice in relation to social parameters. Discourse analysis focuses on the “thread of language” which contains “cues” that guide the participants in understanding participation in social situations (Gee, 2005, p. 104). Various “grammatical devices” contribute in different ways to making social transactions carry certain types of meaning; for example, in my analysis I considered pronoun usage in order to help better understand social relationships. Gee’s (2005) “questions to ask about building tasks” (p. 110-113) were used as a springboard for thought during analysis which focused specifically on discourse. These questions helped me to think about such things as: (a) the situated meanings of words and phrases; (b) the larger activity; (c) the relevant Discourses in the activity; (d) relationships; and (e) connections to future or past interactions. This list is not at all exhaustive of Gee’s (2005) ideas. Discourse analysis in this less formal fashion allowed examination of certain components and gave a richer understanding of the nuances of the speech used by the participants.
**Structural coding.** Structural coding allowed a focus on specific research questions (Saldaña, 2009), which in this case were about identity development and the influence of prior pedagogical knowledge on identity. Two major iterations of data coding in the structural coding phase emerged with multiple steps in each: (a) coding related to the path of identity formation of a preservice teacher of literacy and (b) coding related to literacy pedagogical content knowledge.

**Structural coding path 1.** In the first iteration of structural coding I coded related to the path of identity formation of a preservice teacher of literacy. I first went through the data with various colors of highlighters. I looked for elements that related to each of the research questions. I used a different color to code for each question, with some pieces of data receiving more than one color. Next, I used the descriptive codes to notice patterns in the data of topics that were frequently discussed. I then went through the interview data coding for various ideas. For instance, I coded for “personal history” when the participants referred to their own experiences in school or experiences at home. As I went through this process, I frequently found myself returning to the beginning because I had found something in a later interview or when I was coding another participant that I had to return and code with an eye for that idea. Table 3.7 shows a list of codes.

Table 3.7

*Structural Coding: General List of Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Code Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AK</td>
<td>Attributes Knowledge to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Belief in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLE</td>
<td>Classroom Literacy Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Comparison w/ self or other field experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Class Structure blame on structure not CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Forward looking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GKS</td>
<td>General Kid Story: inference/critique about whole class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTL</td>
<td>Hope to Learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Learned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.7

*Structural Coding: General List of Codes* (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Code Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>Kid Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCLE</td>
<td>Opinion of Classroom Literacy Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCS</td>
<td>Opinion of CS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opinion of CT (Cooperating Teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS</td>
<td>Opinion of Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PH</td>
<td>Personal History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VLT</td>
<td>Valued Literacy Tool- materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking for feedback
Expectations
Reporting class procedures/events
Questions own knowledge
Teaching technique

Hole: Lack of seeing something; participant describes absence of something in the classroom environment

After I had the data coded with a pencil and paper, I transferred the codes to excel. This actually provided another layer of analysis as I was able to further truncate or reduce (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) the descriptions. I then sorted the codes by participant so that each the codes were grouped together. I looked across these codes for general patterns by participant. For instance, in Heather’s list of codes I noticed an abundance of “KS,” kid stories. This was very telling about her identity as a preservice teacher of literacy because it revealed a core sense of identity, or a habitus, that was important to her.

As I was looking for patterns in the structural codes, I used the following questions to look for bigger groups of ideas: “What are the preservice teachers seeing in the field? What are they learning? What is the unspoken message/moral from the interaction or situation? What is the take away?” These questions helped me to discern overarching strands to which these general codes could be organized around (Figure 3.8).
In turn, these helped me arrive at the core sense of identity that the participants relied on to navigate the path of identity development that I will discuss in the findings.

Table 3.8

Overarching Strands/category Ideas Supporting Core Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship with CT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response to Class Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving Information (e.g., from colleagues at planning meeting, from future job sources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broader Pedagogical Classroom Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Disruptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contexts – How do they respond in these events?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Structural coding path 2._ In the second iteration of structural coding, I coded related to literacy pedagogical content knowledge. In this round of coding I specifically focused on the sub question: What is the role of prior pedagogical content knowledge to identity development?

I looked for instances where the participant was relying on an element of pedagogical content knowledge from the past. This may have been displayed by their use of vocabulary related to literacy content. As a guide, I considered what could be found in a textbook related to literacy pedagogical content knowledge. Furthermore, I looked only for instances in the field experience settings. In the interview questions related to their prior literacy experiences the participants often relied on their knowledge of literacy pedagogy to describe their own experiences. However, I did not code these instances because I was studying specifically the development of identity in field experiences.

I asked myself, “what is the role of the knowledge on their identity?” Sometimes broadening this question to “how does their knowledge help them in this figured world?” aided me in seeing the relationship of knowledge to identity. Table 3.9 provides a list of some of the truncated category codes that were used. But first, I began with wider descriptive codes such as judges classroom schedule or questions whole class reading.
For example, the code *makes a hypothesis about student* was seen when Heather said, “I mean he doesn’t comprehend any of it [reading]. I think it’s because he doesn’t enjoy what he’s reading.” Here she relies on her prior pedagogical content knowledge that comprehension is influenced by motivation to read. She hypothesizes that the student is not succeeding because he does not feel motivated to read or he does not enjoy it. She then explains how she intends to help the student find a book that he enjoys. I truncated the code in this example to *hypothesize* and moved it in with other code categories that showed the larger theme of how the participants *authored themselves* based on their prior knowledge. Heather made a hypothesis based on her knowledge, this hypothesis provided reasoning for her action or authoring in helping to choose a book for the student.

I coded each participant then sorted the codes alphabetically, in a similar manner as described in structural coding path 1. After sorting, I truncated the codes, shortening them to broader, less descriptive category codes. Then I grouped those codes by cutting them apart and organizing them into similar groups on a large sheet of paper – taping and moving codes around with other comparable codes. This led to being able to sort the codes into larger categories, which converged and made it possible to infer *themes* that were transferred to a data display (Miles & Huberman, 1994) in order to explain the theory that was developed.

Table 3.9

*Coding Related to Role of Prior PCK to Identity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of Category Codes</th>
<th>Inferred Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build</td>
<td>Notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Critique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 3.9
Coding Related to Role of Prior PCK to Identity (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of Category Codes</th>
<th>Inferred Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move beyond</td>
<td>Anticipate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward look</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationalize</td>
<td>Author Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempt to understand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis Conclusions

Through interaction with the data, codes helped define what was seen in the data (Charmaz, 2006). Coding the data involved describing it in a way which sought to rearrange it to make a link between what happened and a definition or explanatory theory for what it meant (Charmaz; Maxwell, 2005). In the iterative, pragmatic process of data collection and coding, I collected further data to focus on categories of interest. This allowed me to further refine the ideas and look for possible themes or emerging concepts. I also analyzed the data by writing memos as I read it. These memos reflected questions I had, descriptions, and interpretations. The memos alerted me to ideas that I wanted to follow up with further in my data collection.

In summary, I analyzed the data using the primary coding lenses of descriptive coding and structural coding (Saldaña, 2009). The descriptive coding allowed a general overview where I employed elements from discourse analysis (Gee, 2005) to better understand the data. Two iterations of structural coding with multiple steps each, allowed me to develop codes that could be sorted into categories. These categories then revealed themes which gives rise to the theories I developed about the path of identity development in preservice teachers of literacy regarding their prior pedagogical content knowledge.
Trustworthiness of Findings

It is important in qualitative studies to embed in the study design ways to check the emerging findings. This gives a higher probability that the findings represent the whole story and are more accurate. In this study, I used triangulation of data as a method to ensure trustworthiness. I considered the interviews, observations, and artifacts as different windows from which the story of each participant was told. For example, I saw something in an observation that led me to ask a question in an informal interview or to view an artifact in a certain manner. Or I might understand something a participant said in an interview in a different way because of an artifact such as a paper they wrote for their literacy methods course. Considering all of these sources of data allowed for a richer, more balanced telling of the stories of the participants. Weaving the sources of data together, drawing on different pieces to support the findings provided the ability to more thoroughly examine the question. The ability to cross compare different types of data across interviews, observations, and artifacts, as well as the use of three participants aided in the reliability of the study. Relying on these multiple perceptions in data collection added clarity to the ways that the data could be interpreted (Stake, 2008).

Furthermore, member checking was employed during the formal and informal interviews. During the ongoing data analysis, which took place during data collection, I was able to ask participants for clarity about emerging ideas and themes. Particularly with Heather and Brandi I was able to talk with them about an “overall theme” that I saw reappearing throughout their experiences. They were able to confirm and talk about this theme (which I talk about as habitus in the findings) with me during the final interview. As a form of member checking and to gauge the participants’ interest in being involved more with the analysis component of the study, I sent the participants a rough draft of the description I wrote about them. I left a few blanks with remaining questions I had about their personal literacy histories and asked for their general feedback. The response to this attempt to involve them in the writing portion of the study was minimal; I had to email them a few times get answers to the questions. Student teaching was a busy time for them and I did not want to further burden them when they did not seem interested in the final write up of the findings.
Another way this particular study was more trustworthy was because of the dissertation arrangement; my committee members were able to help guide me in interpretation of data through questioning and conversation. I brought data to them, particularly the chair of my committee, to talk about the data and my analysis and interpretation. The involvement of other researchers in this manner was a strength because it allowed different angles to be considered. The involvement of these experts allowed me to consider new ideas and to question the findings in unique ways.

Summary

In conclusion, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to learn more about preservice literacy teachers’ developing identities as related to their prior literacy pedagogical content knowledge. Three participants were chosen based on recommendations by their literacy methods instructors for the demonstration of above average levels of knowledge related to literacy teaching as displayed in their coursework. These participants were invited to volunteer to participate in interviews and observations over the course of a five-week field experience the semester prior to their student teaching and during their student teaching. Artifacts were collected and the participants took the Literacy Instruction Knowledge Scale – Written Subscale (LIKS-WS, Utah State University, 2009). Data were comprised of the interviews, observations, and artifacts. These data were analyzed in an iterative, pragmatic manner. Grounded theory and discourse analysis were used to make assertions and find patterns of interest. Trustworthiness of the findings was sought as the researcher triangulated across the different sources of data in order to add depth and richness to the descriptions and assertions presented.
Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

This study examined the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy in field experiences related to their prior knowledge. To reiterate, the primary question that guided this study was: What is the nature of the construction of identity during field experiences for preservice teachers of literacy? Sub questions were: (a) What characterizes the path of identity formation/shaping as preservice elementary teachers of literacy engage in field experiences? (b) What is the role of prior pedagogical content knowledge to identity development? The findings related to each sub-question were very intertwined with one another. The woven and mixed nature of the findings across the questions is the essence of the richness of these findings.

Throughout the course of this chapter, I will rely on an illustration to present the grounded theory that emerged from my analysis. Although presenting this grounded theory first and intertwined with the data has the risk of appearing positivistic, presenting the findings together with the theory will aid in a more complete explanation of both the theory and the data. I will present the theory concurrently with the findings in order to explain how the theory came from the data.

The example illustration, of mixing paint, will serve as a useful guide in the exploration of the theory that was developed. To begin understanding this illustration, imagine being in a paint store and picture the rows and rows of cardstock color samples with various hues of paint lined up neatly. After deliberating between various shades of, let’s say - green, such as avocado, iceberg lettuce, olivedrab2, and sweet potato vine, the perfect shade is chosen. Now the mixing begins. In order to get the perfect shade of avocado green (78° hue, 1 step lighter than the original value) a dollop of the desired color in the correct ratio is added to a bucket of base white paint. Then a machine shakes the paint to inseparably fuse the colors together, giving the perfect shade.

Imagine now mixing the paint instead with a paint stick- before the time of paint shaking machines, the mixing was done by hand. A dollop of avocado green is added to the center of the can of base white and then the stirring begins. The colors combine - mixing, blending, churning, melding, and mingling as the stick moves and stirs the colors together. I will draw on this image of mixing paint as an analogy to explore the findings
and theory deduced in this dissertation. This analogy shows how findings across the
questions relate to one another and how the findings themselves churn and mix. I will
build on the paint mixing illustration and add to it over the course of this chapter. Figure
4.1 shows the basic graphic illustration that I will build on as I present the findings of this
dissertation; I will use this illustration to gradually build and explain the theory that I
generated from the data.

Figure 4.1

Theoretical Model for Preservice Literacy Teachers’ Identity Development Related to
Prior Pedagogical Content Knowledge: Basic Illustration

A Start to Answering the Primary Question: Habitus and Identity

Figure 4.2 shows the dollop of avocado green paint in the middle of the base
white paint. In this study habitus (Bourdieu, 1991; 1984), which is central to identity, is
analogous to the dollop of avocado green paint. Recall this image from the theoretical
discussion in Chapter 2. The findings from the primary question concerning the nature of
identity construction and the first sub question concerning what characterizes the path of
identity formation in field experiences indicate that the habitus of each participant guided
and shaped the experiences they had and how their identities were constructed. The
habitus is symbolized by the dollop in the middle of the identity that, with mixing, tinted
the hue of the whole identity of each preservice teacher. Before becoming too fixed on
the stagnant nature of Figure 4.2 and the unrealistic separation between the habitus and
the identity – I will return to the illustration of the mixing paint swirl.
Figure 4.2

Habitus as Central to Identity

Figure 4.3 shows habitus (Bourdieu, 1991; 1984) as the central dollop of color but it is fused with the identity, mixed into the base white paint of the identity. The habitus, “a product of history” (Bourdieu, 1980, p. 54), is mixed into how the person understands, views, interacts with, and makes sense of the world, into their identity. The hue of the habitus can be seen throughout the identity of the person. The hue colors how the person interacts with the world, it influences what they do and what they notice – it influences the tools they draw upon as they author themselves.

Figure 4.3

Theoretical Model for Preservice Literacy Teachers’ Identity Development Related to Prior Pedagogical Content Knowledge: The Role of Habitus

The swirl was chosen as a graphic because of the ability to show the mixing and constant change that is central to the notion of identity. Olsen (2008a) says that “learning-to-teach is not a direct, cognitive process of internalizing knowledge but a circular, holistic process of negotiating among often competing knowledge sources and contexts” (p. 6). The swirl shows the notion that identity is dependent on the contextual figured world. Rodgers and Scott (2008) noted that the formation of teacher identity “involves an interplay between external and internal forces” (p. 732). The happenings of
the figured world, or social field as Bourdieu (1980; 1991) calls it, are continuously mixing back into the habitus, which influences what is authored, noticed, critiqued, and anticipated. The identity and the habitus of the preservice teacher is thus continually evolving and in flux.

This ever changing and evolving sense of identity is supported by the literature. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) site different terminology that people use to discuss the shifting and reshaping of identity. They discuss researchers who use different terms including: development of identity, construction of identity, formation of identity, creating an identity, building identity, and shaping an identity. These myriad terms show the complication involved in explaining the changing sense of identity. The swirl graphic depicts this changing and evolving, mixing sense of identity.

Habitus is central to identity. Figure 4.2 and 4.3 show habitus as central to identity. During the descriptive coding process as I analyzed the data considering the major focal question and first sub-question, I noticed that particular themes characteristic of each respective participant shaped the way they interacted with the figured world of their field placements related to literacy. These themes were present in different ways and across time as I engaged with the participants and listened to them describe their situations. For instance, one participant was centrally concerned with individual students in her classrooms. I began to see these themes as a core sense of identity, or a habitus (Bourdieu, 1991; 1984). This habitus propelled each individual to act or to view circumstances in certain ways related to literacy teaching. It helped the participants navigate their literacy field experiences. Their habitus helped them to make sense of their prior knowledge as it related to the current situation, and then to act or author themselves in a certain way because of that habitus. The habitus that I saw was not fixed, in fact for two of the preservice teachers it did not become visible until the student teaching experience. The habitus, while rooted in larger sociocultural, historical underpinnings, was related to the current situation and was subject to the influence of that surrounding figured world.

In chapters 1 and 2, I presented a definition and discussion of the theory of habitus. Concisely, habitus is the core of identity. Habitus is an internalized disposition “that generates meaningful practices and meaning-giving perception” (Bourdieu, 1984, p.
Habitus is also a product of history as it “produces individual and collective practice” (Bourdieu, 1980, p. 54). Habitus “ensures the active presence of past experiences” (Bourdieu, 1980, p. 54) because people rely on their prior knowledge to make decisions about how to act. Furthermore, their actions in the present serve to shape and change their habituses that are embedded in identity.

The preservice teachers of literacy relied on their habituses in order to make sense of the literacy teaching environments with which they were a part. For instance, their own experiences learning to read and write, including their experiences in school and at home, shaped their habituses. This finding aligns with the work of Roe and Vukelich (1998) who studied literacy histories as influential to the preparation of literacy educators. Applegate and Applegate (2004) also found that the reading habits and attitudes of preservice teachers influenced their teaching. Gomez (2009) also found that practicing teachers’ personal literacy practices influenced their teaching. Furthermore, the participants’ university coursework and field experiences mixed in to the blend of experiences, beliefs, thoughts, opinions, etc. that converged to make up their habitus. Also the wider societal perspective about what it means to be a teacher and the role of teachers influenced the habitus of each participant.

It is possible that the habitus is wider than just literacy teaching. Habitus is related to and shaped by figured worlds. A similar habitus may guide a person through differing figured worlds, helping them to respond in similar ways no matter what the setting. Habitus is not under conscious control (Bourdieu, 1984) and thus is difficult to infer. There may be different facets of the same core habitus that are visible in different contexts. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) noted that, “the identities we have, the stories we live by, tend to show different facets depending on the situations in which we find ourselves” (p. 95). Due to the focus of this study, I am not able to infer if this habitus is part of something larger that transcends beyond a literacy teaching identity, although it is possible. It could be that the participants were supported by a habitus that guided their interactions in general and thus the specifics of literacy teaching came from that.

**Introducing participant habitus.** In this study, I found that a certain habitus (Bourdieu, 1991; 1984) guided each preservice teacher of literacy as she interpreted and interacted with situations in the figured worlds of her field experiences related to literacy
teaching. While in one of the participants, this was particularly strong and easy to see in a variety of circumstances, the other two had habituses that were in flux, changing, and growing due to the figured world of their field experiences. I introduce what I inferred as the habitus of each participant here so that in the presentation of the findings when these habituses come to the surface I can point them out. These habituses served as a central color, a hue that mixed throughout the experiences these participants had in their field experiences related to literacy teaching. The habituses tinted and shaped the essence of each individual person and pointed the trajectories along which their identities developed.

I saw Heather’s habitus related to literacy teaching centered around children and called it *specifics about kids matter*. Heather was always bringing the discussion during interviews and observations back to a specific child, using names and giving an illustration of the child’s struggles or successes. Examples in the upcoming sections will bring to the surface how I made the inference of this habitus and the habituses of the other participants.

I inferred that Madison’s habitus depended on others and called it *being received by others is a valuable part of teaching*. Madison cared about the relationships with people, with the other teachers and with her students. This rose to the surface in particular during a difficult situation in her student teaching where she did not feel welcomed by her cooperating teacher. It was through this conflict that I came to see her value in being accepted.

I labeled Brandi’s habitus *learning to take it day by day in kindergarten*. Brandi’s inferred habitus relates to a grade level where she thinks she would be most comfortable teaching. Brandi’s habitus also showed how habitus is influenced by figured worlds and can be morphed. I used Brandi’s own words as a part of the label for her habitus. During an interview at the beginning of student teaching she said, “take it day by day is our motto” as she discussed the challenges of student behavior that vary each day.

Over the course of this chapter, many of the examples I provide will give a sense of the hue or the habitus of each of the participants. I will return to a more complete description of the habitus of each participant at the end of this chapter. I will then be able
to draw on the examples presented throughout the chapter to show more fully how I inferred each of the habituses.

As mentioned, the findings in this dissertation have richness because of their connectivity to one another in answering the different questions. The central finding of the primary question and sub question one was that a central habitus can be inferred that colors the developing identity of each preservice teacher of literacy. I have begun by mentioning the habitus of each of the participants because it is a hue that will tint, a lens that will shape the view of the participants as I continue in the description of the findings.

**Answering Sub-Question 2**

The second sub question guided my data analysis primarily in the structural coding iteration but it also influenced my findings overall. In this section I will describe how the second question shaped my analysis and thus findings related to identity. The second sub-question specifically asked *what the role of prior pedagogical content knowledge was to identity development*. I considered how identity was related to prior pedagogical content knowledge or the ways that pedagogical content knowledge influenced identity.

Using this question as a lens narrowed the way that I viewed identity. Identity is comprised of many different components; I narrowed my study of identity specifically to pedagogical content knowledge. Figure 4.4 shows how the second question guided my analysis of the participants’ identities. Figure 4.4 shows identity as a circle made up of different components. As discussed in Chapter 2 there are various components of identity such as prior experiences with learning literacy as a child, beliefs, values, dispositions, pedagogical content knowledge, and other ideas that are not depicted on the graphic. The graphic shows a multi-colored box with lines pointing to just a portion of the circle. This represents that the findings for this study stem from examination of the prior pedagogical content knowledge component of identity, showing how prior knowledge influences identity. The findings, which will be introduced over the course of this chapter as the theory is explained, are related to how preservice teacher of literacy author themselves, notice, critique, and anticipate.

The research focus, which narrows consideration of identity to looking at the influence of prior pedagogical content knowledge, is unique in the research literature.
This study adds to the literature because it studies specifically how the pedagogical content knowledge pieces of identity related to and shaped the developing identity of preservice teachers of literacy. In accordance with the discussion above and the illustrations with habitus in the center of identity, Figure 4.4 also shows habitus placed in the center of identity with a dotted line circle around it. The dotted line signifies the permeable nature of identity and how it is influenced by habitus. This representation is similar to the paint swirl graphic where the habitus tints the overall identity of each person.

Figure 4.4

*Relationship of Prior Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) to Identity*

Note. The circle depicts possible components of identity. Prior experiences, values, beliefs, and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) are only some of the components of identity.

In the analysis and interpretation of data for this dissertation, I filtered the data looking specifically for places where the participants relied on prior pedagogical content knowledge related to literacy. I used as a basic definition the idea of whether the knowledge would appear in a textbook about teaching literacy in order to decide what to analyze. The findings for this study then specifically come from the aspect of identity.
related to prior pedagogical content knowledge. Analysis of other components of identity may have led to similar findings, but that was not the focus of this study.

**Authoring Self**

The first major finding connected to how pedagogical content knowledge relates to the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy was *preservice teachers of literacy relied on their prior pedagogical content knowledge in order to author themselves in the figured worlds of their field experience classrooms*. The idea of *authoring self* stems from the work of Holland et al. (1998) who consider how meaning is created and how a person “answers” to the world around them. The figured world and the Discourses (Gee, 2001) in which the participants were situated, influenced the ways they made sense of and acted in the contexts of their field experiences.

I return to the paint mixing graphic to theoretically illustrate how authoring self is related to habitus (see Figure 4.5). I have placed authoring self as emerging from the central habitus in the swirl. I have also placed it inside a long rectangle angled at 45° to represent the paint mixing stick. The mixing stick combines and swirls the paint, doing the action of blending and joining the different colors of paint together. The mixing stick goes into the paint but also emerges above the can and interacts with the space above the paint.
Figure 4.5

Theoretical Model for Preservice Literacy Teachers’ Identity Development Related to Prior Pedagogical Content Knowledge: The Role of Authoring Self

Note. The angled rectangle represents a paint mixing stick. As the self is authored the habitus becomes evident in the identity of the individual.

In a similar way, as people interact with the world – authoring themselves, their habituses mix into the responses they have to situations in their figured worlds. I have placed the word “figured world” near the edge of the graphic in Figure 4.5 and on the edge of the painting stick rectangle to signify the three dimensional nature of figured worlds. Figured worlds are beyond the individual to some degree, but they are also present in the individual and it is collective groups of individuals who shape figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998). As the habituses mix with the situations in the figured worlds, the habituses unconsciously color the ways people author themselves, color the things they notice and their actions. It is through the doing, through the authoring, that the habitus is embedded and comes to the surface in the identity of a person. With no action – no authoring, we would not see the fruit of who a person is, we would not be able to see their habitus or their identity. Therefore, in this theory of understanding how the prior knowledge is related to identity development, the authoring is the mixing stick –
it is what helps to mix the habitus with the identity and with the figured world beyond the self. The mixing stick also allows the habitus to come to life in the identity of the person and to be seen in the figured world.

The swirl in Figure 4.5 shows authoring self as close to the habitus. The habitus comes to life as the participants author themselves and vice versa - as the swirl continues, the habitus is influenced by how the participants author themselves. The habitus of each preservice teacher influenced how they authored themselves in their figured worlds of literacy teaching. The teachers acted out of who they were, or their central habitus, while relying on their prior pedagogical content knowledge and other components of their identity in order to make sense of their figured world.

The authoring is also what could change the hue of the habitus. Through the situations people encounter, the things they read, the people they talk to, the thoughts they have, and simply the sociocultural aspect of existing – a person may begin to slowly shift and change. Because of the embedded, historied nature, habitus is something that generally moves slowly. People are “the products of particular histories which endure in the habitus” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 17). People tend to respond and act in similar ways across time and it generally takes many experiences to shift the actions of a person permanently in different directions. The habitus in this way might be likened to the solar system that is constantly in motion within itself, but very slowly changes in relation to the placement within the galaxy. The habitus guides the interactions of people as they interact and author themselves in daily situations, and it can slowly change due to the influence of a number of forces. Brandi and Madison were illustrations of how the figured worlds of their field placements influenced their habituses related to literacy teaching. For example, Brandi expressed that the actions of her cooperating teacher influenced her to try adapting a different persona – one that was more relaxed about the responsibility of teaching, an attitude of calmness despite what the children may do throughout the day.

I discuss authoring self as the first of several findings concerned with how pedagogical content knowledge relates to identity. This is because how the preservice teachers of literacy authored themselves was subsequently related to the other findings (as I will describe- it was related to what they noticed, critiqued, and anticipated).
Furthermore, authoring self was tied closely to the notion of habitus as it was through their interactions in the field that they were able to notice, critique, and anticipate.

Data analysis showed that the teachers authored themselves as related primarily to three venues: (a) interaction with the cooperating teacher; (b) interaction with students; and (c) interaction with classroom and school environment. In the coming sections I will explore each of these subthemes of the primary theme authoring self and provide examples from the data to illustrate them.

**Authoring self: Interaction with cooperating teacher.** As I mentioned earlier, I focused the analysis to answer the second question on the ways that prior knowledge influenced identity development. The first venue where participants used this prior pedagogical content knowledge to author themselves was in relation to interactions with their cooperating teacher. Analysis of data showed that participants turned to their prior knowledge in order to relate to their cooperating teachers. As they related to and interacted with their cooperating teacher, this was one way that they lived out their identity as teachers of literacy. Through their conversations and interactions with their cooperating teachers, they made themselves known, and their identity as a teacher was evolving based on these interactions.

In my analysis, I focused on when the preservice teachers relied on their prior knowledge in their interaction with their cooperating teachers. They did not always rely on prior knowledge of literacy content to author their identity and relate to their cooperating teacher. Sometimes they relied on other components of their identity such as their values or beliefs (see Figure 4.4). For example, they may have relied on their values and beliefs in their conversations – like when a preservice teacher talked with her cooperating teacher about disagreeing with teaching to the test and her disagreement with standardized testing. In instances such as these, the participants were more clearly drawing on other aspects of their identity such their beliefs. In some situations however, I saw a direct connection or reference to a component of prior literacy pedagogical content knowledge as a participant discussed a situation with a cooperating teacher. It is those situations that were relevant for analysis in this study. Sometimes they used their prior knowledge in conversations with their cooperating teacher to support their ideas, or
they used knowledge to rationalize their own thoughts, or they used knowledge to collaborate with the cooperating teacher, etc.

For example, Madison (all names are pseudonyms) relied on her prior pedagogical content knowledge about literacy to justify her own thinking when she disagreed with her cooperating teacher. Justifying her own ideas, even though they contradicted her cooperating teacher’s ideas, helped her to solidify her own identity as a literacy teacher. In an interview during student teaching, she talked about how her cooperating teacher frequently criticized her teaching:

Madison: I can take constructive criticism really well. But I just, I don’t necessarily agree with it. Sometimes when she is telling me things I’m like, “ok.” And I’m thinking in my head, “I can remember the chapter in this book that I had to read that says this.”

Researcher: That justifies the reason you did what you did? But she [cooperating teacher] doesn’t agree with it?

Madison: Yeah… (Madison, Interview 3)

This excerpt shows that Madison was making direct links to material she learned in her courses to justify her teaching. She went on to give specific examples of teaching strategies she had tried as she attempted to author herself as a teacher that her cooperating teacher did not like. Madison seemed frustrated that her cooperating teacher did not respect the knowledge she learned at the university. She used her knowledge to validate the decisions she made even though an expert figure, her cooperating teacher, did not approve. This in turn strengthened her identity as a teacher capable of making independent decisions. Her knowledge was a part of her identity as a teacher and gave her confidence to have a different opinion than her cooperating teacher. Pedagogical content knowledge played a role in Madison’s identity development because it provided a way to rationalize her thinking and to support her decisions in relationship to her cooperating teacher.

I should also point out that this excerpt points to Madison’s developing habitus of literacy teaching being received by others is a valuable part of teaching. Madison was frustrated by how she was not received by her cooperating teacher in this situation. Her discomfort with this situation (which was seen more overtly as the interview continued)
and how she sought to justify her own actions, pointed to her uneasiness with not being received by her cooperating teacher. She continued to want to be received by the students and to try things that would benefit them, even if it risked making her cooperating teacher upset. But she was unsettled by not being received by her cooperating teacher, this revealed the importance she felt about her relationships with others, which was part of her habitus.

In a second example of how prior knowledge was used to author self related to the cooperating teacher, Heather discussed with her cooperating teacher to suggest a course of action for a struggling reader. In an interview, Heather talked extensively about a student who she perceived to be struggling with reading because of his inability to make a connection with a text. Heather’s prior content knowledge allowed her to talk with her cooperating teacher. In this discussion, Heather operated out of her identity as a teacher and called to the surface ideas that were important to her as a teacher. The following is an excerpt from the first interview with Heather. Here she shows how she relied on her knowledge that student engagement with a text is related to comprehension. Notice also the connection to Heather’s habitus of specific about kids matter, she talks extensively about this specific struggling reader, trying to problem solve to best educate him as an individual. These types of descriptions were characteristic of my discussions with Heather.

Prior to the segment that follows, Heather was discussing the importance of finding literature students “can relate to and that they find enjoyable” in order to “boost their comprehension.”

We have a kid who reads orally in the most eloquent way, you give him a test about it…when you ask questions about what he just read, nothing registers, I mean he doesn’t comprehend any of it. I think it’s because he doesn’t enjoy what he’s reading… He never volunteers to read aloud. But when he reads aloud you’re like “oh my gosh he’s very fluent, very articulate.”

I was talking to my teacher today about [this struggling reader]. We’re trying to figure out what we’re going to do with him for this next book, because he doesn’t like history. I told her get him a science fiction book to read or
something, but she was like ‘that’s not what we’re teaching.’ It makes it hard because we’re not doing reading groups right now.

I told her I would look up this weekend, some science fiction books … I told her I would look up maybe some new science fiction, children’s books focusing on science topics, science mysteries. She said I could come up with my own comprehension questions if I have time to see if he’s comprehending what he’s reading. (Heather, Interview 1)

In this situation, Heather relied on her prior knowledge to author herself and to build her identity as a teacher of literacy. Heather took initiative, stating her opinions to her teacher and attempting to find a suitable book for the student. She learned somewhere that if kids read books they enjoy, they will be more likely to comprehend. She took it upon herself to help this struggling reader find a book that he would connect with. Discourse analysis of this segment allows the hypothesis that Heather felt quite confident about her assertions. The statement, “I told her [cooperating teacher] get him a science fiction book” gave the impression that Heather felt she could tell her cooperating teacher ideas. She must have felt enough power in the situation, and confident enough in her own identity, to make suggestions to her cooperating teacher. These ideas are interesting to point out and help to reveal that Heather’s developing identity as a teacher must have been strong in order to speak to her cooperating teacher in this way; however, this type of analysis is not the focus of the findings of this dissertation.

The main idea of this example is that Heather relied on her prior pedagogical content knowledge to author her interaction with her cooperating teacher. She knew that if kids read books that they enjoy, it positively influences their comprehension. Then she used this information about the influence of motivation on reading in her conversation with her cooperating teacher. Her prior knowledge gave her authority to speak in the manner she did, to have the thoughts that she did, and to act in a certain way. Her knowledge thus gave substance to her identity and was revealed in her interaction with her cooperating teacher.

The findings of this subtheme, interaction with cooperating teacher build on literature that discusses the setting of the field experience (e.g., Grossman et al., 2000; Houston, 2008) including the relationship with the cooperating teacher (e.g., Wilson,
Floden, Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). When preservice teachers have opportunities to relate to their cooperating teachers and to author themselves as different from the cooperating teacher, this gives the opportunity for growth of the identity as a teacher. When preservice teachers can rely on their own prior pedagogical content knowledge in order to converse with their cooperating teacher, this provides chances for them to solidify their abilities and identities as teacher.

The previous example showed how Heather relied on her prior knowledge to collaborate with her cooperating teacher and it also showed Heather relied on her prior knowledge as she authored herself in her interactions with students. She described to her cooperating teacher what she noticed; this was her analysis of the struggling reader. She talked to her cooperating teacher about how he never volunteered to read and the struggles that he experienced during oral reading. These comments show that she is using her prior knowledge as she considered the students in her classroom and as she related to them, which relates to the next subtheme, interaction with students.

**Authoring self: Interaction with students.** A second subtheme in the theme of authoring self was that the preservice teachers relied on their prior knowledge to author themselves in their interactions with students. They used their prior knowledge, which was a component of their identity, as a springboard to make sense of and relate to their students. This subtheme shows the specifics of how prior knowledge was used to understand and relate to students.

For example, Brandi used her prior knowledge about literacy in her interactions with a special education student. Brandi relied on her knowledge to notice and analyze the academic and social needs of the student with an individualized learning plan, called a 504. In a required practicum reflection she described this student as someone from whom “bad behavior is expected from him from members of staff in the school which could be the reason a lot of his behavior problems occur.” In a similar way to how Wortham (2006) discussed the notion of social identification, Brandi felt the student was unfairly labeled. Brandi noticed that the student needed to be talked to in a certain way in order for him to respond positively. The following excerpt shows how she relied on her prior knowledge of reading and writing abilities and accommodations in order to better understand the student.
His handwriting is almost illegible at time[s] however he is unable to see the error in his ways because he can read it. If he reads it out loud to you, he can make perfect sense of letters and words that you could only guess at. He does have accommodations written in his 504 to have a scribe if needed and at this time we are beginning to work with him to type his assignments. (Practicum reflection 4) As I will show, Brandi’s understanding of the student allowed her to author herself toward him in a certain way. She relied on her knowledge and other components of her identity in order to reach out to the student to attempt to influence him. In her practicum reflection she described a specific interaction where she had a positive experience with him:

This student made such an impression on me because I was able to see past what I had heard about him and find his potential. I do not think that I am a miracle worker or that I have a special gift that no one else has, I just think that for whatever reason, I was able to look past what others sometimes cannot. Of course, I do not have the history with him that others do, which is something that I take into account. Today, I knew my impression of this student was correct because as a class we went to visit our “buddies” in the 1st grade for game day. It just so happened that this student’s buddy was out sick which resulted in him being very upset and frustrated because he had no one to play a game with. I invited him to play with a little girl and myself. At the end of the day, he came up to me and said I had a good day today and I told him that I did too and then he said, “I really appreciate you playing a game with me.” It was in that moment that I stopped and realized that it is the little things that we do as educators that can make the biggest difference in the lives of our students. (Brandi, Practicum reflection 4)

For whatever reason, she did not adopt the attitude of some of the school staff members and instead gave the student the benefit of the doubt. In her descriptions of her interactions with the student, she took into account her background knowledge of the student as she authored her interactions with him. She relied on what she knew about his behavior struggles in order to gingerly approach the student and to reach out to him even when he was upset. Her response to this situation also showed her reliance on her
developing habitus of taking it day by day. She came to the situation with an open mind realizing that the student had needs that varied each day. She felt she could help him because she was able to look past some of the concerns of other staff members. She showed sensitivity to the student’s perceptions of himself as she noted that the student had difficulty seeing his own errors. As she relied on herself, being open-minded and sensitive to the student, she was able to interact with him—authoring herself accordingly and making a positive difference.

Brandi reflected on how the interaction with this student, asking the student to play a game with her—saying, “I stopped and realized that it is the little things that we do as educators…” Brandi analyzed why this small action may have made such a big impression with this particular student. She reflected on the importance of teachers and how the little things teachers do can make a big difference. In her developing identity as a teacher, how she authored herself gave Brandi confidence in her ability to author herself in ways that made a difference to students.

A second way that the subtheme of authoring self related to interactions with students occurred in the way that the preservice teachers relied on their prior knowledge to consider individual students. This type of authoring did not manifest itself in directly observable actions, but rather in conversation. Preservice teachers relied on their prior knowledge to consider individual students and their learning needs as they discussed other situations.

For example, Heather talked in the second interview about a book program at her school where the students were allowed to select a book to keep. Because they were a title one school, they used some of the money to buy books. Then three or four times a year, the kids were allowed to choose a book to take home.

I had some really poor kids in my class this semester, I remember standing their [sic] watching them kind of go around and look at these books and look at these books. And they would come up to me and be like…“I’m so excited! Look at this book I picked.” …Watching how excited they were made me so excited. It made me think “these kids really do love to read.” If we give them the right tools, they’ll enjoy it and it will be fun for them and they will take something away from it.
And I think beyond test scores and beyond all of that, that’s the most important part of education, is giving these kids the tools they need to succeed. And sometimes what they need to succeed is to have fun along the way and really enjoy what they are doing. And no they’re not always going to like what they do to have fun, sometimes I’m going to have to be mean, sometimes I’m not going to give them everything. They are not always going to get to read a book that they love. But if you can get to know your students well enough and if you can give them an experience like that. Give them something they enjoy and let them pick what they want to read about. (Heather, Interview 2)

Here, Heather relied on her prior content knowledge related to the value of motivation in reading instruction. She knew that it was important for students to feel excited about reading. In the way she told this story, we can see that this book program aligned with her identity as a teacher. She was satisfied to see that kids enjoying picking their own books and felt energized by the enthusiasm of the students. This experience, where she was present authoring herself as an onlooker to the book program, shaped her identity as a teacher of literacy, confirming her prior knowledge and helping her to see the way that motivation in reading plays out with real students.

Heather talked about this moment as one that she would always remember. This example tied back to Heather’s habitus of specifics about kids matter. Heather believed in the importance of each individual student and in this interaction, that identity was embedded in her response to the children choosing books. She believed that kids needed to have books that they want to read and to be excited about reading. She wanted to make learning fun for them individually and sought to know about each student.

Prior knowledge allowed the preservice teachers of literacy in this study to author themselves in relation to their students in a variety of ways. These two examples showed how: (a) Brandi used her knowledge to personalize her interactions in the way she authored her identity toward a particular student, and (b) Heather relied on knowledge about literacy to validate an experience she had, and confirm her own identity as a teacher of literacy. In addition, other categories in this subtheme pointed to ways that preservice teachers relied on the prior knowledge component of their identity in order to: evaluate students’ abilities, assess student growth, attempt to understand the social
behaviors of students, and energize the way the preservice teachers authored themselves in order to persist in an interaction with a student – giving patience. Prior knowledge was thus an important component of the way preservice teachers made sense of and decided about how they should interact with individual students.

Studies such as Roe and Vukelich (1998) have found that preservice teachers rely on their prior experiences in order to make sense of their interactions with students. The findings of this study show that preservice teachers rely on their prior pedagogical content knowledge to make decisions about how they will interact one-on-one with students. These findings are similar to work that has studied how preservice teachers interact in one-on-one literacy tutoring situations (e.g., Al Otaiba & Lake, 2007; Lysaker, McCormick, & Brunette, 2004; Maheady, Mallette, & Harper, 1996; Nierstheimer et al., 2000; Worthy & Prater, 1998). This dissertation study adds to the research by looking at the bigger picture of identity development in relation to preservice teachers’ prior pedagogical content knowledge.

Authoring self: Interaction with classroom and school environment. Data analysis of the relationship of prior knowledge to identity development showed that the preservice teachers relied on their prior knowledge to relate to the whole class and to the wider school. This subtheme is related to the previous theme of authoring self: interactions with students; the distinction is that this theme correlates with larger groups of people. Whereas the previous theme focused on interactions with students individually or in small groups, this theme considers how the preservice teachers authored themselves related to bigger groups or even their understanding of the school community.

A frequent example of this theme occurred when the preservice teacher taught whole class lessons. In my observations of the preservice teachers in the field and my review of their lesson plans, I saw many occasions where they relied on their prior knowledge in order to make pedagogical decisions in moments of teaching. The teachers related to their students out of their identity as teachers, drawing on what it means to be a teacher to shape their interactions.

For example, Madison taught a lesson about writing a short narrative piece to her class of kindergartners. I saw she relied on her prior knowledge about the concept of
gradual release of responsibility for the overall structure of the lesson. From my informal interview with her after the lesson, I learned she drew from Lucy Calkin’s idea of “small moments” as a guide, because she showed me a copy of the instructor’s manual. First, Madison introduced the lesson and model using the text *Alexander and the Terrible Horrible No Good Very Bad Day* (Viorst, 1972). She then modeled the idea of a “small moment” by orally telling a story about something that had happened to her that morning. Next, she gave an example on the smart board of her own “small moment” piece of writing. Finally, she had a student share an example before letting the class share out ideas of “small moments.” In this way, she gradually released control to the students, scaffolding them for success in writing their own narrative pieces.

As Madison authored herself as a teacher of the whole kindergarten class during this literacy lesson, she relied on her prior knowledge in many different areas – weaving them together to create the tapestry of instruction. Madison’s identity as a teacher of literacy was shaped by this moment of teaching. She relied on her prior knowledge of literacy instruction, shaping the lesson in a way that she hoped would be effective. Then afterwards, she reflected on what worked and what did not, which in turn shaped her ever changing identity as a teacher.

This subtheme also manifested itself in the preservice teachers’ literacy lesson plans and reflections. Part of the requirements for the practicum semester was the drafting and teaching of several formal lesson plans. The lesson plan format required the completion of a reflection component after the lesson was taught. These reflections provided insight into the developing identity of the preservice teachers of literacy in this study.

In the following example, Brandi navigated various pedagogical tools and created assessments to determine the progress of her students’ example. This excerpt is from a Brandi’s reflection after teaching a lesson about using nonfiction text features. She relied on her prior knowledge of these tools and the content she was teaching in order to orchestrate a lesson. The orchestration of the lesson and her reflection on it allowed Brandi a space, a figured world to author herself as a teacher of literacy.

The objectives of a lesson that Brandi taught were: (1) students will be able to interpret a nonfiction article based on nonfiction text features; and (2) students will be
able to identify the types and purposes of nonfiction text features. The following is an excerpt from the prompt that requires the lesson plan writer to: “Explain how you determined the levels of student performance for your objectives…” Brandi wrote:

This objective [2] was a summative assessment. After the discussion of the article and the text feature was completed, students completed an exit slip. The exit slip required students to put in their own words the purpose of each text feature and also give an example of a text feature from the article. If students actively participated during the assessment of objective 1, then they would be able to complete the assessment for objective 2 accurately. I created a rubric in order to assess the exit slip. I determined each level on my rubric by looking at my objectives and my connections. (Brandi, Lesson plan 2)

This reflection showed the thinking Brandi used in order to create assessments for her students; these assessments were part of how she authored her identity as a teacher of literacy. It showed her consideration of student participation and the evaluation of an exit slip, which was like an end of the lesson quiz. Later in this reflection, Brandi also considered her students’ successes and growth areas related to this lesson. As she reflected on the effectiveness of her lesson, she pondered how she taught the lesson. This sort of reflection leads to modifications of teaching and requires introspection on the part of the preservice teacher, which shapes their developing identity as a teacher because they are able to think about and modify their own actions. Often the teacher has help in this type of reflection as they are able to converse with their cooperating teacher or field placement supervisor. This helps to scaffold them as they learn to think like a teacher. Their identity grows as they gain a greater understanding of how to use their prior pedagogical knowledge to effectively teach the students in their classroom.

This study adds to the literature on the identity of preservice teachers of literacy because of the new focus on how these individuals author themselves based on their prior knowledge. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the current political climate emphasizes the importance of knowledge. This can be seen in a variety of outlets ranging from the inclusion of knowledge in the first IRA (2010) standard, to NCLB (2001) legislation, which requires highly qualified teachers for classrooms around the nation, to the report of the National Reading Panel (2000) which used a specific definition of knowledge when
deciding the studies that would be included in their report. Other studies have focused on the knowledge of practicing teachers related to literacy teaching (e.g., Carreker et al., 2005; McCutchen, Green, Abbot, & Sanders, 2009; Podhajski, Mather, Nathan, & Sammons, 2009). But this study shifts to preservice teachers and deepens the research by focusing on how knowledge is related to another important area of study, identity. The concept of authoring self comes from research on identity and these findings show that preservice teachers use their prior pedagogical content knowledge to author themselves.

**Further Consideration of Identity related to Prior Pedagogical Content Knowledge: Noticing, Critiquing, and Anticipating**

In the previous section, I considered how prior pedagogical content knowledge assisted preservice teachers of literacy to author themselves in the figured worlds of their field experiences related to their habituses. Prior pedagogical content knowledge also relates to identity development in other ways that helps to further answer the second sub question of this dissertation. As I analyzed the data, considering the ways in which the participants talked about their experiences and observed them in their field placements, structural coding (Saldaña, 2009) allowed the inference of several other themes with categories embedded. In this theory, I assert that as preservice teachers author themselves, the prior pedagogical content knowledge component of their habitus provides a foundation for preservice teachers of literacy to notice, critique, and anticipate. These three themes, which continue to build the grounded theory of this dissertation, will be the focus of the main components of this section.

**Noticing**

In my data analysis, the preservice teachers of literacy in this study used their prior pedagogical content knowledge to notice. I found that this was different than the next finding, critique, because of the absence of judgment. When the participants noticed they discussed without evaluation, more with a tone of reporting. Often the noticing led them to critiquing, but first from their identity as teachers - they had to notice.

Figure 4.6 adds noticing into the theoretical model that I have been building over the course of this chapter. From the participants’ habituses, they authored themselves in the figured world of their field placements. This authoring was the interaction that served to mix their habituses into their identity as preservice teachers of literacy. Noticing,
stems from the previous components of habitus and authoring, but it is also embedded within these elements as will be explored in this section.

Figure 4.6

*Theoretical Model for Preservice Literacy Teachers’ Identity Development Related to Prior Pedagogical Content Knowledge: The Role of Noticing*

In noticing, the preservice teachers of literacy relied on what they knew about teaching and literacy to see their field experiences through the lens of a teacher. The ways that they discussed the classroom environment using purposeful literacy teaching vocabulary helped me to see that they relied on their prior knowledge to view and understand events in the classroom. Noticing the events in the classrooms and school helped them to orient themselves, to orient their own identity as a teacher with what existed in the landscape around them. I found that preservice teachers of literacy noticed using their prior pedagogical content knowledge related to four distinct areas: (a) *classroom literacy events and practices*; (b) *self (metacognitive)*; (c) *cooperating teacher’s knowledge*; and (d) *absence of something*.

**Noticing: Classroom literacy events and practices.** The prior pedagogical content knowledge of the preservice teachers of literacy in this study allowed them to notice classroom literacy events and practices. As discussed in Chapter 2, literacy events
are “activities where literacy has a role” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8). Literacy practices embed literacy events in larger cultural, social, and ideological frames (Bartlett & Holland, 2002). Literacy practices involve “values, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and social relationships” (Purcell-Gates, Jacobson, & Degener, 2004, p. 32) and must be inferred based on the literacy events. The preservice teachers had specific knowledge that allowed them to notice and view things in ways unique to teachers. This finding is congruent with Phelps (2009), who studied the knowledge of teachers and non-teachers on an assessment. He found that teachers do indeed have a specific body of knowledge that differs from others.

The findings of this study show that the preservice teachers of literacy used what they knew about literacy (and what they were learning as their identity developed) to make sense of their field placements. They were able to use specific language that showed they had acquired some pedagogical content knowledge in order to describe and notice their surroundings. This noticing led them to critique and evaluate their figured worlds, which I will discuss in future themes.

An example of this was when the participants noticed and described the physical and structural organization of their field placements. For instance, in Madison’s first reflective log during her five-week fifth grade practicum placement she described the classroom. The prompt for the reflection gave several questions to guide the students to notice the setting, which shaped what she wrote and reflected upon, but what I found interesting was the participants’ reliance on prior knowledge to complete this task. Madison’s description showed her understanding of concepts related to literacy instruction such as student grouping and classroom organization. She noticed the contextual, figured world in which the literacy events took place through the eyes of a teacher. The physical space helped to define and structure the literacy events and practices that took place in classrooms. Madison wrote:

Mrs. Harrison’s classroom is set up so that her students are in mixed-ability groups. Each group has four or five students each. She has five table groups, giving her a total of twenty-three kids. This amount was just enough for me to get acquainted with during my first week. The rest of her room is extremely organized. Mrs. Harrison has a place for everything, and all containers, bins,
shelves, etc. are labeled! Her classroom also has a computer center with four 
computers, a classroom library with cozy furniture and organized books, and an 
entire board devoted to Calendar Math. (Madison, Practicum reflection 1)

Reflection on Madison’s writing show the pieces of knowledge that contributed to 
what she noticed about her practicum classroom. Granted, she was a being asked to write 
about the classroom environment as a component of her university coursework. But it is 
interesting to see how she relied on the piece of her identity that is related to her 
pedagogical content knowledge of student grouping. It is likely that in her coursework 
(or somewhere) Madison learned about the importance of considering how students are 
grouped together. Perhaps in conversations about social learning theories she learned 
about mixed-ability groups. It is also possible to speculate that Madison learned about 
them importance of creating an environment conducive to literacy learning as she notices 
the “cozy furniture” and organized classroom. These ideas became embedded in the 
identity of Madison as a teacher, what she noticed and what she felt about the classroom 
environment revealed what she thought is important which was a component of her 
identity. She knew that creating a learning environment was part of her role as a teacher.

In my first interview with Madison, she expanded on the above description of the 
setting telling about activities the class did; this helped me to triangulate data that she was 
not just noticing the classroom environment because she was assigned to write about it 
for a grade. She discussed silent reading, spelling words, grammar exercises, how 
writing was organized, and the materials that were used for literacy instruction. In this 
conversation about the literacy events in the classroom, she drew on her prior knowledge 
to make sense of what she saw. For example she said,

I haven’t ever seen an actual reading [basal] book. She uses a lot of tradebooks 
and chapter books. They do a lot of trade books that go along with the content 
they are on. They do the same book and they’ll do different things like reader’s 
threater.

Here she showed how she noticed the type of instructional material and relied on her 
background content knowledge of reader’s theater. What she noticed about this 
classroom unconsciously was shaping her identity of what it meant to be a teacher of
literacy. The physical organization and the events that took place in that field placement shaped her understanding of what literacy was and how to teach it.

In a similar manner, Brandi discussed the organization of the literacy block in her kindergarten student teaching placement. She supported her understanding of the situation with a bit more narrative about the purposes behind the organization.

Learning centers are used in the classroom during the Literacy block of instruction, which is the only time that students change classes. The Literacy block classes are divided based on learning levels. The block normally lasts from about 8:30am-10:40am and students rotate in groups from about 8:30 until 10:20. There is a Guided Reading center, a Reading Support through Technology center, a Literacy Skills center, and a Writing and Literacy Skills center. Each center has an instructor. The groups allow for smaller group work and more personal attention. They also allow for assessment of strengths and challenges. (Brandi, Student teaching reflective log 1)

These examples show that the preservice teachers of literacy noticed what is happening in their field placement classrooms. While the prompt for the reflection called on them to discuss elements in the classroom, what is important is how they relied on their prior knowledge about literacy in order to make sense of the settings and instruction that was occurring. Here they passed very little judgment on the situation; instead, they reported and took account of the status quo. Their developing identities as literacy teachers were being shaped by what they noticed because they began to categorize and solidify what it meant to teach literacy in the field. They began to understand the materials and activities involved and to notice them from the perspective of a teacher. They started to see that this was the way things were, they were beginning to accept and get a taste for how things should be in the classroom regarding literacy teaching and this was becoming embedded into their identity.

**Noticing: Self (metacognition) and own knowledge.** Another category in the theme of noticing was noticing self, which spoke to the metacognition of the participants. The preservice teachers of literacy drew on their prior knowledge as they thought about themselves as literacy teachers. Their metacognition about their developing identity as teachers was evident in the ways they spoke about their successes and stumbles in the
field. This theme was particularly connected to the Literacy Instruction Knowledge Scale [LIKS], (Utah State University, 2009; Reutzel et al., 2009) assessment that the participants took. Also, the reflective data components I collected, such as the practicum reflections and lesson plan reflections, provided further data to support this theme.

This theme aligns with current research on the importance of reflection to teacher development. Researchers have studied reflection and teacher education (e.g., Conway, 2001; Jay, 2003; Risko et al., 2008; Ward & McCotter, 2004). Reflection allows new teachers to examine themselves and their actions with the hope of making revisions in their identity related to teaching pedagogy. It has been seen as central to effective teaching (Jay, 2003). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) note the importance of reflection to identity development:

Reflection is recognized as a key means by which teachers can become more in tune with their sense of self and with a deep understanding of how this self fits into a larger context which involves others; in other words, reflection is a factor in the shaping of identity. (p. 182)

In the discussion of the category of noticing self, I will first consider how the LIKS was a venue for the preservice teachers to reflect on their pedagogical content knowledge. Following that I will discuss how participants were able to reflect on their own strengths to characterize themselves as teachers.

Conversations about LIKS assessment showed metacognition. As mentioned in Chapter 3, I chose to use the Literacy Instruction Knowledge Scale [LIKS], (Utah State University, 2009; Reutzel et al., 2009) as a data source because I wanted to see how the participants’ identity was related to a way that knowledge is often measured in our society - via standardized, multiple choice tests. The group conversation and individual interviews following the administration of the assessment allowed me to get a sense of the prior knowledge used in this type of assessment as well as how it related to their identity.

As I talked with the participants about the LIKS, I realized that they noticed their own knowledge. They were able to be metacognitive and perceptive about the state of their own identity and knowledge as literacy teachers. In the case of the LIKS, they were metacognitive about the components of their identity that were measureable on this sort
of assessment. With an open-ended question, “What did you think of the test?” followed by discussion about specific questions, the participants shared their own strengths and weaknesses. They were able to reflect on their own knowledge, a component of their identity. They talked about where they acquired the knowledge that helped them be successful and expressed frustration with not getting knowledge from places they expected to (e.g., university coursework).

The participants took two of the three subscales of the written component of the LIKS (Utah State University, 2009; Reutzel et al., 2009), the comprehension and decoding subscales. During the group conversation following the administration of the LIKS, the participants talked about particular questions with which they struggled. This discussion helped me to infer they were fairly cognizant of their strengths and weaknesses regarding their knowledge of literacy teaching as it was measured on this assessment. They were able to reflect on the assessment and identify which questions challenged them and why.

During the discussion of challenges in the group conversation, the participants conversed about the wording of the questions. They attributed not understanding the wording as part of the reason why they struggled with answering the questions correctly. Brandi said, “The decoding part I had a hard time with because I wasn’t aware of a lot of the terminology. I just thought the questions were clearer in the comprehension part.” She and the other participants found the comprehension subscale easier.

They also communicated that they felt they knew the concepts that were being discussed in the assessment, however they did not feel confident about the terminology and vocabulary that was used. They expressed frustration that they were not taught these ideas in their coursework at the university. Heather said, “To be honest as preservice teachers in all of our literacy classes we don’t do a lot with decoding. I don’t ever remember in classes, we haven’t done a lot with decoding.”

Heather also expressed that the questions did not provide the type of background contextual information one would have as a teacher in order to answer the questions. She said:

A lot of it is opinion based. It asked so many different examples, especially with comprehension – what you would do in this situation. A lot would have to do
with what you had done before. A lot of the questions you don’t know enough about the student to know what comprehension strategy is best for them. What was hardest for me is that I felt there was more than one right answer so I feel like I would need to know more about the student to be able to pick the best answer.

(Heather, group conversation)

Madison agreed with Heather and added that she felt they have learned a lot of the strategies in the literacy coursework at the university. “So it’s almost confusing to decide which one is best,” Madison said. “There are so many different options that it’s like which one am I supposed to pick.”

In general, the participants – particularly Heather- were eager to find out the answers to questions that they were uncertain about. We discussed answers to the questions that were particularly troubling, which led to more questions about literacy content. To a certain degree, I got the sense they enjoyed taking the test because it helped to identify areas of pedagogical content knowledge they needed to bolster. I got this sense because they were eager to find out the answers after they were done taking the assessment and wanted to learn more about questions they did not get correct. They also seemed to benefit from the conversation that ensued afterwards where they were able to help each other as they clarified different aspects of literacy pedagogical content knowledge.

I never formally reported the scores of the assessment to the participants. I told them about the results in terms of letting them know on which test they scored higher. I also told them that they scored fairly equally amongst themselves. I felt it was not important to give them an actual number because I did not have any way of comparing it to any standardized scores. Also, the assessment was designed to be used with practicing teachers.

In the interviews, I also learned more about how identity development related to prior knowledge as measured on a standardized test. During the second interview, I either told the participants which area they scored higher on or asked them to make a guess about whether they scored higher in decoding or comprehension. I then asked them for their reaction to the results of the test. These conversations surrounding the
LIKS assessment were a source of data that allowed me to infer the theme that preservice teachers are metacognitive about their own knowledge.

In the following example, I talked with Madison and told her she scored higher on the decoding subscale. She was surprised by this and then hypothesized about why, thinking about her own identity as a literate individual. This excerpt was from the second interview with Madison.

Researcher (R): I looked over that test that we took...
Madison (M): And I did horrible.
R: Well no, you did fine. I don’t know what horrible is or not because I don’t have any norms and it is a test that is designed for practicing teachers. I expected people to miss a lot and I missed a lot when I took it too. But you did, there was the comprehension scale and then the phonics, no decoding is what it was called.
M: OK
R: And you scored better on the decoding.
M: Oh really! [laughs]
R: Does that surprise you? How do you feel when I say that?
M: Yeah it definitely does. That definitely surprises me.
R: I mean not by much
M: Maybe that goes back to, I’ve always been really good at decoding words myself. So I don’t know if maybe I was able to manipulate the question and like relate it.
R: Uh huh
M: Maybe that’s why I did better at it.
R: I don’t know
M: [laughs] I would have definitely thought I would have done better on the comprehension.
R: It’s not that you did bad on the comprehension, I just wanted to tell you and see what your reaction was… [further conversation about specific categories on the LIKS]
M: I mean I don’t know, it could be that, I mean I was, I was a very observant learner. I’m always, I’ve always been able to identify, “oh she's been able to do
this because of.” I’m not trying to brag but I’ve always been one step ahead of the. Almost before they say it I’m like “oh that means this.” Especially with reading and writing. I mean I’ve never been like that in math or anything. Maybe I was just better at that because I could tell what my teachers were doing. Maybe I was just more keen on blending stuff and phonics stuff.

This interview excerpt showed Madison noticing her own knowledge and reflecting on this component of her identity as a teacher of literacy. She thought she would have done better on the comprehension part but then began to think about why she did okay on the decoding. She talked about her abilities, stating that she had always been better with reading and writing, this attitude unconsciously influences her identity as a literacy teacher – if she feels this is a strength for her she will teach operating from that mentality. Madison hypothesized that maybe she was able to manipulate the question and relate it to her prior knowledge in order to answer correctly, here she is making a guess at why she would be successful about something - what about herself would make her succeed. She also said she has always been one step ahead and felt that she was very observant of what her teachers were doing and why. This type of discussion is what led me to infer the category of metacognition in the theme of noticing. I felt that the preservice teachers of literacy in this study were able to notice their own knowledge, which in turn played a part in their ongoing identity development.

**Characterizing self as teacher.** The participants showed they were able to reflect on their own qualities as a literacy teacher. The reflective assignments such as lesson plan reflections and practicum reflections allowed them to focus on how they authored themselves in specific situations. They were able to examine situations and evaluate how they responded as a teacher. In these assignments, they responded to prompts that asked them to examine certain situations in the field The participants also showed that when prompted they were able to reflect even deeper by identifying traits which were typical of their identity as literacy teachers.

When I set up the second interview, I asked the participants to think about words they or someone else would use to describe them as a literacy teacher. I wanted to ask them this question in order to see what types of things they thought about their identity as a teacher. Table 4.1 shows the words they chose as they reflected on themselves. In the
interviews they explained these words, discussing more about how they thought of themselves as teachers and showing how they drew on their prior knowledge to choose appropriate traits.

In some of the words the participants chose it is evident that they looked to what they had learned a literacy teacher should be in order to label how they viewed themselves. The labels they chose for themselves aligned with what they knew a literacy teacher should be from some prior knowledge. For example, Madison spoke about the idea of being a literacy role model. She talked about how the idea of being a role model was in one of the required texts for the second literacy methods course. “It is stuff we are told over and over in our methods courses,” she said regarding how she thought of the words to identify herself.

Table 4.1. Characterizing Self as Literacy Teacher

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<th>Heather</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Brandi</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview 2</strong></td>
<td>-Energetic</td>
<td>-Literacy role model</td>
<td>-Patient</td>
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<tr>
<td>Characterize</td>
<td>-Hard on self</td>
<td>-Active</td>
<td>-Excited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self as a</td>
<td>-Creative</td>
<td>-Routine</td>
<td>-Comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literacy teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Enthusiastic</td>
<td>-Confident (in terms of content)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words that you</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Identified that these were</em></td>
<td><em>Qualified these words as “right now”</em></td>
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<td>would use to</td>
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<td>describe self or</td>
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<td>that others would use.</td>
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**Noticing: Cooperating teacher’s identity and knowledge.** Another category in the theme of noticing was the preservice teachers’ noticing the cooperating teacher’s identity and knowledge. Here the preservice teachers noticed things such as the demeanor, style, knowledge, character, and general essence of the cooperating teacher’s identity as a teacher of literacy. This subtheme further develops literature, which discusses the setting of the field experience (e.g., Houston, 2008; IRA 2003, 2007)
including the relationship with the cooperating teacher (e.g., Wilson, Floden, Ferrini-Mundy, 2002).

For example, Brandi wrote about her cooperating teacher for her five-week field placement in fifth grade. In this writing Brandi noticed Mrs. Mason’s sense of humor and how she related to students. She talked specifically about the special education students, noticing how the cooperating teacher related to them. She noticed components of the identity of Mrs. Mason and remarked on them here.

Mrs. Mason has a very good rapport with her students and uses a little bit of comedy and laughter in everything that she does. The students really respond well to that. She is very accepting of student ideas and when students respond incorrectly to a question, she finds a way to praise the response in some way, and then asks them to consult with another student who can help them find the right answer. There are several students with special needs in the classroom. Most of the special needs are ADHD related and each student is completely different. She treats them the same as any other student and relays to them that she holds very high expectations for them. She does not accept less from them just because they have a 504 plan. She always works to get more from them and is just as focused in moving them forward as she is any other student. There is one student with autism who has an IEP, however he has a paraprofessional with him at all times during the day and they have their own things that they work on. (Brandi, practicum reflection 1)

Brandi’s ability to recognize specific elements of how Mrs. Mason related to students was a window to her developing identity as a teacher. She noticed things about Mrs. Mason in accordance with what she perceived the identity of a teacher to be. For example, she noticed that Mrs. Mason holds high expectations for the special needs students, this must be something that she believes is important or she would phrase it differently. If she thought the special needs students should be treated differently, she may have been exasperated about the behaviors of Mrs. Mason and talked about how unfairly she treated the students, however this was not the case. What Brandi chose to talk about and the way she phrased it was a window into what was an important component of her identity.
A conversation in my second interview with Heather served as another example of the subtheme of noticing the cooperating teacher’s identity and knowledge. During this interview, Heather she talked about things that she learned in her practicum placement. She discussed how she felt her cooperating teacher really knew her students academically. It was an interesting conversation though because she also said that her cooperating teacher did not know her students personally. I could tell she had been doing some thinking about how her cooperating teacher related to the students in the fifth grade classroom. These conversations, which dealt directly with Heather’s habitus of specifics about kids matter, were particularly in-depth - this is only a portion of the conversation. Heather said:

When it came to their level of reading, she knew them. She didn’t know them on a personal level. Patty could tell me anything about what level they are in classroom. But I feel like for literacy it goes a little beyond that because you have to know what they are interested in outside of classroom, so you can foster that into really, really any subject area…

I spent last week doing my reflective things, doing my portfolio. I realized, it’s weird with her. I think she knows it [the academic level of her students]. I don’t think the way she does it plays into what she knows. But what the students need, I think she knows it based on testing. I don’t think she does enough to fix it. The way she teaches it doesn’t go along with her findings.

In the first paragraph of this interview, Heather talked about how her cooperating teacher knew the reading level of the students in her classroom. Heather noticed the knowledge of her cooperating teacher; she felt that her cooperating teacher had a good sense of the academic strengths and weaknesses of the students in the classroom.

The interesting part is the second paragraph, which leads to the next category in this theme of noticing absences. In the second paragraph Heather pointed out that, “the way she teaches does not go along with her findings.” Here she began to think more critically, to move beyond the noticing, to use what she noticed to judge. She noticed an absence. She noticed that the cooperating teacher was not doing what she could be doing to meet the needs of the students in her classroom. Heather noticed that the cooperating teacher had knowledge of the levels of her students, but she also pointed out an absence
of something. There was an absence, according to Heather, of effective instructional design that sought to address the levels of the students.

**Noticing: Absence of something.** The final subtheme in the larger theme of noticing links directly into the next theme, critiquing. The preservice teachers relied on their prior pedagogical content knowledge, which was a part of their developing identities as teachers of literacy, in order to notice when something was missing. They were able to see holes in what was happening regarding literacy in the figured worlds of their field placements. They expected to see certain things that they did not see.

The preservice teachers were able to see these holes because of their background knowledge related to literacy pedagogy. As a part of their identity, they had a sense of the way things should be in the classroom and when things were not that way – they noticed an absence of something. Taking note of these missing events, materials, lesson structures, etc. helped to shape the developing identity of the preservice teachers. They drew on their own knowledge of what should be and when they did not see it, they began to wonder. In this wondering they took what was in the figured world and brought it into their developing identity- turning it over, examining it for worth, noticing that something was missing, something was not as they had expected. In this noticing, their identities were being changed, they were caught wondering if perhaps they were wrong- maybe what was missing indeed should not be involved with literacy teaching? Or maybe it should?

For example, Brandi reflected on how her field experience classroom did not address individual learning needs. The second practicum prompt asked the students to:

Do a little more in depth exploration of the instruction in this particular classroom. Please prepare a general discussion of our impressions of the types of instruction that you’ve seen so far. In your discussion, answer questions such as:

- Does the teacher seem to employ a variety of ways to teach concepts? Within lessons, how does the teacher approach students’ individual learning styles? Does the teacher utilize small group instruction or take a whole group approach? What does the teacher do to ensure all students are participating?

Brandi’s response to this prompt illustrates the subtheme of *noticing the absence of something* because it took a tone of reporting on what was missing. Brandi reported
that she did not see much adaptation of the curriculum for individual needs. Brandi did little evaluating about the absence of differentiation, she just provided description. In the first paragraph Brandi set the tone for what typically occurred in the classroom related to reading. She then commented on what is missing.

In social studies and reading (the curriculum is combined in this area), Mrs. Mason uses a real-world approach and relates the concepts from long ago to the lives of students currently. The students are reading a book right now about Captain John Smith and the Jamestown colonies and I have never seen students as excited to read as they are when she tells them to pull out that book. They have even said that they did not like social studies until having it with her.

I have not noticed a clear approach to student’s individual learning styles. There is not a lot of differentiated instruction that takes place that I have observed. There are definitely differentiated learning levels that are present in the classroom and several cases of ADHD where adaptation to an individual learning style would be appropriate. I have not discussed with Mrs. Mason any ideas for differentiated instruction but I know that it is something that I think about when I am planning my lessons. The math class is already differentiated through the grade level so there is not much adaptation that needs to occur there, however in homeroom, which includes language arts and social studies, as well as science, there are several different individual learning styles that are present.

Mrs. Mason usually teaches in a whole group and I have not observed her leading small group instruction. The whole group is usually a question/answer type setting and the students actively participate. Mrs. Mason tells a lot of fun stories and really plays on student’s interests to hold their attention. Mrs. Mason ensures that all of the students are participating by moving about constantly in the classroom and making sure that all eyes are on her. (Brandi, Practicum reflection 2)

In this reflection, Brandi relied on her background pedagogical content knowledge to realize that there was not much small group instruction. If she would not have had training as a teacher, it is possible that this paradigm would not have been part of her identity. In the last paragraph Brandi praised her teacher’s ability to lead whole
class instruction, but it was situated within the comments about the lack of
differentiation. “I have not observed her lead small group,” Brandi said, but using
discourse analysis (Gee, 2005) I looked deeper and thought about her stance on this. It is
interesting that she did not take a strong stance about the absence of small groups even
though she appeared to feel that there should be more differentiation. In these beginning
weeks of her time in this figured world, maybe she was still noticing these ideas and the
critiquing would come later. Or perhaps she did not feel that this reflection was the
appropriate place to vent concerns, she merely felt the need to report the status quo.

Even though Brandi noticed that she hadn’t seen small group instruction in the
figured world of her field experience–it is possible to speculate that what preservice
teachers notice has a great deal to do with what is present in the field experience setting.
If there are rich educational activities related to literacy in place in the field experiences,
it is likely that the preservice teachers would notice more and be exposed to a wider range
of teaching pedagogies. The research surrounding field experiences discusses the
importance of quality placements (e.g., Grossman et al., 2000; Houston, 2008; IRA 2003,
2007). The findings of this study support the importance of quality field experiences
with good literacy instructional practices are important. Preservice teachers of literacy
will notice and begin to consider what the identity of a literacy teacher is based on what
is present in the figured world of their field placements.

It was interesting that sometimes in my conversations with the participants they
simply pointed out the way things were, noticing and making mention of something they
did not see. They would report this as just the way that it was and something they had
come to accept. However, I also noticed that as they saw these holes, they often began to
ask questions that led them to evaluate and critique their situations, which is
where the link to the next subtheme comes.

Critiquing

The previous theme of noticing connects directly to the next theme of critiquing.
As the theoretical model I have been building (Figure 4.7) shows, the participants
authored themselves out of the habitus and noticed what was in their figured worlds.
From this noticing, they then critiqued- thinking judgmentally and weighing what they
saw in their field experience figured worlds. Figure 4.7 shows the word critique added to
the swirl that represents the mixing identity of preservice teachers of literacy. As the preservice teachers interacted with the figured world of their field experience, authoring themselves as was described earlier, they critiqued what they observed. They noticed events and situations and then from that, they critiqued. This critique was mixed into their ever changing identity as a teacher of literacy. It changed who they were as a teacher because as they were critical with their surroundings, they began to further deepen their own identities as teachers.

Figure 4.7

*Theoretical Model for Preservice Literacy Teachers’ Identity Development Related to Prior Pedagogical Content Knowledge: The Role of Critiquing*

I considered the word *evaluate* to describe this theme, however much of the data was rooted in the criticism and questioning of various structures that I will explain below. Therefore, although some of the comments the participants made were more evaluative in nature, most of them were more judgmental, finding fault with the field experience. Because of this, I chose the word *critique* to describe this theme.

Often the participants’ critiques were related to the participants’ wrestling with the differences between the field versus the university teacher education program or the participant’s own beliefs and experiences. The split between teacher education and the
field was called the “two-worlds” pitfall by Feiman-Nemser and Buchanan (1985) and is frequently a part of the research literature surrounding teacher identity development. For instance, Alsup (2006) reviewed some literature noting that teachers often end up teaching in ways that are not consistent with their own beliefs or what they learned in teacher education and that the gap between teacher education and field experiences leads to negative teacher attitudes. Flores and Day’s (2006) findings supported how new teachers have to be strategically compliant about their teaching decisions, acting in ways that their supervisors will agree with while at the same time maintaining their own perspectives. On a positive note, Horn, Nolen, Ward, and Campbell (2008) found that those who made the greatest growth in learning experienced a tension in the difference between the teacher education program and their experiences in the field.

What is important is that the participants in this study experienced some conflict, discrepancies between what was in the field and what they had learned in their teacher education courses. They found reasons to think critically about the way that their cooperating teachers planned and led instruction. This sense of tension and dissatisfaction is congruent with the research literature, and has been shown to help develop preservice teachers’ identity as teachers.

As I analyzed the data related to the theme of critiquing, I noticed the critiquing fell roughly into three categories. In this theme (critiquing) I will present the findings related to (a) critique of the cooperating teacher; (b) critique of the literacy events and practices; and (c) critique of the teaching method. The exemplars that defined each category were naturally intertwined because the cooperating teachers adopted teaching methods that helped to define the classroom literacy events and practices within the figured worlds. In other words, the cooperating teachers taught in certain ways or adopted certain teaching methods in accordance with their beliefs and the expectations for teaching in their schools. These teaching methods often became the literacy events or observable literacy practices that were occurring in the classroom. For example, if the cooperating teacher chose a teaching method of whole class instruction, the observable literacy event was reading a book together as a class. This literacy event then could be examined for a deeper literacy practice that would say something about the general philosophy or nature of literacy in that particular classroom. Perhaps the inferred literacy
practice could be that literacy is done together as a group because it is fun or maybe everyone has to read the same book because the teacher does not trust students to read on their own.

Similar to Coffey and Atkinson’s (1996) discussion of nested and overlapping codes and Dey’s (2007) contention that categories “are rarely exclusive or exhaustive” (p. 181) the categories in this theme did not have clear boundaries. Figure 4.8 depicts the nature of the relationship between the categories in this theme. The figure shows three equal-sized circles that overlap in the middle. The overlap between the circles shows that some of the examples that could be used to illustrate one category could also represent ideas in another category.

Figure 4.8 Relationship of Categories in the Critiquing Theme.

I differentiated the categories in this theme by the focus of the critique. Through discourse analysis, I noticed that sometimes the preservice teachers spoke directly about their cooperating teachers, almost accusing them of being at fault for the problem they saw. Other times, the participants would talk around the cooperating teacher without actually blaming them; in this case the focus seemed to be on the classroom literacy
Critiquing: Cooperating teacher. The first category in the theme of critique was the critique of the cooperating teacher. Preservice teachers are learning to be teachers; therefore, it is natural that as a part of their identity development they would think critically about the actions and decisions of their cooperating teachers. Their identity as a preservice teacher, a guest in the classroom of these cooperating teachers, precluded that the participants maintain a professional attitude and show compliance and agreement with the cooperating teacher despite internal disagreement. Therefore, in my conversations with them and in their reflections, I noticed that they critiqued their cooperating teachers’ ways of doing things - but also seemed to always provide a caveat or way of showing that they still supported and thought highly of their cooperating teacher. As I mentioned in the previous theme noticing, often when the preservice teachers in this study noticed something that was missing, it led them to think critically about the situation. They relied on their prior knowledge to speculate about what could be done differently.

In the last theme noticing, I used Brandi’s response to the second practicum reflection prompt to show how she noticed her teacher’s lack of differentiation. Here, Heather responded to that same prompt, but she answered in a much more critical, condemning way towards her cooperating teacher. Heather, while providing the appropriate caveats to show she outwardly respected her cooperating teacher, blamed the cooperating teacher for the inability of the class to work together.

While I love Ms. Hart and think she is an excellent mentor teacher for me in a lot of ways, she doesn't differentiate instruction as much as I think she should. Although this is based strictly on my own opinion, I feel like the students don't know how to work well together because she never has them do group assignments or collaborative work. She says that because they can't work together, she doesn't put them together. I think that the students need to learn how to work with their peers- they are in the 5th grade! She could structure lessons so that the children can't act out, and tell them exactly what she expects of them, providing consequences if they choose
not to follow the directions. If she gives them an interactive activity and gets them up and moving, acting out shouldn't be an issue because they will be enjoying themselves and be more engaged. She does a lot of whole group instruction. In reading, the IEP students go to special ed, and she has the rest of the students pull chairs to the front and round robin read. While the students seem engaged, I think she could get a better sense of each student's individual progress if she did small group instruction…However, so much of what she teaches seems to be teaching to the test. She has told me how much she hates that, but it's what they are required to do…I think if Ms. Hart could simply incorporate a bit more small group instruction, it would be more beneficial to the students. (Heather, Practicum reflection 3)

Heather’s reflection scrutinized the way the cooperating teacher relied on whole group instruction; Heather’s identity as a teacher did not match what she saw her cooperating teacher doing in the classroom. Heather’s surprised tone showed that she felt somewhat astounded about the status quo of round robin reading and whole group instruction. Heather provided suggestions from her prior knowledge about what her teacher could do to improve the situation – such as providing high expectation for interactive lessons- but also showed respect for the demands (such as testing) that her cooperating teacher faced. The challenge of testing will be discussed more thoroughly in the next subtheme, because in my analysis I actually saw this as related to another subtheme in this theme of critiquing.

These data show that Heather felt enough autonomy in her identity development as a teacher to be able to critique and think about how her cooperating teacher could improve. Heather felt strongly enough about these ideas to make suggestions about (although not to) someone who had power over her. She relied on her background pedagogical content knowledge, which was a component of her identity as a teacher, to make suggestions for improvement. It was evident that in her developing identity as a teacher, she relied on her prior knowledge to navigate making sense of the field placement figured world. She used her own ideas to give confidence to the faults she saw in her cooperating teacher. Heather’s critiques emanated from her the dispositions of her habitus that specifics about kids matter. As a part of her identity as a teacher she believed
in the importance of the individual student and instructing students in differentiated ways that reach students at their level of need.

In another example of this category of critiquing the cooperating teacher, Brandi, in her third reflection, criticized the actions of her cooperating teacher. Brandi foreshadowed these ideas in her second reflection prompt, but with the following prompt she was more critical:

Many of you may have concerns about the difference between what you have studied on campus and what is done in the “real world.” For this log entry, describe at least three differences from what you “assumed” would be true, and what is “fact,” at least in this classroom, this school. Consider areas such as classroom management, instructional practices, the amount of paperwork, teacher planning/preparation, and more.

Brandi’s concerns were about the same topic as Heather – a lack of differentiated instruction in the fifth grade placement. Here Brandi relied on her analysis of the abilities of students in her classroom (e.g., that some like to draw) as part of her rationalization for the need for more differentiation and for the critique of her cooperating teacher.

Another assumption that I had going into my practicum experience had to deal with differentiated instruction. This has been the biggest stumbling block for me. I am a firm believer in having a plan for every student in your classroom; the plan may be the same for 99% of your students, however the 1% who needs to do something that is adjusted or modified are just as important. My teacher does not differentiate and there are a few students who would benefit greatly from it. For example, there are several students who like to draw and are very good at it. When we do assignments that involve drawing or illustrating, they really thrive and have no behavioral issues because they are doing something that they enjoy while still meeting the objectives. In my classroom, as much as possible, I’m going to use interest inventories of my students so that I can make each lesson as enjoyable for them as possible. If students enjoy learning and it is presented to them at a level in which it feels attainable, your classroom will be much more successful. My teacher is successful in meeting the needs of her students as well as the objectives required by the Program of Study, however I feel as though the
learning could be much more beneficial if it were differentiated more by achievement level and interest. (Brandi, Practicum reflection 3)

The focus of this critique was on the teachers’ lack of providing differentiated instruction. Brandi placed the blame on her cooperating teacher for not differentiating instruction in the way that she could. Brandi relied on the prior knowledge component of her identity (the value of interest inventories) as she began to look forward to what she might do in her own classroom. The theme of anticipating her own classroom as relevant to identity development will be discussed later.

**Critiquing: Classroom literacy events and practices.** In the second category of the theme of critiquing, the preservice teachers of literacy critiqued classroom literacy events and/or practices. As I mentioned earlier, the lines between the categories in the theme of critiquing were somewhat gray. The differentiating mark was where the focus of the comment resides or where the culpability was placed.

For instance, in the last example of the Brandi’s practicum reflection, she blamed the cooperating teacher for the lack of differentiated instruction. However, in an interview her comments focused on the structure of the classroom. In the interview Brandi talked with me about the benefits of one of the literacy methods class assignments, the “literacy assessment” and explored how it helped to shape her identity as a teacher of literacy. In the field, the preservice teachers were required to do a case study of a reader. They did particular assessments, including an interest inventory and then provided instruction to the reader based on the assessments. Brandi used her experiences and knowledge from this to rationalize her critique of the structure of the literacy events in her practicum placement. She said:

I think by doing the literacy assessment I learned how important it is to know about your students. Like to know what they are interested in and what they like.

And you don’t have to, not everybody has to be doing the same thing. And that’s what I saw a lot of. It was a wonderful class and I loved my teacher. But everyone was doing the same thing. How can any student thrive in that setting when they are not on the same level? They don’t have the same interests?

By doing the assessment…I also saw how important it is to take the time…to see what this is what they like and it is how I can help them. If they like
something they are going to do better at it. So I think doing the interest inventory is a big deal.

I like the idea of allowing the students to foster their own idea... Not everybody has to read the same text. You don’t have to force students to – there are so many books- they don’t have to read the same book, you can still meet your objective and you can still follow core content but not everybody has to be doing the same thing...

That’s the biggest take home for me is that if you walk in a class and everybody is doing the same thing. That for me could be more of a problem than if you have 20 different kids doing different things. I think that’s more realistic and more effective than everybody being on the same page.

In this example, Brandi criticized the literacy events that were organized around all students doing the same thing. She spoke earlier in the interview about the specifics of these events (e.g., whole class book reading, teacher read alouds, and reading focused on social studies content). In her identity as a teacher, Brandi felt that if all of the students were doing the same thing they probably were not learning as much as if they were to do different things catering more to their individual interests. Brandi relied directly on the interest inventory she had to do for her literacy methods class as a rationale for finding out how to assess the interests of each student. She used this piece of knowledge to make claims that asserted her identity as a literacy teacher. Brandi felt finding out what students enjoyed and letting them do different things were important parts of the literacy practices that should have been happening in the classroom. The absence of this, or everybody doing the same thing, was troubling to Brandi and was what she critiqued in this example.

In another example of the category of critiquing classroom literacy events and practices, Heather struggled with the pressures of standardized testing which were counter to her identity as a teacher. In Heather’s third and fifth practicum reflections, as well as during her interviews, she discussed the literacy event of teaching to the test that she saw in her field placement. In the figured world of her practicum school, passing the state test was a very real concern and teachers felt pressured to teach in certain ways in order to accomplish this. Heather relied on her background knowledge of the way
students should be instructed in order to best meet their needs versus the discrepancy from what she saw as teachers taught to the test.

Perhaps the biggest and most disheartening difference is that we have always been told in our classes that it is important we teach our students real world skills and create a balance between all of the subjects within schools so that students are learning and exposed to all different subject areas, but teachers in my school simply teach to the test because it's what the school makes them focus on. Not only do they not even have science class because they are not tested on it in the 5th grade, but they only do reading and writing in a format in which they see it on the test. They don't do centers or anything for Language Arts because they have the students practicing reading questions as they will see on CATS testing. I was aware they had to cover core content, but I think the school district has forgotten entirely about making students enjoy learning and really honing in on the ways students learn best, which could improve their test scores more than simply teaching one way across the board. (Heather, Practicum reflection 3)

Heather expressed frustration in this excerpt about the lack of enjoyment and the absence of teaching students real world skills. This was difficult for her developing identity as a teacher. She was frustrated that some subjects such as science were not taught because they were not on the test. Heather blamed the testing pressure for the lack of time to do centers and enjoyable reading, and thus criticized the literacy events in the classroom. She continued on with these frustrations in the fifth reflection, blaming pressure from the administrators as an unseen force that influenced the classroom literacy events.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for me is going to be the way many administrators pressure teachers to teach to the test, especially in our county. The pressure forces teachers to teach in a test format in every subject area. Not only does it take the fun out of teaching and out of learning, but it doesn't address the way that students best learn. My teacher told me on more than one occasion that she used to do all sorts of fun activities with her students until they were told they had to teach to the test. We spent the entire last week of school doing learning checks, which appear to me to be a cover-up name for basically a scrimmage test, which
is illegal. However, all of our county does them in the 5th grade. Not only does it make me sad, but it makes me frustrated because the people who force us to teach to the test don't realize that our students would be performing substantially better on the tests if teachers could teach their students in the ways that they best learn, not the way the administrators think they should learn. (Heather, Practicum reflection 5)

In these examples, the critiques of the preservice teachers of literacy were focused on the classroom events and practices that were generally imposed upon the teachers. The blame often was not placed directly on any one person as the preservice teacher wrestled with what they disliked about the figured worlds of their field experiences. As they wrestled with and critiqued these structures, their identity was in flux. They contemplated questions and thoughts about classroom events and the pressures teachers receive from outside forces to do things certain ways. These ideas were mixed into their developing identities as teachers of literacy.

**Critiquing: Teaching method.** The final category in this theme was critiquing the teaching method. In this category the participants evaluated specific instructional techniques. They removed the blame from the cooperating teacher and focused instead on a certain instructional practice. These instructional practices could also be interpreted as literacy events in the classroom; however, in this study I distinguished literacy events as pertaining to activities with which the children were engaged, rather than the activities of the teaching method.

In one example of this category, Madison wrestled with the teaching method that involved using worksheets. In Madison’s third practicum reflection, she discussed the amount of worksheets that she observed in the field. She highlighted the dichotomy between what was discussed as appropriate in teacher education versus what happens in the field. This type of conflict, between field and teacher education, is common (e.g., Britzman, 2003; Feiman-Nemser & Buchanan, 1985; Houston, 2008).

In our methods courses, we are often told not to assign worksheets, or too much paperwork. In fact, in some instances, it has seemed as though worksheets are frowned upon. In the field, however, I have found that this is not so. At Western Hills Elementary, teachers assign worksheets and paperwork all the time. While
it is not necessarily “busy” work, it still keeps the kids busy on the topic at hand. I have seen many valuable lessons taught using worksheets as “Exit Ticket”-like reviews or for flashback purposes. My cooperating teacher usually assigns worksheets as an assessment for what her students have learned from the lesson. So, while I do think it is important to limit the number of worksheets given in class, I also think that many worksheets can be very beneficial to helping students solidify the facts in their head. Extra practice always makes perfect in my experience. (Madison, Practicum reflection 3)

Here Madison was torn, in her identity as a teacher, about the value of worksheets. She was thinking critically about the teaching method that required the use of worksheets. She expressed that her experiences in the field allowed her to see the value that worksheets can have, but she also agreed with what she learned in her teacher education that their use should be limited. Madison relied on her prior knowledge from teacher education as a background, but questioned it as she was developing her identity as a teacher and saw firsthand the value of this teaching method.

Another example began in one of the email exchanges with Heather before I came to observe her teaching a reading lesson during practicum. Here she warned me that they would just be doing a whole group lesson. She did not seem proud of this and when I talked to her afterwards I had a better understanding. Based on her prior knowledge about the best design of instruction for reading, she felt that the whole group lesson was not an effective strategy. She tried to suggest another way to teach the lesson, but her cooperating teacher advised her that they were behind in reading and Heather should just teach it the way that she did. In her lesson plan reflection, Heather wrote:

To be honest, this was not the way I think reading instruction works best and is not the way I would teach it if it were my own classroom. Due to time constraints and being behind in our lessons, my teacher asked me to teach it the way she teaches reading traditionally. Not only is there no differentiated instruction, but the students just sit there. (Heather, Lesson plan reflection)

These sentiments echo Flores and Day’s (2006) findings that oftentimes preservice teachers have to be compliant in the way they teach because of the counsel of their cooperating teachers. In Heather’s developing identity as a teacher, she wrestled
with the teaching method that she was required to use, critiquing its effectiveness and struggling because she did not feel she was best meeting the needs of the students in her room. She relied on her prior knowledge of what she knew about differentiated instruction and student involvement to make these assertions.

**Anticipate: Anticipatory Reflection or Reconstructive Discourses**

The final aspect of the theoretical model that I have been building over the course of this chapter is the addition of *anticipation*. In this theme, and component of the theoretical model, the preservice teachers allude to what they might do in their own classroom. As they look ahead to what they plan to do in their own classrooms, it provides a window into the identity of the preservice teachers. Elements in this theme were categorized when preservice teachers foreshadowed what they might do in their own classrooms or how they might do things differently than what was happening in their field experiences. When they about what they might do differently if they had the power of being in charge of their own classroom they critiqued the status quo by imagining the improvements they might make.

Figure 4.9 adds *anticipate* to the swirl in the theoretical model. It is placed farther out than the other words and in the direction that the swirl is moving to show momentum in that identity continues beyond the bounds of the present. Identity develops through looking forward (and backward) and is continually in flux, crossing space and time.
An example of this theme occurred when Madison thought about what she disagreed with in her practicum and discussed in an interview her aspirations for her own classroom. All of the participants experienced a fifth grade practicum placement where the reading curriculum was highly integrated with social studies. This proved frustrating for them as they felt reading did not get emphasized enough. This excerpt from my second interview with Madison indicated she wanted to have a reading time that was free from other subjects in her own classroom. Here she wrestled with what she saw in the practicum experience and compared it to what she experienced as a student growing up. She made sense of her disagreements with the practicum setting by anticipating and reconstructing the type of classroom she might like to have.

Madison (M): It was strange. They coordinated reading with social studies. That was part of how they got their reading in and they were also learning their social studies. It was interesting, but I don’t think I wanna, some schools might not have a choice. I want to have more of a free reading time

Researcher (R): free reading?
M: A reading block free of other subjects. At M1 Elementary they interlock social studies with reading. It almost felt that it was overkill. The whole 5 weeks I was there was on pilgrims and the mayflower. I just kind of thought “let them read about something else” you know? What was fun about literature for me was that it was so diverse and different stories and genres. Poetry here and there…

R: Did you see literacy content? Did that happen?

M: I didn’t see it. I obviously had to teach literacy type ideas. It was just so hard in 2 hour block so many kids were pulled out. There was no time where they could all be in the same classroom at once.

It was new to me to see things done that way. I think I might like the way that I got it a little bit better, with a specific block, specific books. It was separate from everything else. I think that was more effective for me. I just don’t know how much they were actually getting, all of them getting the same literacy stuff throughout the day – scattered…

I think I grew in the sense that now I know how I might like to teach literacy or how I might like to set up my literacy block. And I had got to see the different ways, now I’ve had an opportunity to see the way different teachers teach it and the way they set up their reading. I grew in the sense that I noticed some things I liked and didn’t like and I can kinda put that in the file for when I start to design my day in the classroom.

In this example, Madison relied on her prior knowledge of literacy teaching, which came from her own experiences, or the ‘apprenticeship of observation’ (Lortie, 1975). She thought it was more effective to have a separate, specific block for reading instruction like the one she had as a student. Madison also felt that the lack of a variety of literature provided a further rationale for why the integration of social studies and reading did not work. In her identity of teaching literacy, it was important to have a wide variety of different types of literature. The events in this classroom did not align with that. In her developing identity as a teacher of literacy, she looked forward, anticipating that in her own classroom she would have a “free reading block” meaning a block just designated for reading, free from other subjects.
I relied on Conway’s (2001) interpretation of Van Manen’s (1995) ideas about anticipatory reflection to give meaning to ideas in this theme. Conway (2001) used Van Manen’s work to define anticipatory reflection as “future oriented reflection before action” (Conway, 2001, p. 90) and retrospective reflection as “past oriented reflection after action” (Conway, 2001, p. 90). Conway found that anticipatory reflection helped to give preservice teachers hope. A similar idea was used by Larson (2006) but she employed the terminology of reconstructive discourses as times when preservice teachers “verbally imagined who they might become as a teacher of literacy and how they would become this ideal” (p. 84).

Similar to the work of Conway (2001), Van Manen (1995), and Larson (2006) this dissertation study found that preservice teachers of literacy imagined their future as teachers, anticipating what their own classrooms would be like. This anticipating, aided in the identity development of the preservice teachers as they navigated the path of becoming a teacher because they were able to visualize the role they would play as teachers. As they mentally imagined the identity they would have as a teacher, they interpreted their surroundings and made sense of what they learned, swirling and mixing ideas from the past and looking forward into the future.

**Returning to Habitus**

In the beginning of this chapter, I introduced each participant’s habitus (Bourdieu, 1991; 1984) related to literacy teaching. I have now described some scenarios showing how these participants authored themselves in the figured worlds of their field experience classrooms. In these findings, I reported how they relied on their prior knowledge to notice, critique, and anticipate giving examples that served to explain their developing identities as literacy teachers.

The theoretical model I built over the course of this chapter, (Figure 4.9) shows how identity is like a spiral that is constantly mixing, taking in information from the figured world and bringing it into the habitus, circling and moving – changing and adapting. In light of this circling motion that I have been building as I have presented the theory over the course of this chapter, is it is appropriate that I circle around now in the presentation of these findings – returning to the idea of habitus that began the theoretical model.
I return to habitus now because we have been introduced to each of the participants and a little about each of their identities. As I described each of the themes I provided examples that introduced Heather, Madison, and Brandi. Through this we began to get a sense of their identities and embedded habituses as literacy teachers. We saw some of the situations they wrestled with and explored their thoughts as they related to the themes of authoring, noticing, critiquing, and anticipating. I chose stories that would best represent each theme; and coincidently some of the examples alluded to the habitus of each participant, in which case I made a note of this. Other examples did not necessarily clearly show the habitus because the primary purpose was to report the findings related to the theme. I circle back now, showing the mixing nature of identity in the way that I present this theory and return to the idea of habitus. In this section, I will provide examples that more clearly show the habitus that was central to the developing identity of each of these future teachers of literacy.

Heather’s habitus: Specifics about kids matter. I will start with Heather because in several of the examples that illustrated the previous themes, Heather’s habitus was visible. Heather operated from a core habitus in her identity that focused on the importance of kids; I labeled this habitus “specifics about kids matter.” She drew on her prior pedagogical content knowledge to support this habitus, often talking about the importance of differentiating instruction and the importance of knowing each child. She was genuinely interested in the students in her classroom and saw each of them as unique individuals with whom she had the opportunity to work.

The examples in the previous themes have already helped to set the scene for describing Heather’s habitus. Recall for instance the discussion about the struggling reader presented in the theme authoring self: interaction with cooperating teacher. Heather felt compelled to find a book for the student whom she knew struggled with comprehension even though he read fluently. She knew he enjoyed science fiction and made it her mission to try to find a book for him. Another example, presented in authoring self: interaction with students was the excitement Heather described in watching her students choose a book that they got to keep.

In the themes of noticing and critiquing Heather reflected on her cooperating teacher’s knowledge of individual student learning levels and the lack of instruction that
her teacher planned to align with these individual levels. Heather was particularly upset about the teaching to the test that she observed in the field world of her classroom (as described in *critiquing classroom literacy events*) because it did not align with her identity as teacher which sought to make instruction engaging and relevant for each of the children in her class.

Heather’s habitus was particularly easy to infer because it was a theme that resonated clearly in the interviews, observations, and in the artifacts I collected. During the last interview she even seemed conscious of her focus on students saying, “I know I always talk about getting to know the students and blady blady blah. But...” The examples of her discussions about specific students were widespread. I will now provide a few further examples to illustrate Heather’s habitus.

Heather’s response to a question in the first interview about the tools she would need to teach literacy was supportive of her habitus that the specifics about kids matter. In the interview, I asked the participants what they would need to teach literacy in a remote place that did not have any resources. I asked them to imagine what they would need to teach literacy in the middle of the rainforest. Through this question, I hoped to gain a greater perspective of their view on literacy teaching. Using the artifacts that they thought were important to the figured world of literacy teaching, I was able to infer some things about their identity, especially as I looked across the participants at the range of responses.

Table 4.2 shows the responses of all of the participants to the interview prompt about the tools needed to teach literacy in a remote location. It is interesting to note how specific the tools are that Heather mentioned. The first valued literacy tool she mentioned were Elkonin boxes, a tool to help students learn to hear the individual sounds in words. This is a fairly specific tool, and mentioning it pulled on Heather’s prior pedagogical content knowledge. Her rationale for listing this tool was her great success with Elkonin boxes in an earlier kindergarten placement. She also mentioned notecards for a word wall, and bare books – blank notebooks for the children to do their own writing. The final tool she mentioned was a class set of books.
Table 4.2 *Tools needed to Teach Literacy in a Remote Location.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would a teacher need to teach literacy in a place that didn’t have any resources like the rainforest?</th>
<th>Heather</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Brandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elkonin boxes</td>
<td>Fun tradebooks</td>
<td>Good book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sight words, notecards for word wall</td>
<td>Blackboard, dry erase or parchment</td>
<td>Paper, pencil (no computer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bare books</td>
<td>Class set of books</td>
<td>Fun tradebooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class set of books</td>
<td>Posters (alphabet, phonetic sounds, supporting info)</td>
<td>Reference text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-TV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tools that Heather saw as important to teaching literacy helped me to make inferences about her identity and habitus as a literacy teacher. She mentioned specific tools, which supported my inference that she believed teaching literacy is a complex processes. In contrast, Brandi mentioned fairly simple tools: a book, something for writing, and a reference text – and as I will discuss momentarily, this supported her habitus. Heather’s tools need to be individualized for the particular situation, taking into account the specific kids. For instance, the teacher has to choose the words that are appropriate for the students to use with the Elkonin boxes and on the word wall and the bare books allow each of the students to create their own writing. These particular adaptations that are required showed Heather values the knowledge that the students brought to the figured world of teaching and learning. Heather’s habitus of the specifics about kids matter thus was supported in the tools she saw as important to literacy teaching.

Her habitus was further illustrated in other situations, for example in Heather’s first student teaching reflection she noticed how her cooperating teacher related to the students. She took into account how the students might be seeing the situation and appreciated the time that her cooperating teacher took to be kind to the students and make sure they understood the instruction. In the reflection Heather said:

I love the way my cooperating teacher handles instruction in my classroom. She is very relaxed and always speaks in a warm tone with the students, even when she has to become sterner because the students aren’t paying attention. There is
whole group and small group instruction in the classroom. She introduces a lesson by asking for student’s eyes and ears. She will then give them a brief overview of what is about to happen. When she closes a lesson, she always prepares students for the next transition. (Heather, Student teaching reflective journal 1)

This reflection showed Heather’s developing identity as she notices and connects with the practices of her cooperating teacher that show care for individual students. Heather’s developing identity was also seen as she reflected on her practicum placement in the following excerpt from her reflection journal. Notice how Heather’s habitus of specifics about kids matter comes to the forefront in the passion she expresses for the students.

I was so unbelievably blessed to be placed in a classroom of 24 amazing students. All of these students were so uniquely different, and I absolutely loved every single one of them. They all came from a variety of different backgrounds, and all had their own strengths and weaknesses. I loved learning about assessment, and I loved teaching lessons and seeing the students perform well. I don't know that there is a more rewarding feeling in the profession of teaching than when a student does well on an assignment based on material you taught them, and you get to tell them how proud you are of them. Seeing how excited they get and finding their sense of self-worth is just one of the many reasons why I know teaching is what I want to do the rest of my life. My experience at H1 Elementary was a truly amazing one, and I think it set the standard extremely high for next semester's student teaching placement. (Heather, Practicum reflection 5)

Heather felt strongly connected to the students and notes this as a reason that she wanted to enter the profession of teaching. These examples and the ones used to support the earlier themes showed that Heather operated from a habitus that cared very much about the people, the specific children that she would be teaching. In the teaching decisions and in her reflective conversations, this habitus came to the forefront as guiding and shaping the ways Heather authored herself in the figured world of her field experiences.
Madison’s habitus: Being received by others is a valuable part of teaching. Compared to Heather, Madison’s habitus was not as easy to infer. Whereas I had a sense of Heather’s habitus beginning in her practicum placement, it was not until Madison’s student teaching that I saw something that I could label as a developing habitus. Perhaps this was actually because it was in the process of changing. As I got a sense of her habitus in student teaching, I then was able to look back at her five-week practicum field experience to see that habitus there as well. It is the nature of qualitative research to use this cyclical, reflexive approach to data interpretation (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Dey, 2007) and it is interesting that the habituses of Madison and Brandi (as will be described) were evolving and changing over the course of their field experiences.

Madison’s developing habitus of being received by others surfaced in the ways that she found importance in fitting in and being viewed by others in a positive manner. Getting along with her colleagues and being well-received by her students was valuable to Madison. This could stem from the sociohistorical roots of teachers needing to be role models and to be viewed positively by others just because of their position as educators; this is a habitus that endures across time in terms of the responsibilities of an educator. Part of Madison’s habitus was linked to this historical thread about the importance of educators being received and liked by others. Madison found motivation for her decisions and actions based on her desire to blend in with the way things were and to be the person that her students needed her to be.

Madison’s evolving habitus of being received by others was most visible as she struggled to connect with her cooperating teacher in her student teaching placement. I sensed that something was wrong early in Madison’s student teaching because her first student teaching reflections were unusually short and superficial. For example, her first reflection was only five short paragraphs and she had a reporting tone, which was not typical of how her reflections were in practicum. The last paragraph in her first reflection was:

I could go on and on about all the things I learned from my ethnographic interview. Mrs. Cornelius and I sat for over an hour talking and discussing our students, and the methods and procedures of the classroom. The main idea that I gathered from my interview was that when teaching Kindergarten, an educator
should strive to provide a consistent, safe, welcoming environment that promotes young children to learn basic skills that will be meaningful to their future.

This example illustrated a cold and practiced tone to the reflection, a typecast response to the reflective prompt. I was further clued in that something was not right when I read, “Mrs. Cornelius also advised me to not use excitement with the kids when requesting attention or instructing students, etc.” Not use excitement? Coming from someone who listed enthusiastic as a character trait to describe herself as a literacy teacher that was a revealing statement of the trouble Madison was having. After reading Madison’s reflections I emailed her to set up an interview.

In my email I said, “…I'm sensing a lack of enthusiasm in the tone of your logs, I hope everything's going ok. But I know you are busy and maybe you were just rushed to pull those together.” Then I asked her if we could meet to do an interview. Madison replied, “…I have lacked enthusiasm a bit this semester; I apologize for displaying that in my logs! I'm trying to fake it as best I can!” and suggested a time to meet.

We met at a coffee shop for Madison’s interview and I learned more about her student teaching situation. “It’s awful but I’m not excited to go to school in the morning. I wake up and I’m like… oh again,” Madison said at the beginning of the interview. “I don’t feel like I’m doing anything right ever. I don’t feel comfortable like taking the initiative ummm and kind of doing stuff on my own. That’s just not the person I am.” Madison explained that she felt her cooperating teacher had a set way of doing things and was not flexible to adjust to other ideas. She talked about being compared with last semester’s student teacher who was “the high and mighty.”

Madison discussed further details that helped me understand she did not feel accepted and that she was experiencing some trepidation in her identity development as a teacher. For example, after Madison had asked a student to ‘pull a ticket’ for behaving poorly, the kindergarten classroom assistant un-pulled the ticket. The assistant was essentially saying that the child did not deserve to have that consequence for his behavior. Here the assistant did not receive Madison as an authority figure in the classroom and made the students feel that Madison had very little power in the class by reneging her consequences. Madison thus was left questioning her own identity as a student teacher and position within the figured world of that kindergarten class.
Madison did not feel comfortable in the classroom in terms of the way it was organized, both the space and in the use of time. She described the organization of the literacy centers as not easy for the kids because they were not allowed to finish their work and were randomly called up to work with the teacher. The unpredictability of it was frustrating for Madison because she saw that the students were having a tough time. But on the other hand, some things were too organized for Madison. She described how the procedural control of the students was very specific:

She [the cooperating teacher] likes everything very — completely buzurko organized. Every detail to the last minute is organized. Not the objects in her room, because I don’t think they are. She has absolute exact procedures. Not a lot of talking, not a lot of movement.

This style did not match with Madison’s developing identity as a teacher where she described herself during a lesson to the students saying, “I have a flare for the dramatic, I can be really silly about things.” Madison seemed to value a fun atmosphere, as this excerpt from the interview illustrated:

R (Researcher): What do you think of her teaching?
Madison (M): I think she is a really good teacher, I just don’t think she is a very fun teacher.
R: But for you ‘fun’ is part of being a good teacher?
M: Well yeah…(continued, telling a story of the university supervisor complementing her because the students were having fun during a lesson)

The fun atmosphere that Madison, sometimes unintentionally, brought to the execution of her lessons was critiqued by her kindergarten cooperating teacher. The cooperating teacher did not receive Madison’s unique style and identity as a teacher and pulled her aside after every lesson to give her suggestions. This conflict between whom Madison wanted to be and what her cooperating teacher thought things should be, made it difficult for Madison to feel like she was doing things the right way. Madison was not received by her cooperating teacher, which made it difficult for her developing identity as a teacher. Madison said, “Each lesson that I’ve taught so far. There’s been stuff that I’ve done wrong or stuff that she would do differently. Or stuff that she doesn’t think is best.
Maybe I’m learning, maybe I am doing all these things wrong.” Madison began to question herself as a teacher because her surroundings did not align with her identity.

When her cooperating teacher was out for the day, Madison described feeling more at ease in the figured world. She talked about going to a grade-level planning meeting without her teacher and how much easier it was.

The other 3 [teachers] were involving me in the conversation. I wasn’t kind of hanging off to the back, by myself. They you know. I got to express some of my ideas and one of the PSA’s [principal’s staff assistant] was in there and that was really cool. It was fun. It was a lot of fun.

This quote is revealing of Madison’s developing habitus that being received by others is important because she enjoyed successfully planning and teaming with the other teachers. She expressed joy about being involved in the conversation and being able to hear and include the ideas of others. She also was happy that she got to show off her ideas for the principal’s assistant, I assumed because she was trying to look good in front of this person to possibly obtain employment. In that comment, her desire to be received by others was especially seen. Even though Madison felt positively about the planning situation that happened when her cooperating teacher was out for the day, she compared it to the situation in her practicum experience:

[This semester] there’s not a lot of communication. Last semester I felt super comfortable running into the other room, “Hey can I borrow that worksheet, I want to use it for my lesson.” And they did that all the time. And some of them even asked me if they could use stuff I had created. “Could you come do that lesson with my kids?” And I was, like it was, awesome. This semester there is just no team atmosphere about it.

In her practicum placement Madison felt accepted and received as a part of the team of teachers which helped to improve her sense of her own identity as a teacher.

Despite her internal identity conflicts and frustration with not feeling received, Madison was able to collect herself and act professionally in the situation. Madison said, “It’s okay, it’s just one of those things. But you know I’ll get through it and I am, like I said, I’m faking it really well. I won’t do anything that will make me not get along with her.” At the end of the interview she noted:
It’s kind of been a life lesson more than it has been a teaching lesson. I don’t run into people that often have issues with me. I don’t run into people not liking me or me not liking someone. So this has been a life lesson more as I’m trying to get used to another personality that is completely different than mine and seeing that person all day every day. I’ll get through it, I always get through everything.

Madison’s student teaching experience was marked by internal identity struggle in terms of being received by others, which helped me to understand that this was an important part of her developing habitus as a teacher. She wanted to fit in and to be a part of the figured world, she wanted to be liked and received by her colleagues. Although many of the aforementioned examples did not speak directly to her being a teacher of literacy, teaching literacy is encompassed in general “teaching.” The study was always couched within the literacy teaching aspects; however, some of these explanations lent themselves to the consideration of a wider sense of teacher.

In contrast to Madison’s student teaching, in her practicum experience she did feel received by others and valued the relationships she built as this excerpt from a practicum reflection showed:

One of the best things to happen during my stay was the close relationships I built with my teacher and students. I know that Mrs. Chambers will be a life-long resource for me and willing to help me in any area of my future. Also, I became close with many of the students, which helped me to adapt my instruction for each of them! I realized out in the field how very important it is to constantly differentiate and adapt instruction to suit the needs of each individual student. I have learned that as a prospective educator, this is vital to my success. If I want to move my students ahead in scores and make them better learners, this will be a trait I will constantly need to work on.

Here she points out the importance of Mrs. Chambers as a resource, which points to her reliance on others and her necessity to be included as important to her developing habitus. She also mentions how a relationship with the students was important, being received by them was important to her ability to adapt her instruction for their learning. In saying that she is a “prospective educator” she categorizes her own identity as not yet fully a teacher. She sees that she is more on the peripheral rather than a full participant
(Lave & Wenger, 1991) in terms of her identity as an educator. She continues in this reflection saying:

Another thing I have noticed about myself is that even in the classroom, I’m very good at working with others as a team. At times, I was asked to collaborate with the other practicum students on lessons for the entire 5th grade, or asked to work in-depth with the ESL specialist, Intervention specialist, or another 5th grade teacher. I have always done a great job collaborating on projects outside of school, but over these past 5 weeks, I realized that I can also communicate and collaborate with other teachers, and parents in some cases, very well too!

(Madison, Practicum reflection 5)

Here Madison points out that working in a team is important to her and that she feels she is good at it. Since she feels this is a strength of hers, it is likely something that she hopes will continue as she teaches in the future. This shows how her habitus of being received by others translates into what she enjoys and feels is important as part of her identity as a teacher.

In conclusion, Madison’s identity as a teacher operated from a developing habitus of being received by others is a valuable part of teaching. This was not something that was easy to infer and it was highly dependent on the figured world where Madison was placed, if she had been placed somewhere different for her student teaching where she felt received it is possible that a different habitus would have become more evident. Identity depends on the surrounding figured world in for certain aspects to be revealed.

Madison noticed what was happening in her field experience classrooms from her developing habitus where she didn’t feel accepted. She understood things from a certain angle and critiqued the status quo because of her relationships with those around her. When those around her thought positively about her, she seemed to be mostly positive about the environment; and when she did critique, she placed blame on larger teaching methods rather than on people whom she contacted directly. However, when she was not received by those in her environment, she critiqued the people more directly and anticipated differences that she would implement if she were in charge. In these ways her fluctuating central habitus influenced the ways that she understood and interacted with the figured worlds of her field placements related to literacy.
The examples from Madison’s student teaching placement where she struggled with not feeling accepted helped to bring this habitus to the surface, it was not as evident in a different figured world. Not only did she not connect with the adults in her room, but also the students were more challenging to connect with as well at the kindergarten level. Madison did express that she got along with the students but kindergartners tend to be more focused on themselves and less able to communicate and relate to others on a deeper level. Madison expressed that, “the day is a lot busier and more hectic because they are kindergartners. But it’s fun.” Despite not feeling received, Madison learned about her identity as a teacher and a person in this situation. However, she felt much more at ease and successful in situations where she felt accepted by her fellow teachers.

**Brandi’s habitus: Learning to “take it day by day” in kindergarten.** Like Madison’s habitus, Brandi’s habitus became apparent during her student teaching field experience, it was also dependent on the figured world in order to be more visible. As I will show, Brandi’s habitus was related to age level of kindergarten and the demeanor of her cooperating teacher who was very relaxed and “took it day by day.” Brandi’s habitus caused her to be relatively calm and to approach things one situation at a time. Her habitus blossomed primarily in her student teaching, and then I also saw it in the comparison that I could make with how she was in her fifth-grade practicum placement. Thus, Brandi’s habitus demonstrated how the nature of habitus evolves based on the figured worlds that a person is involved with. As I will describe, the inclusion of the word *learning* to describe Brandi’s habitus represents how Brandi’s habitus changed because of the figured world of her kindergarten placement.

The grade level of kindergarten was important to Brandi’s developing habitus as a teacher and consequently a teacher of literacy. In her first interview, before she student taught, she expressed a desire to teach in the primary grades, “If I got to choose a grade level it would be K or 1. They are still passionate about learning. Everything is new to them. I love seeing the light bulbs go off.”

Brandi had a different demeanor in her kindergarten placement than in her fifth grade practicum field experience. She was more confident and relaxed. I met with Brandi for the last two interviews in her kindergarten classroom when the students and
teacher were out of the room. In her second interview Brandi expressed immediately how much she was enjoying the figured world of her kindergarten field experience:

Researcher (R): What is your sense of things so far?
Brandi (B): I love it.
R: Yeah? Why?
B: I don’t know, I just kinda feel – I like the atmosphere, I love the students. It’s definitely different from Fairmeadows. But I feel like I fit in better here. It felt like it was a good fit there. I just uh. I don’t know it’s different. It’s a completely new situation. I’ve never been in this type of atmosphere where they literally just don’t know anything. I’ve always said I wanted Kindergarten or K/1 so I mean this has really allowed me to see that - And I like that!

Brandi’s opinion about always wanting to teach Kindergarten or first grade reveals that this grade level is important to her. She seems to think will resonate more strongly with this grade or that she will be more successful. This belief is a component of her identity as a teacher, what she thinks she might be good at probably will carry over into what she will actually be good at doing. In the next part of the interview, Brandi described details about the organization of the kindergarten classroom and how she really felt less stressed because of her cooperating teacher. She said that she and her cooperating teacher “clicked” describing how they have a similar approach to things in the classroom.

This is less stressful for me – even though it is a bigger responsibility. And you do have the two solo weeks. I feel like, I feel like I will be completely prepared for my solos. I mean she’s I really could not have asked for a better CT [cooperating teacher] – we click – and I feel like we have the same sort of approach to a lot of things. She’s been really good. Was very organized from day one… that’s just how she is though, she just knows what she is doing. It doesn’t have to be elaborate – she’s just organized.

Brandi also talked about how this was the first year her cooperating teacher taught kindergarten – before she had been a fifth grade teacher. Brandi thus felt like they were learning some things together and felt the ability to connect with her teacher because they both had been in a fifth grade experience before coming to kindergarten. She spoke
highly of her cooperating teacher’s approach to curriculum planning and lesson delivery. She also discussed the differences in planning for fifth grade versus planning for kindergarten and how the students really drive what gets accomplished during the day.

Brandi (B): I don’t think it’s easy by any means. I would never want to give anybody the impression, “oh it’s so much easier to be a kindergarten teacher” because it’s not. You know, your preparation is different. But what you do inside the classroom is.

Researcher: It’s a different type of.

B: It is what it is. Sometimes it’s chaos. I told [university supervisor] “I’m not promising anything.” I said, “It is what it is, that is sort of our motto - We take it day by day. We have kids in here; you don’t know how they are going to be.”

(Brandi, Interview 2)

Here Brandi used the words that I chose in representing her habitus. She said “we take it day by day.” Discourse analysis of the pronoun use here points to an interesting inclusion of her cooperating teacher in this statement. This is an attitude that I wondered if she perhaps adopted from her cooperating teacher. This prediction was answered as correct in the third conversation as I talked to Brandi about her habitus.

In the third interview I commented that Brandi seemed very relaxed. Brandi said that it was not like her to be so laid back; she said that wasn’t her usual demeanor, “I’m very up tight stressed out.” She said the five week practicum experience was very stressful for her, she felt pressure because of all of the lesson plans they had to write and turn in for grades in the methods classes. She said that she “became way too focused on the lesson plan. And my perfect procedures and objectives. And that’s not, you know, your goal. Your goal is to come in and do what you can for that day. Make a difference somewhere. Fill a gap somewhere.”

When I asked her in her third interview about her relaxed demeanor and the idea of “taking it day by day” that she had mentioned, she said that this was something that she had learned. She attributed this to her cooperating teacher’s general attitude, this was something she had noticed in her figured world and adapted it for herself.

I’ve learned...It’s not me. In the classroom I’ve learned to. It’s helping me outside of the classroom; helping me in daily life become more relaxed. The
more you are around kids you learn; they are going to give you surprises every
day... Out of nowhere they have a total breakdown and you have 26 other kids
that you have to take care of.

Our teacher assistant I have learned just as much from her as I have from
Mrs. T. In terms of looking at it and saying, “Ok you have 2 minutes— you act this
way and then, that’s it.” And she doesn’t lose it, Mrs. T doesn’t lose it. There’s
never the sense of panic, even when it is chaotic. We can look at each other and
laugh. I feel like if I can hold on to that, to this mentality, even if I am completely
on my own next year… (Brandi, Interview 3)

In these comments, Brandi indicated that she wants to hold onto a mentality. This
is a mentality that she learned and noticed in this classroom field experience. She learned
to be more collected and calm, going with the flow of what the students need. Her
environment changed her identity and habitus as a teacher. This finding is supported by
findings of other studies (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) about the nature of identity
as ever changing as described in Chapter 2.

The data from earlier in my work with Brandi also supported Brandi’s habitus of
taking it day by day. Even if Brandi had not yet realized that she was a calmer teacher,
recall Brandi’s responses to the materials she would need to teach literacy in a remote
location presented in Table 4.1. Brandi said that she would need a good book, paper &
pencil, and a reference text in order to teach literacy. These simple tools indicated that
she had a view of literacy that perceived it as something easily accessible to students. In
thinking about the artifacts she said would represent the figured world of teaching
literacy - a book, pencil and paper, and a reference text are pretty straightforward and
uncomplicated. These undemanding artifacts align with an approach to teaching literacy
of taking it day by day, going with the needs of the students, taking things as they come.

Furthermore, the words that Brandi used to describe herself as a literacy teacher
as shown in Table 4.2 also aligned with the habitus of learning to “take it day by day” in
kindergarten. Brandi used the words patient, excited, comfortable, and confident to
describe herself as a literacy teacher, but she qualified it as “right now.” By placing it in
the context of now, Brandi shows that she values this figured world of kindergarten. She
values this day as a teacher. She did not make broad generalizations about who she
would be in another context or on a different day or who she hopes to be some day. She lists words and restricts those words to specifically this time in her life as a literacy teacher. In the interview when I asked what words characterized her as a literacy teacher she said:

Right now, you know I think it is- I think patient. *Excited* I like, I feel - I feel like literacy, you have to have it before you can do anything else – math, science, social studies. It’s [literacy] just something that I’ve always, I’ve always felt that has been my strongest area and what I’ve felt most comfortable teaching. I can approach a literacy lesson much easier than math or science. Um. So I just feel like maybe *comfortable* - comfort zone, maybe something like that.

I would also say in this situation *confident* in terms of content, because it is so basic, you know, it’s beginning sounds. In fifth grade I always made sure I knew, you know what I wanted them to get out of, content wise it was different…This is a bit more basic…I feel like beginning sounds I use that all the time. I don’t have to spend 2 hours at home saying to myself, B sounds like /b/. I guess preparation is different.

These comments showed that Brandi thought specifically about her particular situation as a literacy teacher of kindergarten students. She felt confident about literacy in particular and believed it to be the foundation for success in other content areas. This confidence translated into her comfort and excitement with her current situation. She was operating from a habitus as a literacy teacher that very much considered the contextual figured world. In the third interview Brandi said, “You do what the kids need you to be, be what they need you to be, and then you go home. You know, if you don’t have the perfect [format] lesson plan, the roof is not going to cave in.”

The events and circumstances that Brandi noticed and responded to were based on her overarching habitus where she took things “day by day.” Brandi noticed things in her figured worlds based on this demeanor; she did not allow herself to become too ruffled and agitated by the behaviors of the students or other changing circumstances in the classroom. Then out of what she *noticed*, she *critiqued* thinking about what actions would best meet the needs of her students on that day. As she *anticipated*, and thought about her own classroom – she hoped to maintain the calm demeanor and attitude that she
saw displayed by her cooperating teacher – an attitude that resonated strongly with her because all along, it was part of her habitus as a teacher.

**Summary**

The habitus of each of the preservice teachers of literacy in this study was central to their developing identities. This finding was related to the first question about the nature of identity development in field experiences. Habitus served as a guiding lens through which everything else was viewed, it was the color that gave each teacher’s identity a particular hue.

The theory I presented in this chapter further explored how that from habitus, each of the preservice teachers authored their interactions with the figured worlds of their field experiences. Through authoring, habitus came to life. Habitus influenced the way they navigated the figured worlds of their field placements, *authoring themselves* in certain ways. Each teacher’s experience with their field experienced served to mix their understanding of literacy teaching because of the figured world where they participated. Their surrounding figured worlds, served to inform and shape their developing identities.

The second question related to the role of prior pedagogical content knowledge to identity shaped the theory that emerged from this study in the ways that the preservice teachers authored themselves, noticed, critiqued, and anticipated. As preservice teachers authored themselves, the prior pedagogical content knowledge component of their habitus provided part of the foundation for preservice teachers of literacy to notice, critique, and anticipate who they hope to be as a teacher. The prior pedagogical content knowledge of each of the preservice teachers allowed them to notice certain aspects of their figured worlds. From this noticing, they critiqued – also relying on their prior knowledge. Then they often anticipated what they wanted to be like, their identity as a teacher, when they had their own classroom. All of the elements of this theory, noticing, critiquing, and anticipating were related to their habitus and shaped their developing identity as literacy teachers.

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Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Limitations

In the final chapter of this dissertation, I will focus on a synthesis across the findings. I will summarize the findings by returning to the purpose, research questions, and the problem that guided this study. I will also present implications for practice and implications for future research. Finally, I will highlight some limitations of this study.

Returning to the purpose

In this study I sought greater understanding of the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy in field experiences (including student teaching). Further, the relationship between identity and prior pedagogical content knowledge was explored.

The primary question that guided this study was: What is the nature of the construction of identity during field experiences for preservice teachers of literacy? Sub questions were as follows: (a) What characterizes the path of identity formation/shaping as preservice elementary teachers of literacy engage in field experiences? (b) What is the role of prior pedagogical content knowledge to identity development?

In this study, I wanted to know how preservice teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge influenced their identity development. I wanted to explore preservice teachers in light of the recent political climate that places so much emphasis on having highly qualified teachers in classrooms across the nation (NCLB, 2001) and the increased standardized testing of students that influences the general demeanor of classrooms.

While measuring knowledge in this way is increasingly emphasized, I, and other researchers who focus on identity (e.g., Alsup, 2006; Assaf, 2005; Olsen, 2008a; Larson & Phillips, 2005), do not believe this type of measureable knowledge is all that is needed to be an effective teacher or literacy teacher. In the findings of this study, I showed a fusion in the epistemological frameworks supporting the study of identity with those behind the drive for teachers to take tests that assess their knowledge of content. After all, knowledge is a component of identity and the epistemological underpinnings for studying knowledge can be subsumed into the larger construct of identity.

Conclusions

First, the path of identity formation in preservice teachers of literacy is characterized by a fluid central habitus that can be inferred in varying degrees of development and growth as preservice teachers of literacy author themselves in field
experiences. The preservice teachers of literacy in this study authored themselves in the figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998) of their field experiences with a tendency to demonstrate a certain central habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; 1991). This habitus could be inferred by the ways in which they authored themselves in the Discourses (Gee, 2001) that surrounded them. For example, literacy practices (Bartlett & Holland, 2002; Street, 1984) could be inferred from observable literacy events (Heath, 1983; Purcell-Gates, Jacobson, & Degender, 2004) that the preservice teachers created. Sometimes the preservice teachers did not agree with the literacy events of their field experience classrooms. In these instances, their habituses were often visible as they wrestled with why they disagreed with what was happening in their figured worlds. They talked about these disagreements in conversations and wrote about them in their reflections. I was then able to see how their present figured worlds interacted with their habituses.

In one of the preservice teachers, Heather, this habitus was easy to infer – while in the other two it was seen as developing and changing based on the figured worlds. It is exciting that the habitus is not fixed in preservice teachers because it shows that they are susceptible to educational influences. Bourdieu (1980) in fact points out that “early experiences have particular weight” (p. 60) on the developing habitus – so it is possible that the experiences of the preservice teacher education will weigh heavily on who teachers become.

Second, prior pedagogical content knowledge plays a role in the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy as it helps them notice, critique, and anticipate as they author themselves in the figured worlds of their field placements. Further, measuring pedagogical content knowledge via standardized testing when combined with conversation may help preservice teachers to understand their identity. Analysis of data collected in this study indicated that preservice teachers of literacy relied on their prior knowledge about literacy content and literacy pedagogy in order to make sense of their figured worlds. Their understandings and background experiences allowed the preservice teachers to notice existing literacy events through the eyes of a teacher. They then critiqued literacy events in terms of actions of their cooperating teachers and general structures of the figured worlds of their field placements. This critiquing led
them to *anticipatory reflection* (Conway, 2001) or *reconstructive discourses* (Larson, 2006) where they looked ahead to what they hoped for their future literacy classrooms.

Multiple choice tests designed to measure literacy pedagogical content knowledge can help teachers sift through their own knowledge and identity as a teacher in order to better understand who they are and what they know. As mentioned in chapter 2, my initial interest in pedagogical content knowledge stemmed from the increased societal focus on standardized testing. Standardized tests are increasingly being used as a statement about what people know and are more and more valued for decision making. Preservice teachers have to take tests to prove they have the content knowledge necessary to become certified. I wondered how this type of knowledge aligned with preservice teachers’ identity as teachers.

In Chapter 4, I discussed a group conversation that I conducted after the participants took the Literacy Instruction Knowledge Scale [LIKS], (Utah State University, 2009; Reutzel et al., 2009) This conversation proved interesting in the interactions that the participants had in order to make sense of the content that was presented on the test. Also, in the individual conversations I had with the participants they often seemed surprised when I reported in which area they scored higher. I noticed that with one participant in particular, simply telling her she had done better on decoding over comprehension gave her an increased sense of confidence in her identity and potential ability to teach these concepts. Future research certainly could explore more about the potential of tests to influence identity development of preservice teachers of literacy.

**Implications for Practice**

This research supports the work of researchers (e.g., Alsup, 2006) who think it is valuable to include issues of identity in teacher education. This research showed more about how teacher identity is developed in field experiences specifically related to literacy teaching. Several implications for practice, specifically for teacher educators can be deduced from the findings of this study.

First, teacher educators *should be purposeful with preservice teachers about their developing identities as teachers of literacy*. Alsup (2006) noted that often, “the teaching of teachers has focused on developing the intellect, the cognitive aspects of learning to
teach, without recognizing that to separate the intellectual from the affective or the physical is unproductive, even impossible” (p. 26). This dissertation’s findings support Alsup’s ideas that suggest new teachers be taught about the self as a teacher. Olsen (2008a) points out that “learning to is less about accruing technical or intellectual knowledge and more about (re-) constructing one’s own teacher identity” (p. 6).

Teacher educators should include assignments to focus on identity. I have included a possible assignment in Appendix F called the NCA/WR Identity Guide as a frame for preservice teachers to consider what they see in the field and access their identity as a teacher. NCA/WR stands for Notice, Critique, Anticipate, Why, Reflect and is available in two forms with different types of scaffolds. Also, Form C is a guide to assist teacher educators in leading preservice teachers through the process of the NCA/WR Identity Guide.

The NCA/WR Identity Guide asks preservice teachers to actively engage in some of the processes that will encourage them to think about their own identity as a teacher. The guide is divided into 3 columns with the first asking preservice teachers to notice and critique what they see in the field. The second column asks them to consider why they noticed and critiqued those particular things while the third column digs deeply into their identity asking them to reflect. Finally, a space is provided at the bottom for preservice teachers to think ahead and anticipate what this means for them as teachers.

In creating this Identity Guide, I drew on the findings from this study. The form encourages preservice teachers to think in ways that, through analysis, I found preservice teachers in this study thinking. The form first focuses on tangible, observable events in the field experience classroom, similar to many of the reflection assignments that are required in preservice teacher courses already. In the noticing and critiquing sections of the form, preservice teachers are encouraged in an open-ended way to observe and record what is important to them about what they see in the field. Form B provides preservice teachers with more scaffolds to point their observing in certain directions. Teacher educators could use this form when there is not time for doing the exercise multiple times because it more directly guides the preservice teacher. Alternatively, preservice teachers who need assistance with reflection or who have not had many experiences in the field may benefit from Form B.
Next, the form encourages preservice teachers to think one step beyond what they notice or critique to consider why they noticed or critiqued that particular thing. In this, they begin to access their identity as a teacher. For example, if they noticed that only a few students volunteered to read aloud to the whole group, considering why they noticed this could lead them to think about a reading from a university course that discussed fluency and motivation for reading. Or perhaps they would think about how they as a student loved or hated to read aloud. Accessing why they notice and critique certain things in the classroom moves them to consider what this means about their identity as an educator.

In the reflection section the preservice teachers are encouraged to consider the why aspect in a deeper manner. The reflection component provides an analytical place for them to think metacognitively about their identity. Who or what are they including or leaving out in the lens that they use? Who is being marginalized by their perspective? If they noticed the students who volunteered to read, what about those who did not volunteer – why did they not write anything down about those students? What does that mean for those students that they were not noticed at first? Because classrooms today are filled with diverse populations of students who come with a variety of needs and backgrounds, teachers must consider how their own identities meet the identities of the children in their classrooms. Teachers must be pushed to examine the lens through which they view teaching and how this influences their approach to the children in their classrooms. When teachers notice certain things, what are they missing? Who are they leaving out, silencing, or marginalizing and how can this be remedied?

Furthermore, along with a variety of students there are a variety of methods available to teachers of literacy. The reflection section can also be used to contemplate preservice teachers’ attitudes and opinions about various pedagogical methods. They can be encouraged to contemplate how their identity translates into the types of pedagogical methods they may use in the classroom. If they noticed certain methods being used in the classroom, such as asking students to volunteer for reading aloud – reflection on these methods may lead preservice teachers to see the possibility that another method may have worked better. Perhaps they noticed only certain students volunteered to read because they were uneasy about asking students to volunteer, and this did not resonate with their
beliefs about reading instruction. Or maybe they were relieved that only the good readers volunteered to read because they feel uncomfortable when a student struggles with fluency because they do not know what to do to help. Reflecting beyond why they noticed something leads to the examination of identity and can help preservice teachers change and adapt their teaching selves in order to be the best teacher possible.

Another area of the form asks preservice teachers to anticipate how what they wrote on other areas of the guide will contribute to who they are as a teacher. In this way they are called to think about how they will be as a teacher, how they will do things in future teaching opportunities or in their own classroom. If they noticed only certain students volunteered to read – what will they do as a teacher? Perhaps they will not ask students to read aloud in their classroom, maybe they will call on specific students to read, maybe they will do only small group reading, or maybe it did not bother them and they will continue with asking for volunteers. Thinking through these options and looking ahead can be beneficial for enacting change because new teachers often replicate what they have seen in the classroom or what they did as students themselves.

Form C in Appendix F provides a guide for teacher educators who are leading preservice teachers in using the NCA/WR Identity Guide. This form provides ideas for introducing and explaining the NCA/WR and also for leading preservice teachers in the reflection component. Step by step directions are provided for two ways to use the form, one with less scaffolding and the other with more scaffolding.

Other ideas are available that include exercises dealing with identity in teacher education courses. For example, Alsup (2006) explores ideas to help teacher educators include a focus on identity in their class beginning on page 197 in her book. She suggested, making visual teaching metaphors, creating philosophy statements, or developing an identity discourse map as ideas to help preservice teachers focus on their own identities.

A second implication of this study is that teacher educators, cooperating teachers, and field experience supervisors should be explicit with preservice teachers about the ways developing knowledge influences their experiences in the field. It might be useful to discuss the idea of habitus with preservice teachers in order to help preservice teachers explore what is meaningful to them as a teacher. This would help them see that they look
through a certain lens as they enter the field and that their prior knowledge interacts with what they experience. Open-ended questions focused around the concepts of noticing, critiquing, and anticipating could help preservice teachers understand how they are authoring themselves as literacy teachers. Possible questions could include: (a) What do you notice in the field based on the course readings? (b) What critiques do you have of literacy events in your field experience and why? (c) How do you think literacy teaching in your classroom will compare to your field placement? These sorts of questions would aim to spur discussion leading to issues of developing teacher identity.

Third, teacher educators can help preservice teachers anticipate and interact with the discrepancies they find in the field and to realize their own agency as teachers. The findings of this study followed in the path of research that discusses how instruction at the university differs from what happens in the field (e.g., Feiman-Nemser & Buchanan, 1985; Houston, 2008). Participants in this study were faced with cooperating teachers who taught in ways that were looked down upon at the university. This dichotomy is often frustrating and confusing for new teachers to navigate as they begin to develop an identity as a teacher (Olsen, 2008b). Britzman notes that “Enacted in every pedagogy are the tensions between knowing and being, thought and action, theory and practice, knowledge and experience, the technical and the existential, the objective and the subjective” (p. 26, Britzman, 2003). The abilities of the preservice teachers in this study to reflect on these conflicting experiences showed that preservice teachers have potential to think deeply about how the experiences they encounter in the field influence them as a teacher. These teachers were able to think metacognitively about their own growth as a teacher. Conversations that encourage metacognitive thinking would hopefully help preservice teachers to realize their own agency. Agency is “a way of positioning oneself so as to allow for new ways of being, new identities” (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007, p. 5). Agency allows teachers to have the confidence they need to move forward with their own ideas. Practices in teacher education such as rehearsing classroom practices and role-playing can help to bolster agency in preservice teachers (Ticknor, 2010).

The data in this study pointed to how influential the figured world of the classroom environment was to the developing identities of preservice teachers. It is impossible to ignore also all of the identities of each individual child who is a part of the
figured world of the classroom as well. All of the children come from unique, diverse backgrounds and come with their own baggage, stories, and desires – they have their own identities. It is important to educate preservice teachers to be aware of their own race, class, and gendered perspectives and how those are influential to their role as teacher. Conversations about identity are ample places to bring to the surface some of the more responsibilities of educators in terms of seeking to understand and reach out to all children no matter how different they are.

**Implications for Future Research**

This dissertation study affords several areas of future research due to the additional questions that arose as the findings were presented. Research adds to and supports other research, but it also leads to more questions that can be answered with future research. This study has implications for research in three main areas.

First, future research could consider the influence of teacher education on the identity of beginning teachers. The education of a teacher is seen as a continuum (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Olsen, 2008b). This research would extend the work presented in this dissertation by following the line of research such as that done by Kosnik and Beck (2006; 2008). Kosnik and Beck’s (2006; 2008) work considered the impact of teacher education on the practices of beginning teachers. Future research could extend the work of Kosnik and Beck (2006; 2008) with a focus on ideas related to identity that were presented in this dissertation. This work would consider what preservice teachers of literacy learned in relation to their identity development as literacy teachers. Kosnik and Beck (2008) identified a gap related to a difference between what the preservice teachers wanted to learn and what was taught. The findings report by Kosnik and Beck (2008) showed that teacher educators tried to teach a lot of content and the preservice teachers felt there was a lack of focus. Future research would look to see if preservice teachers learned in regard to their identity development and pedagogical content knowledge. This research might look at the way practicing teachers author themselves and how they notice, critique, and anticipate related to their pedagogical literacy content knowledge. This would extend the work done here by exploring how identity development related to prior knowledge extends into actual teaching.
Other future studies in the line of teacher education as a continuum (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Olsen, 2008b) could explore how the teacher’s habitus is affected during the first year(s) of teaching. Also, future work could explore the connection between attrition and identity, it would be interesting to see what about identity allows teachers to leave or stay. Further, considering identity development in the professional development of practicing teachers will be another next step for research. Dillon, O’Brien, Sato, and Kelly (2011) wrote about literacy teacher education and professional development, a next step for research would be considering how to include identity with professional development.

Also, as mentioned future research can further explore the influence of testing on identity development of teachers. This work would further expand the connection between the way that knowledge is measured and identity. Measuring knowledge in the form of a test is a popular way that society is using to determine the worth of various educational systems. Identity reaches beyond what is measured on a test, but test taking abilities and the knowledge that can be measure on tests is a part of identity. Further exploration of the connections between testing and identity development would prove interesting in learning more about the abilities and identities of future teachers. Another area for future research would be replicating this type of research with a different population of preservice teachers of literacy. This study chose participants based on recommendations from professors. The professors were asked to recommend participants who had strong pedagogical content knowledge based on their performance in literacy classes. Choosing this type of preservice teacher was in accordance with the goals and purpose of this particular dissertation study. However, it would be interesting to see how findings would differ given another population of preservice teachers – perhaps a population with more mixed academic abilities.

**Limitations**

This study adds to the body of literature related to the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy. However, the results should be interpreted in light of some limitations. First, because this study was a case study it is not directly generalizable to other populations. I chose a population of preservice teachers who were labeled by their instructors as knowledgeable and above average in terms of pedagogical
content knowledge. This gave a certain lens to the data that I was able to collect. Similar findings may be found with other populations; but as discussed in the implications for future research – different populations of preservice teachers need to be considered before wide generalizations can be made. However, the findings of this study in terms of the way that content knowledge relates to identity could be helpful to preservice teachers and teacher educators as a framework for discussion. As mentioned, Appendix F provides a template for an exercise that preservice teachers could do in order to become more aware of their own identity.

Another limitation deals with the manner of participant selection. The participants were selected for this study based on recommendations from the instructors of the literacy courses they took at the university. Bias therefore enters into the study in the selection of participants because of how these instructors defined knowledgeable preservice teachers. I recognize that I relied on their subjective definitions of this concept that likely differed from instructor to instructor. It is possible that the selection process influenced the type of data I was able to collect based on the type of people that I chose for the study.

A third limitation surrounds some of the artifacts that were class assignments. It is important to point out that the participants in the study were required to complete some assignments for grades in their literacy course and in their practicum/student teaching experiences. The given prompts that the students responded to influenced the direction of this data sourced. The fact that these were assignments influenced the type of writing that the participants did because they may have written certain things to please their instructors or to get a grade. However, I was able to triangulate the data with the interviews that I did, which did not have the pressure of a graded assignment.

Further, it is a limitation that the timing of the observations and particularly the interviews did not occur at the same juncture. Brandi in particular was different from the other two because I was not able to do my first interview with her until after the practicum experience, this then altered the timing of the other interviews. This may have influenced the data I collected for her as it was more focused on the student teaching field experience rather than the five-week practicum placement.
Summary

In this study of the identity development of preservice teachers of literacy I haven’t found the “answers” to apply to solve a problem. What I have found is a richness located in knowing the stories of several preservice teachers and of thinking about them in a new way. Studying identity allows a richness that permits asking deeper questions, questions that care about the person more than just the content that they know. This type of research makes sense in education because knowing the answer isn’t all it takes to be a teacher. Teaching is about knowing the self and about knowing how that self interacts with others in the diverse figured world of the classroom. Knowing more about how identity develops and how knowledge is related to identity will help educate teachers who are more prepared to embody what it means to be a teacher, whatever that is.

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Appendix A
International Reading Association Standards 2010

Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge. Candidates understand the theoretical and evidence-based foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction

Foundational knowledge is at the core of preparing individuals for roles in the reading profession. It encompasses the major theories, research and best practices that share a consensus of acceptance in the reading field. Individuals who enter the reading profession should understand the historically shared knowledge of the profession and develop the capacity to act on that knowledge responsibly. Elements of the standard for Foundational Knowledge set expectations in the domains of theoretical and practical knowledge, and in developing dispositions for the active, ethical use of professional knowledge. Expectations are founded on the concept of a profession as both a technical and moral enterprise, i.e., competent performance for the betterment of society.

Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction. Candidates use instructional approaches, materials, and an integrated, comprehensive, balanced curriculum to support student learning in reading and writing.

The Curriculum and Instruction Standard recognizes the need to prepare educators who have a deep understanding and knowledge of the elements of a balanced, integrated and comprehensive literacy curriculum and have developed expertise in enacting that curriculum. The elements focus on the use of effective practices in a well articulated curriculum, using both traditional print and online resources.

Standard 3: Assessment and Evaluation. Candidates use a variety of assessment tools and practices to plan and evaluate effective reading and writing instruction.

This Assessment and Evaluation Standard recognizes the need to prepare teachers for using a variety of assessment tools and practices to plan and evaluate effective reading and writing instruction. The elements featured in the Assessment and Evaluation Standard relate to the systematic monitoring of student performance at individual, classroom, school, and system-wide levels. Teacher educators who specialize in literacy play a critical role in preparing teachers for multi-faceted assessment responsibilities.

Standard 4: Diversity. Candidates create and engage their students in literacy practices that develop awareness, understanding, respect and a valuing of differences in our society.

The Diversity Standard focuses on the need to prepare teachers to build and engage their students in a curriculum that places value on the diversity that exists in our society. The elements featured in this standard relate to race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, and language. This Diversity Standard is grounded in a set of principles and understandings that reflect a vision for a democratic and just society and inform the effective preparation of reading professionals.
Standard 5: Literate Environment. Candidates create a literate environment that fosters reading and writing by integrating foundational knowledge, use of instructional practices, approaches and methods, curriculum materials, and the appropriate use of assessments.

The Literate Environment standard focuses on the need for candidates to synthesize their foundational knowledge about content, pedagogy, the effective use of physical space, instructional materials and technology; and the impact of social environment to create an environment that fosters and supports students’ traditional print and online reading and writing achievement. This standard recognizes that candidates must create a literate environment that meets the diverse needs of students and facilitates connections across content areas as well as with the world outside the school.

Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership. Candidates recognize, demonstrate, and facilitate professional learning and leadership as a career-long effort and responsibility.

The Professional Learning and Leadership Standard is based upon a commitment to lifelong learning by all reading professionals through communication and collaboration. The elements featured in this standard include positive dispositions, individual learning, collaborative learning, designing and evaluating professional learning, advocacy, and foundational knowledge for professional learning and leadership.
Appendix B
Recruitment Email

You were recommended by your Literacy I methods instructor to receive an invitation to participate in a research study. You were recommended because of your exceptional level of achievement in that course. Your success in Literacy I makes you a good candidate to participate in this study.

Let me tell you a little about the study and myself. My name is Lindsay Grow and I am working on my doctorate in literacy under the direction of Dr. Almasi, Dr. Shake, Dr. Jensen, and Dr. Perry. I previously taught the Literacy II methods course and helped with the studio model. You know me because I’m helping out with the scholastic book orders for your Literacy II methods course.

I am interested in learning more about the identity development of preservice teachers as related to their prior knowledge. If you choose to participate you will be one of 3 preservice teachers at the Research University who are also participating. Most of your participation will involve observation of things that you will already be doing in order to receive your degree at the Research University. Your participation would involve me observing (not evaluating) lessons you will already be teaching, a few interviews, and taking an assessment about your literacy knowledge. Your total participation beyond what you would do for classes would be about 4-6 hours.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary and will not influence your grade in any course. Please email me back with any questions you have, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the study further before you decide to participate.
Appendix C

Elementary Education Course Requirements apart from General University Studies

Program Related Studies (37 hours)

Workshop in Design Education for Elementary Teachers (3)
Teaching Music in Elementary Grades (3)
Mathematics for Elementary Teachers (3)
Mathematics for Elementary Teachers (3)
Introduction to Psychology (4)
Geology for Teachers (3)
Physics and Astronomy for Teachers (3)
Choose one of the following courses:
HIS 580, PS 456G, APP 200, GEO 322, HIS 240 (3)
LIS 510 Children’s Literature and Related Materials
or alternative (e.g., lower-division equivalent from community college) (3)

Select two courses from the following: MA 310, MA 241, EDC 334, ENG 205, ENG 207, ENG 211, ENG 230, ENG 231, ENG 232, ENG 233, ENG 234, ENG 261, ENG 262, ENG 264, ENG 281, EDC/ENG 509 (6)
Free Elective (3)

Professional Education Requirements
(48 hours)

All of the following courses require admission to the Teacher Education Program:
Human Development and Learning (3)
Health Education in the Elementary School (2)
Physical Education for Elementary School Teachers (2)
Teaching Reading and Language Arts (3)
Teaching Exceptional Learners in the Elementary Classroom (2)
Classroom Management and Discipline (3)
Elementary Practicum (3)
Teaching Social Studies in the Elementary School (3)
Teaching Science in the Elementary School (3)
Teaching Mathematics in Elementary Schools (3)
Designing a Reading and Language Arts Program for the Elementary School (3)
Introduction to Instructional Media (1)
Strategies for Including Students with Disabilities in the Elementary Classroom (2)
Student Teaching in the Elementary School (12)
Appendix D
Semi-structured Interview Protocol

This protocol served as a guide for the interview sessions. I used the interviewee’s responses to inform future questions during the progression of the interview.

Interview 1
During practicum experience (after practicum for Brandi)
1. In order to get to know participants: Tell me about yourself. What interested you in teaching? What memories do you have of learning to read or write?

2. To focus on field experience and begin to understand literacy histories: Tell me about some of your previous experiences with literacy teaching.
   Potential prompts:
   - Literacy I, what did you take away from that class, what stands out?
   - How did that practicum teacher teach literacy?
   - Your experiences as a student with literacy.

3. To understand perceptions of literacy: What would a teacher need to teach literacy in say a place that didn’t have any resources in the building, in a remote place like the middle of the rainforest?
   Potential prompt if this question is difficult: What would an ideal 1st grade classroom be like in order to teach literacy in the best possible way?

Interview 2
Before student teaching (early in student teaching- for Brandi)
1. Identity as reflection: What did you learn about literacy teaching from your practicum experience?
   - What one or two stories do you think you will tell in the future that would say something about what you learned about literacy teaching from this experience? (Are there any stories or objects that represent something significant which you learned about teaching literacy that you will always remember from your field experience?)

   OR (for Brandi)

   To get participant talking and telling stories about the influence of student teaching thus far and to compare with practicum:
   How would you describe your experience thus far?
   Potential prompts:
   - Are there things the teacher is doing that you resonate strongly with? Things you are really glad she/he is doing? Why?
   - How does it compare to last placement?

2. Identity occurs at the site of conflict: Talk about moments that you disagreed with something the cooperating teacher was doing in the classroom.
   Potential prompts:
   - Why did you disagree?
- Are there aspects of the literacy teaching in the field placement that you felt positive about? Explain.

3. How would you characterize yourself as a literacy teacher? Give me some words that you would use to describe yourself – or that others would use to describe you if that is easier.
   - Aspects of your teacher preparation that have influenced the way you plan to teach literacy?
   - How do you see yourself as similar to or different from teachers in the field (perhaps specifically your cooperating teacher)?

4. Identity as anticipatory reflection: What do you hope to learn about literacy teaching from your student teaching experience?

5. Do you think the LIKS assessment represents what you know about teaching literacy? You scored highly in ______, what is your reaction to that?

**Interview 3**

**Mid-end of student teaching**

1. How would you describe your experience? How would you characterize the type of literacy teaching in this field experience?
   Potential prompts:
   - What surprises you about teaching literacy to elementary students?
   - Have you seen any conflicts in what you anticipated teaching literacy to be like and how it is here?
   - Are there things your CT is doing that you resonate strongly with? Things you are really glad she/he is doing? Why?

2. How does actually being in the classroom help you learn to be a literacy teacher? What value does it have? *(Gets at what they perceive to be the knowledge they gain from the field experience)*

3. Do you feel like you know what you need to in order to teach literacy? Do you have the content knowledge that you need to be a teacher?

4. Identity as reflection: How might this classroom be different from your own future classroom?

**Group Conversation after taking LIKS Written Assessment**

1. To seek interesting thoughts surrounding performance on pen/pencil knowledge measure which may relate to identity (rationale for decisions made on knowledge measure):
   What did you think of the test?
   Prompts: Were certain items difficult/easy? Did any stand out to you? Why?
Appendix E

Valued Literacy Tools or Literacy Artifacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview question</th>
<th>Heather</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Brandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What would a teacher need to teach literacy in say a place that didn’t have any resources, maybe in a remote place like the middle of the rainforest? | -Elkonin boxes  
-Sight words, notecards for word wall  
-Bare books (for writing stories)  
-Class set of books | -Fun tradebooks (hot books)  
-Blackboard, dry erase or parchment with paper/pens  
-Posters (alphabet, phonetic sounds, supporting info)  
-TV | -Good book  
-Paper, pencil (no computer)  
-Reference text |
The questions in this exercise are to help you consider what it means to be a teacher, what is important to you as a teacher, and why it is important. The more we know about ourselves as teachers and why we think/believe/act in certain ways, the better we can become. As you observe in your field experience consider the following:

| What do you **NOTICE** related to literacy teaching? | **Why?**  
*What from your base of knowledge or prior experiences caused this to stand out?* | **REFLECT!**  
*Wait for directions in class to complete this column* |
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<tr>
<td>What do you <strong>CRITIQUE</strong> related to literacy teaching?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you <strong>ANTICIPATE</strong> related to literacy teaching?</td>
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</table>
NCA / WR Identity Guide  Form B

The questions in this exercise are to help you consider what it means to be a teacher, what is important to you as a teacher, and why it is important. The more we know about ourselves as teachers and why we think/believe/act in certain ways, the better we can become. As you observe in your field experience consider the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you NOTICE related to literacy teaching?</th>
<th>WHY?</th>
<th>REFLECT!</th>
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<tr>
<td>Think about:</td>
<td>What from your base of knowledge or prior experiences caused this to stand out?</td>
<td>Wait for directions in class to complete this column</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Classroom literacy events &amp; practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Yourself and your knowledge</td>
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<td>- Cooperating Teacher’s knowledge &amp; identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>- If something is missing</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>What do you CRITIQUE related to literacy teaching?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Think about:</td>
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<td>- Cooperating Teacher</td>
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<td>- Classroom literacy events &amp; practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Teaching methods</td>
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</table>

| What do you ANTICIPATE related to literacy teaching? | |
|-----------------------------------------------------| |
Form C: Teacher Educator’s Guide to NCA/WR

There are two different approaches to using the NCA/WR depending on how much time you want to devote to it and the needs and abilities of the preservice teachers with whom you work.

Option one allows the process of observation during the field experience to be open-ended. In this option, the preservice teachers are provided with the NCA/WR Form A and asked to fill out all of the columns except reflect during or after a field experience. Minimal directions are provided to guide the preservice teachers during the observation and filling out process, this allows the exercise to initiate from what the preservice teachers observe and feel is important.

After the field experience observation, the students gather to receive instructions about the reflect section of the form. They can then complete this section during class with some time given first for independent work, then some given for small group discussion and finally whole group conversation. Alternatively, they could receive instructions about completing the section, then go home to complete it and come back to discuss.

In order to complete the reflect section of the form – guide your students through a process similar to the following:

1. I am going to say some different statements that might spark thoughts in your mind related to who you are as a teacher of literacy. Jot down a few notes as the thoughts come or write pieces of the question that caused you to have these thoughts so you can return to them more fully during an independent work time.

2. Think about what you noticed and critiqued during the observation, did you write down everything you saw? Why/ Why not? How did you choose what you wrote? What does that say about you as a teacher? Why did you think these things were important? What does it say about what you left out, what you didn’t write down? What is the other, what did you not see, what story did you not tell?

3. Look at what you wrote in the notice column – do you see any patterns? Did you write mostly about the space, or people, activities, or something else? Did you write about feelings or actions?

4. Look in a similar manner at what you critiqued. What patterns do you see? Did you critique one particular structure, person, activity? Did you find it difficult to critique – think about why?

5. Now let’s turn to the why column – this is where we begin to dig more into your identity as a teacher. What are you relying on to make these observations and critiques? Are you relying on the same thing? What patterns do you see in this column? For example, did you notice and critique because you are comparing with something else like your own experiences as a student or your learning in teacher education? How does what you rely on
influence your teaching? How does it influence your students? Analyze this column what configurations of ideas surface?

6. Finally what did you write in the anticipate area. What does this say about what is important to you as a teacher? Will you be able to uphold these dreams? What obstacles will you face? How will you stay true to who you are as a teacher? You have good aspirations now but what about later, how will you examine yourself to make sure that you are a good teacher?

7. Now you will have some time to think more and write more in the reflection column. Use another paper if you need more space. (Go home and work on this.) We will then meet back together so you can talk with a small group about what surprised you the most or stood out to you as important during this process.

8. Share: First in small groups, so students are less intimidated, then ask for volunteers to share to the larger class.

Note: Students can use the form multiple times, noticing and critiquing different aspects of the field and reflecting on their identity as teachers. Different conversations, hopefully with greater depth each time will occur as they focus on different aspects of the field experience and become more accustomed to the process.

**Option two** provides more scaffolding for the students before they engage in the activity and during the observation itself. This may be appropriate if you have less time or if your students have done very little reflection and metacognition, or have struggled with it in the past. Provide the students with Form B before the field experience and model with think alouds the process of completing the form.

For example, you could say something like –“During my observation one of the things I noticed was a teacher read aloud. So I’m going to write down read aloud in the notice column (model on a projector). I noticed this because I remember being read to as a child and I also read about it in the Reading Teacher article we read for class. So I’m going to write ‘I was read to’ and ‘reading assignment’ in the Why column.”

Continue in this manner modeling all of the areas except reflect, which you will do with the students following the procedure above when they return from observing.
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